

General Manager's Report



Pete Wierenga

This summer at Niagara Christian Gleaners (NCG) was busy in many ways—probably busier than first anticipated. Our Produce Acquisition Team was advised early on to expect some mid summer challenges with produce supply. Fortunately that did not materialize for us and we were blessed with a steady flow of good produce. We continue to develop strong food donor relations that help us plan effectively—many thanks to them for the support we are receiving.

With this being our first summer in production, it was interesting to see things develop. We had a number of high school students come out and help regularly. The energy and enthusiasm these kids brought to the mix was really quite exciting. Often we would have up to three generations working together. Grandparents working alongside children and grandchildren—what a joy to see! It most definitely is a unique feature of volunteering at NCG—a service opportunity that involves a range of ages, skills, and abilities. Best wishes to the students who are back at their studies.

By July we had managed to work through our barreled inventory and now all of our dried produce is packaged almost immediately. At one point we had over 2 million servings in inventory ready to ship as needed. The inventory quantity shifted quickly as we prepared a significant shipment for Eswatini (formerly Swaziland).



That shipment alone was close to 650,000 servings. In this case we were happy to partner with Hope and Healing International (www.hopeandhealing.org) and the Luke's Commission (www.lukecommission.org) to provide this much needed aid for people suffering from HIV Aids and Tuberculosis. This small country in Africa has one of the highest rates of HIV and TB inflictions in the world.

The aid shipment that we sent to Pignon, Haiti in May finally arrived just in time for the start of their school session. Our food aid is part of the school nutrition programs that feed over 1000



children a day. For many of these children it's likely the only meal they may have in a day. We have received requests from other Christian organizations for our dried produce. We are prayerfully considering these requests on a case-by-case manner and seek to bless as many hungry, hurting people as possible in Christ's name.

I'm sure you can sense with me that God is at work in and through NCG. We've been blessed in countless ways and lives are being touched. Often in our morning devotions at the Gleaners, scripture effectively reminds us that God is sovereign and that He is ordaining this mission as a conduit of His mercy and love. Our prayer is that the work done at NCG is an offering of praise, worthy and acceptable to Him!

Food Donor Profile



Pete recently had a phone interview with Nathan Streef, one of the owners of Streef Produce Ltd. He first met Nathan early last spring at their production plant in Princeton, ON and was amazed at their operation. Streef Produce have been generous food donors to both Ontario Christian Gleaners (OCG), Cambridge, ON as well as Niagara Christian Gleaners (NCG). In fact, Streef Produce donated over 175,000 lbs of potatoes and sweet potatoes to NCG since our December 1, 2018 production start date!

PW: "Nathan please tell our readership a bit about your family business."

Nathan: "Streef Produce Ltd currently farms more than 3000 acres in Southwestern Ontario. The business had humble beginnings and began with 5 brothers growing vegetables on a 7 acre piece of property. Since then the ownership has changed to include 3 sets of cousins and two dads."

PW: "What are your main crops and how do you market your produce?"

Nathan: "Our product mix looks like this: Asparagus, Green Beans, Potatoes, Sweet Potatoes. Soybeans and Corn are grown as crop rotators. Additionally we distribute produce from other growers as a way of accenting our product line for our clients. All of our products are routed through the Ontario Food Terminal where we service a range of clients from the small market retailer to the large grocery store chains."

PW: "What are your challenges when it comes to your surplus produce? What have been the trends over time?"





Nathan: "Essentially the core challenge with surplus produce is the grading expectations and how they affect what is classified #1 product vs #2 product. The consumer (and then the correlating produce buyer) has demanded nearly perfect produce. Anything less than perfect now becomes a #2 Grade. The trend over time has been that these tolerances have become tighter. The net result is more #2 Graded product with limited markets and options for it. Another noticeable trend with the consumer is that families are eating less home cooked meals than before and, instead, tend to buy ready-to-eat meals or packaged meals that may or may not include vegetables."

PW: "Without organizations like the Gleaners what are your options for the #2 or culled produce?"

Nathan: "Our options are limited for sure. Often it goes to cattle farmers for feed or discarded - both with little or no return. Because our crops are grown specifically as table food there really is no meaningful market for the surplus produce."

PW: "What has partnering with OCG and NCG meant for Streef Produce?"

Nathan: "We're thrilled to be part of an amazing ministry that is helping curb this food waste and meet need worldwide. At Streef we're food producers first and when we're facing these surplus challenges it's great to have a workable solution that makes a difference in people's lives. We wish we never had to dispose of good, edible, nutritious food and so the Gleaners provide us with an option. We've always had a heart for missions and have been involved in mission trips to Haiti where we have witnessed first hand the challenges that Haiti and other developing countries face. When we see the packages of dried food feeding hungry people it warms our hearts."

PW: "Nathan- on behalf of NCG, I thank you and your team at Streef Produce Ltd for the support we have received. We do view this mission as essentially a partnership with producers like yourselves who think about us with your surplus produce. We couldn't accomplish this without you. Blessings to you all!"



this mission is amazing. When Pete showed us the picture of the cooking pot of a Haitian family that had our produce in it, it became such an emotional moment for me and I'm sure for all the volunteers. We really are "feeding the hungry".

I also must say that the social part of volunteering at NCG is a vital part of what I love and crave. My gleaner partner, Sylvia Land and I, set up the Fellowship Room as part of our skill set, and find the "coffee break" to be very important to the happiness of the volunteers. The conversation flows and the fellowship is beautiful and the best part is when Pete or Rick quiet us down and we get updates and have devotions together. Then I feel like part of this song that says, "We are One in the Spirit, We are one in the Lord."

Fundraising Report

With much thankfulness, we can report that the Strawberry Social was well attended and enjoyed by all. This event raised \$18,850! Our next major fundraising event will be our 2 dinners in 2020. Save the date, D.V., for **March 27 and 28, 2020**. More information will follow regarding this popular event. Please remember Niagara Christian Gleaners in your year end giving. Or perhaps you would consider monthly withdrawals from your bank account; this is a great option to help with our ongoing monthly expenses. We appreciate your financial support in any amount!

Board Report

We are quickly approaching the one year anniversary of being in full operation at NCG! A new start up always comes with its own challenges but we see that our Lord God uses these challenges to teach us and provide blessings that we did not anticipate. We have a great team of volunteers who joy in their work and fellowship with each other. Produce over the summer has been plentiful and of great quality from our grower partners. More ministries are applying every month for food to meet the needs in the corner of the world where God has placed them.



There is no shortage of produce or of requests for nutrition, however, we can always use more volunteers to process needed sustenance for our brothers and sisters in need. Every volunteer adds over 200 servings of food to our output each day. If you are able to help out, even if very occasionally, others will be blessed even as you will experience His blessing!

Volunteer Profile



Evelyn Dam (Right)

I look forward to volunteering at NCG at least once a week. I ask myself, "Why do I love being here? What makes me and so many other volunteers want to clean up produce that would end up in land fill if we do not process them? What's it all about?"

It's about people getting together with a common goal- to feed the hungry, but it also fills a need for us to find purpose. To know we are making a difference in countries where the children are malnourished, where mothers can't feed their children vegetables and fruit because they do not have the means to get them. To be part of

"And God is able to make all grace abound to you, so that always having all sufficiency in everything, you may have an abundance for every good deed." 1 CORINTHIANS 9:8

PRE-AUTHORIZED DEBIT FORM FOR NIAGARA CHRISTIAN GLEANERS

Name _____ Address _____ City _____

Prov _____ Postal Code _____ Phone (_____) _____ Email _____

Donation Information: Monthly Donation Pledge: \$ _____ Donation taken each 15th day starting _____ Month _____

Authorization: I/we hereby authorize you to debit my/our account each month in the amount shown above and for such amount to be payable to Niagara Christian Gleaners. Your treatment of each payment shall be the same as if I/we had personally issued a cheque authorizing you to pay as indicated and to debit my/our account accordingly. This authorization may be cancelled at any time upon written notice by me/us.

Date _____ Authorized Signatory _____ **Please include a void cheque along with your form.