

Okanagan Gleaners

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OKANAGAN GLEANERS

— HELPING TO FEED THE HUNGRY OF THE WORLD IN JESUS' NAME —



Spring 2018 Edition

SIDRS Helps Haiti and Puerto Rico

Shelters International Disaster Response, based in Kelowna, has recently shipped boxes of Okanagan Gleaners soup mix to Puerto Rico and Haiti (see the article and two photos on this page and the next).

For more information about this grass-roots organization and its work abroad (including a February 2018 update and photos of the Gleaners soup mix being delivered to these countries), please visit their website at: www.sidrs.org

Changes of Address

If you receive a printed copy of the Gleaners newsletter by mail, please remember to let us know of any recent or upcoming changes to your address. This will enable us to keep our mailing costs down.

Every Bag of Soup Mix Has Its Own Story

Soup mixing is starting soon and hundreds of volunteers will be helping us scoop the veggies and seal the bags that are shipped abroad. But have you ever wondered where that bag you're filling will travel to, and who will benefit from your efforts? Every bag of Okanagan Gleaners soup mix has its own story. Some are sent overseas as part of a large shipment by a recognized humanitarian aid organization. But there are some smaller stories too of how the soup mix gets there and who brings it, or how it is distributed once it reaches its destination.

Typically, large shipping containers are held at ports of entry or border crossings until the contents are thoroughly inspected by local customs officials and they are deemed safe to continue to their final destinations. A recent shipment of soup mix to Puerto Rico to help people affected by last year's hurricane was delayed until officials could confirm that the bags contained no corn.

Sometimes foreign government red tape or corruption makes it difficult to get the soup mix to its intended recipients, so a little creative thinking is required. A couple of years ago, Gleaners soup mix had to be smuggled into Nepal by a pastor after their devastating earthquake because of government restrictions on what could be brought into the country by road. And just recently, a cargo ship delivering soup mix to Haiti circumvented the hefty illegal fee demanded by a corrupt port official by pirating the goods to a safe location after dark and then disappearing before the ship was detected.

We've also heard amazing stories of mission groups, families and individuals who have packed bags of Gleaners soup mix into their cars or suitcases to bring to projects they are involved with abroad. The Erma Fenell Foundation in northern Baja California was a frequent recipient of soup mix brought down from Gleaners volunteers. Erma made up a large pot of salsa-flavoured soup and tortillas every week for her outreach project with indigenous women and their children, who came from miles around to learn about the Bible, socialize with one another, and get a nutritious meal. Bags of soup mix also found their way to the garbage dumps of Ixtapa and Puerto Vallarta in Mexico, where volunteers helped to feed hungry, impoverished garbage pickers as they worked.

(Article continued on the next page.)



Okanagan Gleaners Prayer Requests

We ask that you would please join us in prayer for the following needs:

- A consistent year-round supply of fresh and frozen vegetables for our soup mix, especially during the off season (non-harvest months)
- Financial assistance to order the following supplies for soup mixing:
\$9,050 for 100,000 bags to package the soup mix and \$11,850 + taxes for 7,900 boxes used for shipping
- After many years of service, our 5-ton truck has been causing lots of trouble due to breakdowns. Maybe it's time to replace this faithful servant. However, a used replacement unit would cost an estimated \$32,000
- A safe and productive volunteer season through the spring months and the two soup mixing periods
- Okanagan Gleaners is looking for a new treasurer. Please see page 4 for more details about this position



"Let us not become weary of doing good, for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

– GALATIANS 6 : 9 –

2017 Sock Campaign Results

SOCK CAMPAIGN TOTALS	
Socks – Boys	1,400
Socks – Girls	1,080
Toques	1,312
Underwear – Boys	183
Underwear – Girls	317
Scarves	193
Sweaters	170
Mitts and Gloves	391
Slippers and Shoes	85
Infant Clothes	177
Blankets	173
Toys	100
Miscellaneous Clothing	380
GRAND TOTAL	5,961

Thank-you to all of the friends of Okanagan Gleaners for participating in our 22nd Annual Sock Campaign. Since the Fall of 1996, we have collected warm clothing for orphans in Eastern Europe.

This year, we received almost 6,000 items. Knitters in communities from Kelowna to Osoyoos made quality toques, sweaters, mittens, scarves and blankets. Many others purchased gloves, socks, underwear, shoes and even toys to donate. Once again, the response was incredible.

This is also the second year that North Okanagan Valley Gleaners have organized a sock campaign for communities in the region, from Vernon to Salmon Arm.

We are assured in Scripture that caring for orphans is close to God's heart, and we thank you for helping to make a difference in the lives of these children.

Every Bag Has Its Own Story . . .

(Continued from the previous page.)

These are just a handful of the stories that are shared with Okanagan Gleaners in reports or by word-of-mouth. Many others go undocumented. With every issue of the newsletter, we have tried to share these stories and pictures with you about where the soup mix travels, how it gets there, who is receiving it and how it gets prepared. And we hope to continue doing so in the future.

In the meantime, maybe you'll create your own stories at Okanagan Gleaners this year, or perhaps you already have.



A Quick Soup Mixing Refresher

Whether it's you're first time joining us or you're a seasoned pro, here's a few things to remember. One bag of soup mix contains 100 servings. One box can hold 12 bags of soup mix. Remember to stretch during short breaks in production or rotate positions with others. Soup dust is your friend. It will get into everything, including your eyes and hair. Bring hats or goggles, and wear comfortable shoes.

From the President's Desk

It certainly seems like spring has finally made its appearance in the south Okanagan. We have been quite busy this winter at Okanagan Gleaners, as there has been a steady supply of produce this year and we were blessed to have enough dedicated snowbirds and local volunteers available to keep our new dryer, Ruth, running regularly. As a result of this, and the generosity of Peace Country Gleaners, we expect to be able to package 8 to 9 million servings of soup this year. That is an outstanding amount for our facility and would not be possible without the wonderful support of our many donors and volunteers.

Due to this high volume, and in response to the concerns of our volunteers regarding the extra mixing time that it entails, the Board of Directors has decided to divide our soup mixing process into two campaigns. The first will be for two weeks beginning April 17th, while the second will begin on June 12th and last for three weeks (see next page for more details). During the interval between sessions, Okanagan Gleaners will work diligently to distribute the product that was packaged from the first mixing campaign.

We have already experienced some production issues this season, from septic backups to electronic glitches with Ruth, but thanks to our committed (and skilled) staff and volunteers, these issues have been resolved and we look forward to two exciting mixing periods.

Please remember that our Annual General Meeting this year is on Saturday, May 12th and we hope that a lot of you will be able to attend. We also have some vacancies coming up on our Board of Directors and are looking for the names of people who are being led to serve in this role over the next two years (see sidebar on page 5).

Thank you for your commitment to Okanagan Gleaners.

In His service,

Bill Saul, *President*

**It's been 23 years
in the making but
this year we're
cracking 100
(100 million, that is)**

Annual Treasurer's Report

Thank-you to everyone who donated or contributed to Okanagan Gleaners last year. We are blessed that so many people continue to support the ministry and share our commitment of helping to feed the world's hungry. In 2017, we had three successful fundraising events – a hot dog sale in the summer, a fall fair and open house in September, and our second Christmas card campaign at the end of the year. This is going to be another big year for Gleaners as we surpass the 100 million servings of soup milestone. We hope that you will continue to support Gleaners in 2018.

2017 YEAR-END FINANCIAL REPORT

INCOME – DONATIONS & FUNDRAISERS

General Undesignated Income	\$203,060
Churches & Charitable Groups	\$44,049
Memorial Gifts	\$2,630
Christmas Gift Cards	\$2,730
Fall Fair Fundraiser	\$4,664
Designated Funds & Services	\$13,548
TOTAL DONATIONS RECEIVED	\$270,681

EVERY BAG OF OKANAGAN GLEANERS
SOUP MIX HAS ITS OWN STORY.



Gleaners Blips and Bites

Here are some important dates and details for the next three months.

SOUP MIXING SESSIONS – APRIL AND JUNE 2018

Due to a surplus of vegetables last year from local growers and Peace Country Gleaners, the 2018 soup mixing season will be longer than usual this spring and will result in millions of additional servings. Therefore, the Board has decided to split the operation into two separate soup mixing sessions – the first will be from April 17th to 28th (two weeks) and the second will be from June 12th to 30th (three weeks). Mixing will start at 8:30am and run until 2:30pm (Tuesday through Saturday), with a hearty lunch provided by donation. If you would like to be a part of this annual event, please mark your calendars and come out to join the festivities. Remember to book early if you want to reserve an RV site. See you there!

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING – MAY 12, 2018

On Saturday, May 12th we will be holding our 2018 A.G.M. at the Gleaners plant in Oliver. The meeting will start at 10:00am (rain or shine) and a luncheon will be provided afterward by donation. Please bring your own lawn chairs to sit on and a dessert to share with others. This year, several of our Board members will be retiring and these vacancies will need to be filled. If you are interested in becoming more involved with Gleaners or know someone who might, please see the box on Page 5 for more details.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS – TREASURER NEEDED

Okanagan Gleaners is currently looking for an individual with financial experience to take on the role as treasurer. This is a part-time volunteer position, which oversees all financial and accounting procedures for the organization, as well as sitting on the Board of Directors and participating in Board activities. If you know of anyone who might be interested in this position, please spread the word and help us find the right person. For more information about the treasurer, contact Jane at 250-535-1424.



Workers unloading a truckload of Okanagan Gleaners soup mix in Abu Sara, Ethiopia in 2017

Okanagan Gleaners Society

Spring 2018 Newsletter

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Taylor Knight

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How You Can Get Involved

Okanagan Gleaners Society is powered by volunteers and funded by donations. We couldn't do what we do without the generous help of our many supporters from near and far. There are several ways in which you can get directly involved.

VOLUNTEERING:

We are always looking for volunteers at Gleaners to help with the production of vegetables for our soup mix. Whether you live nearby or are passing through the Okanagan, we can sure use your help.

Skilled volunteers and experienced trades people are also encouraged to contact Gleaners. There is never any shortage of work to be done around the Oliver plant.

DONATIONS:

Regular donations help Gleaners to meet its monthly operating expenses and fund necessary improvements to the facility.

BY PHONE: Single or recurring monthly donations can be arranged by credit card or Direct Deposit from your bank account by calling Gleaners at 250-498-8859

BY MAIL: Cheque and money order donations can be mailed directly to the Okanagan Gleaners Society at:
507 No. 3 Road, Oliver, BC V0H 1T1

BY INTERNET: Donations can be made securely via CanadaHelps by following the Donate link on our website at:
www.okanagangleaners.com

Thank-you for your continued support.

Okanagan Gleaners Board of Directors

If you or someone you know are interested in becoming a member of the Okanagan Gleaners Board of Directors, here is some information to consider.

Overview of a Board Member's Role:

An elected Board of Directors, accountable to God and to the membership, governs the society of Okanagan Gleaners. All directors are elected for a two-year term at the Annual General Meeting. A two-year term may be renewed by re-election.

Directors should be familiar with the daily operation of Okanagan Gleaners.

The directors of the society are volunteers who serve without remuneration and shall not directly or indirectly profit from their position on the Board.

Each director is entitled to one vote. The majority of votes shall decide questions arising at any meeting of the directors.

The Board of Directors meets once monthly. All directors are expected to attend at least 10 out of 12 meetings per year. An Annual General Meeting of Okanagan Gleaners is held every May.



Support From Arterra Wines Canada

Arterra Wines Canada have jumped on board to support Okanagan Gleaners this soup mixing season. Thanks to a local retired grape grower who contacted Troy Osborne at Arterra, they have loaned us 150 plastic grape harvest bins and some bin lids, which will be lined with heavy plastic and used to store the pot barley and split peas coming from Peace Country Gleaners. Arterra Wines Canada has made these bins available for the short time needed to store the shipment when it comes via Super B train from La Crete, Alberta. We will then return these bins to the winery so they can be used for the 2018 grape harvest later this year. Okanagan Gleaners is now ready to receive the shipment of dried product from La Crete, once the roads and weather conditions improve.

Production Totals From Last Year

Here are the production totals from the past year. Please note that since soup mixing was moved from January to April, these totals are from May 2017 until mid-March of this year. Because production is still continuing until soup mixing begins, there will be more dried product available than what is listed in the chart below. Peace Country Gleaners in La Crete, Alberta works in partnership with Okanagan Gleaners, processing and drying produce from their region to be combined with our dried product to make the soup mix. We expect this to be one of the biggest years yet for soup production and distribution, and we would like to thank everyone who got involved or is planning to join the two soup mixing campaigns.

2017-2018 SOUP PRODUCTION TOTALS		
Dried Product	Oliver Plant	La Crete Plant
Beans	40	
Beets		90
Brussel Sprouts	7	
Carrots	11	63
Mixed Vegetables	56	
Onions	42	
Peas	9	
Peppers	20	
Pot Barley (estimate)	1	300
Potatoes	81	39
Split Peas (estimate)		300
Tomatoes	83	
GRAND TOTAL	350	792

The numbers listed above are for 45 gallon drums of dried vegetables. Split peas and pot barley are estimated because the numbers will vary (La Crete is shipping us two Super B trains of product, consisting of split peas and pot barley). This is an estimated total of 1,142 barrels, compared to 1,050 barrels from the previous year.