CROS Ministries Gleaning Program Volunteer Packet

Welcome to the CROS Ministries Gleaning Program

Thank you for your interest in volunteering with CROS Ministries!

By joining our gleaning program, you're helping rescue fresh produce that might otherwise go to waste and providing it to families, seniors, individuals with disabilities, and others facing food insecurity throughout our community.

This guide will help you understand what gleaning is, how to sign up, what to bring, and what to expect in the field.

What Is Gleaning?

Gleaning is a food recovery program of CROS Ministries.

Local farmers donate fresh fruits and vegetables that cannot be sold or are left behind after harvest. While this produce may not meet retail standards, it is still nutritious and perfectly good to eat.

Volunteers help harvest this produce, and CROS Ministries works with food pantries, meal programs, and community partners throughout Palm Beach and Martin Counties to distribute it at no cost to those in need.

Simply put:

Farmers donate.
Volunteers help harvest.
Families receive fresh food.

How to Get Involved

1. <u>Weekly Gleaning Emails</u>

Every Monday, we send an email with upcoming gleaning opportunities for the following week. Participation is always optional. If you would like to unsubscribe, email: **Robynne Ryals -** rryals@crosministries.org

2. <u>Sign Up Online</u>

Visit our SignUp Genius page to view and reserve volunteer spots:
https://www.signupgenius.com/go/70A044DAEAC2FA7FB6-59250287-2025

Please note:

- Locations may change depending on crop availability.
- Final directions are typically sent on Wednesday for weekend events.

3. <u>Contact Robynne Directly</u>

Questions? Looking for a specific date?

Robynne Ryals, Gleaning Program Director
rryals@crosministries.org
561-713-4317

Before You Glean

Before attending any gleaning event:

✓ **Review This Packet -** Please review these guidelines with everyone in your group.

✓ **Complete a Liability Waiver**

- Every volunteer must sign a waiver for each event.
- Group leaders and supervising adults must also complete a waiver.
- Volunteers under 18 must have a waiver signed by a parent or guardian.
- Bring completed waivers with you and give them to CROS staff at check-in.

✓ **Bring the Essentials -** Encourage all members of your group to bring their own supplies.

Please bring:

- Water
- Work gloves
- Hat
- Sunscreen
- Bug spray

Weather Notice

All gleaning events are weather dependent. Unsafe field conditions may require an event to be canceled or rescheduled.

Gleaning Rules

We are guests on private property. Please help us maintain our excellent relationships with local farmers.

Respect the Property

- Leave the field cleaner than you found it.
- Do not leave trash, water bottles, gloves, or personal items behind.

Supervision Requirements

- Volunteers under 18 must be accompanied by a supervising adult.
- Elementary, middle, and high school students must remain supervised at all times.
- High school students age 18 and older still require supervision while participating as part of a school group.

Follow Instructions

Only harvest in designated areas and follow directions from:

- CROS staff
- Field supervisors
- The Gleaning Program Director

Child Safety

- Children must be at least 5 years old to participate.
- Children ages 5-6 must remain within arm's reach of a supervising adult.

Safety First - Volunteers who do not follow safety rules may be asked to leave the event.

For your safety:

- Do not climb trees.
- Do not climb fences.
- Do not ride in the back of moving vehicles.
- Stay away from farm equipment.
- Stay away from canals and roadways.
- Do not picnic or remain in the parking area after the gleaning event has ended.

No Pets

Pets are not allowed in gleaning fields. This is both a safety issue and a food safety requirement.

Helpful Tips for the Field

Wear Appropriate Clothing

- Dress in layers.
- Long sleeves and pants are recommended for cool mornings.
- Corn leaves can be sharp, so long pants are strongly recommended in cornfields.

Wear Closed Shoes - Closed-toe, closed heel shoes are required.

Not permitted:

- Flip-flops
- Sandals
- Heels
- Crocs

Be Prepared - Most fields do not have restroom facilities available.

- Wear a hat.
- Use sunscreen.
- Bring bug spray.
- Use the restroom before arriving.

Important Allergy Notice

Mangoes are part of the **poison ivy family**. Anyone with a mango or poison ivy sensitivity should avoid mango gleaning events.

Frequently Asked Questions

When will I know where we are gleaning? Final directions are typically sent by email on Wednesday for the upcoming weekend's events.

Can I choose where we glean? Not always. We harvest crops that are available when and where they are ready. Sometimes this requires volunteers to travel farther to prevent fresh produce from being wasted.

Are there bathrooms in the fields? No. Please plan accordingly before arriving.

What time are gleaning events? Most gleaning events run: **8:30 a.m. - 11:30 a.m.** Please arrive **20-25 minutes early** for check-in. Events may end earlier if all available produce has been harvested.

Typical Gleaning Schedule

For the complete schedule, visit our SignUp Genius page.

Wednesdays & Fridays

- Large school, corporate, and community groups
- Smaller groups may join when space allows
- Arrive before 9:30 a.m.
- Typically in Boynton Beach, Delray Beach, and Belle Glade

Thursdays

- Primarily Belle Glade
- Volunteers must be 13 years or older

Saturdays

- Multiple events throughout Palm Beach, Martin, and Hendry Counties
- Open to individuals and groups

Sundays

- Primarily Boynton Beach and Delray Beach areas

June - August

Mango Season

- Lantana locations
- 8:00 a.m. - 11:00 a.m.
- **Mango allergy warning applies**

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Gleaning & Faith

Gleaning has been used for thousands of years as a way to help feed those in need.

"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 the foreigner. I am the Lord your God." **Leviticus 19:9-10**

Additional references:

- Deuteronomy 24:19-22
- Ruth 2

Thank You

Every box packed, every crop harvested, and every volunteer hour donated helps provide fresh, healthy food to our neighbors in need.

Thank you for being part of our gleaning village.

Together, we're rescuing food, reducing waste, and fighting hunger throughout South Florida.

About CROS Ministries

CROS Ministries
3677 23rd Avenue South, Suite B-101
Lake Worth Beach, FL 33461

561-233-9009
www.crosministries.org

CROS Ministries has a 48-year legacy of trusted service and leadership in the fight against hunger in Palm Beach and Martin Counties. Its mission is to provide food to people who are hungry and food insecure through community partnerships. With boots on the ground six days a week, CROS works to ensure access to healthy food for all in need. Its programs include community food pantries, hot meal services, and gleaning initiatives that recover fresh produce from local farms.

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