

Ruth's GLEANINGS

2020: A Year of Blessings,
Challenges and Opportunities



"When you reap the harvest of your land, do not reap to the very edges of your field or gather the gleanings of your harvest. Leave them for the poor and for the foreigner residing among you. I am the Lord your God." – Leviticus 23:22

For Ruth's Gleanings, 2020 has been a year of opportunity! Opportunity to glean more food, purchase more food, pack more food, distribute more food, and FEED MORE PEOPLE. **We could not have done it without God's abundant provision, and we could not have done it without YOU!!!**



Even with the unforeseen challenges we all faced this year, God blessed our ministry in wonderful ways. Here are a few highlights from 2020:

- We opened our new packing facility in Pacolet, including our new walk-in refrigerator. This allowed us to rise to the challenge of such a massive increase during this year's crisis.
- We purchased and outfitted a refrigerated trailer to transport the food.
- We hired a logistics coordinator, bringing our staff size to 4.
- Hundreds of volunteers logged thousands of hours helping us to sort, pack, and distribute the food.
- We partnered with dozens of community partners to reach further into our community, where they distributed this fresh produce.

Every one of these accomplishments has been possible only because of the people who give of their time, talent, and treasure. Thank you!!!

Breaking it down by the numbers:

FoodShare Spartanburg

This Ruth's Gleanings program provides a healthy fresh produce box that is aggregated and distributed bi-weekly through marketing and sales of the food at wholesale cost. It is geared for low-income and SNAP/EBT participants. In 2020, we purchased, packed and distributed over **5,500** of these nutritious boxes, totaling over **105,000** pounds of produce. That constitutes nearly **90,000** meals and is **DOUBLE** our 2019 totals!

Our mission to empower people in nutritional poverty by increasing access to fresh, healthy food has been more important than ever in 2020 as health has come into focus for the entire world during the COVID-19 crisis. When food systems were interrupted, our established relationships with local farmers and distributors became a lifeline to the abundance of fresh, health-enhancing fruits and vegetables. In addition, our partnerships with other organizations throughout Spartanburg became even more vital as we all co-labored together to bring in the harvest for the increasing number of families in need.



"The produce box was amazing. I love fruit and vegetables. Everything was used in this box. Thank you!"

Program Participant

"I really like the variety of fruits and vegetables. I used and cooked everything and I shared with my family. Keep the boxes coming!"

Program Participant



Gleaning Program

Throughout the summer months, our gleaning program participated with the USDA Farmers to Families program. This program was instituted through the CARES Act in order to keep our nation's food system running, our farmers producing, and our distributors fully staffed. Partnering with local food distributors, partner agencies, food pantries, churches, and community centers, we facilitated over 6,300 boxes of fresh produce into Spartanburg homes. That was roughly 120,000 pounds of produce, or 100,000 meals, again - DOUBLE our 2019 gleaning totals!

With the doubling of output of each of our programs, God enabled Ruth's Gleanings to do more than we could have ever dreamed or imagined. Putting it all together, we distributed 11,800 boxes; 235,000 pounds of produce; or 196,000 meals. Again, our small staff of one full-time, and three part-time employees clearly could not have accomplished this without the army that God brought together to bring victory in an otherwise difficult year. Thank you!!!

As 2020 comes to an end, we are reflecting on all we have accomplished together and looking forward to what 2021 will bring. Our plans are big because we serve a God who enables us to do so much for others. **Here's a quick snapshot of what is on the horizon for 2021:**

- Add an operations manager to our staff
- Purchase a refrigerated truck (we have raised \$50k towards the \$70k that we need)
- Launch a Community Seed Bank program
- Begin our urban food forest / edible landscape
- Expand our FoodShare partnerships to reach more Spartanburg communities
- Offer FoodShare cooking classes through the partnership of: Joe R. Utley Heart Resource Center, AHA, Clemson SNAP-Ed, Spartanburg Food System Coalition, Ruth's Gleanings, FoodShare Spartanburg, FoodShare South Carolina

We want to be prepared to say our "Best Yes" to every opportunity to serve and feed the nutritionally impoverished in Spartanburg with the most nutritional and impactful foods available. Our partnerships within the local food system, health community, faith community, nonprofit community, and individuals like you make this possible. I invite you to be a part of the work we are doing to meet our goals, and beyond what we can dream or imagine. **Here are some ways you can make an impact:**

- Sign up for our newsletter at ruthsgleanings.com
- Spread the word to friends and family to get more people involved
- Sign up to volunteer at ruthsgleanings.com/volunteer
- Sign up your family, corporate team or church group to pack food boxes
- Give a year-end donation to Ruth's Gleanings
- Pray for us and those we serve

"I love the boxes—I use all the fruits and veggies. They were fresh—like just picked. I love this program!"

Program Participant

Please consider a financial donation to help us accomplish our 2021 goals and beyond. You may give securely online at ruthsgleanings.com/donate. Your continued support of our ministry makes it possible for us to accomplish our mission as we empower people in nutritional poverty by increasing access to fresh, healthy food. For that, we are grateful!

Tonja Smith, Founder & Executive Director