

All Are Welcome

For most of us, fresh produce is readily available. Grocery store aisles overflow with fruits and vegetables harvested from farms across the country. But the people who plant, pick, and pack that food don't always know where their next meal will come from.

That's why your support of the Society of St. Andrew matters so deeply to partners like Dos Santos Food Pantry.

Dos Santos primarily serves immigrant communities on the Eastern Shore of Virginia, including Haitian and Hispanic families, as well as many senior citizens and other under-served neighbors. These are families who often live and work quietly in their community, sustaining the agricultural economy while facing rising food costs, unstable employment, and fear about where they are truly welcome.

At Dos Santos, they are welcome.

"Whatever I can do to help people feel comfortable and accepted, I'm happy to do that," says Betty Mariner, who leads the pantry. A former ESL teacher, Betty brings both compassion and cultural awareness to her work, helping families who have moved from other countries feel safe and seen.

That sense of trust is everything for Dos Santos. Dos Santos doesn't advertise its services through billboards or mailers, just word of mouth in the community. Neighbors tell neighbors about a place where they can find what they need. Betty and Jean Siers (SoSA's Regional Director in Delmarva) cannot even remember how they found each other; they both say they just heard about each other.

Since opening a thrift store in 2022, Dos Santos has gained greater visibility

and expanded its food pantry reach, now distributing around 800 food boxes each month, serving 3,500 people. That's 200 packages every week for families in need. Recently, they transitioned from pre-packed bags to a "shop-style" pantry, allowing families to choose the foods that best meet their needs. The change followed community feedback: some Haitian families didn't need masa, while many Hispanic families did.

And for a long time, the only fresh produce available at Dos Santos came from the Society of St. Andrew. Since 2023, SoSA has shared 56,000 servings of produce with Dos Santos!

Thanks to you, SoSA's rescued fruits and vegetables fill boxes and shelves, bringing nourishment to people who spend their lives harvesting food for others. While Dos Santos now also receives produce from a local food bank, SoSA's partnership laid the foundation for distributing produce. Fresh food belongs in every household, regardless of income or ethnicity!

**"Whatever I can do to help people feel comfortable and accepted, I'm happy to do that."
—Betty Mariner**

Your impact reaches Dos Santos in another powerful way each summer through SoSA's Harvest of Hope mission work-camp program. Teen campers who attend Harvest of Hope on the Eastern Shore spend their

mornings gleaning produce from fields, then arrive in the afternoons to deliver that food directly to Dos Santos. Their help is invaluable as they assist Betty with tasks around Dos Santos.



Betty Mariner of Dos Santos Food Pantry (pictured talking to Harvest of Hope campers in the photo above) works to ensure that the very families sustaining Virginia's agricultural economy have fresh produce on their own tables. Through Harvest of Hope and gleaning on the Delmarva peninsula, Dos Santos has received over 56,000 servings of fresh produce to share with neighbors in need.

Your gifts do more than just rescue produce. They extend to trusted community partners who serve their communities in culturally-specific ways. Every neighbor deserves dignity and care; Dos Santos ensures that residents of the Eastern Shore have exactly what they need to thrive. ■





I ♥ Sosa