

Operation Food Search Creates Gleaning Partnership with Eckert's Nonprofit to Work With Family Farm

April 13 2021 2:05 PM



ST. LOUIS - Operation Food Search (OFS), a non-profit hunger relief organization, recently announced a new gleaning partnership with Eckert's Belleville Farm located at 951 S. Green Mount Rd. in Belleville, Ill. The family farm will donate peaches and apples from gleaning events to assist OFS's Greater St. Louis Area Gleaning Program, which is in conjunction with the Missouri Coalition for the Environment (MCE).

The gleaning—which involves harvesting or picking up already harvested food that would otherwise be unused—will be conducted by volunteers from US Foods, a restaurant supplier for St. Louis and more than 300,000 operations across the country.

The donated gleaned food is then quickly distributed to OFS's network of more than 200 food pantries, shelters and food sites located throughout the bi-state region.

Eckert's Country Store & Farms is the largest family-owned and operated pick-your-own orchard in the U.S. Eckert's Belleville Farm is open year-round and offers seasonal pick-your-own fruit and vegetables. The sixth and seventh generations of the Eckert family operate retail, entertainment, and farming entities in southwestern Illinois.

"Eckert's partnership with Operation Food Search represents a longstanding commitment to help nourish the bodies of those in need, and it's one that we have taken to heart for over 25 years. Previously our Eckert's team members harvested the fruit and worked with Operation Food Search to receive and distribute the donations. We're excited to welcome US Foods team out to Eckert's for the gleaning initiative and are thrilled to continue to provide our homegrown peaches and apples to feed so many in our region," said Eckert's Marketing Director Amanda Morgan.

"US Food is proud to partner with Operation Food Search and Eckert's in their efforts to address food insecurity across St. Louis," said Andy Stein, Area President for US Foods. Eckert's has been a valued partner of US Foods for more than 20 years, and it's an honor to provide them additional support wherever it's needed. US Foods has a longstanding commitment to supporting hunger-relief efforts across the country, and it's a pleasure to be involved in such a wonderful event."

Founded in 1981, Operation Food Search (OFS) is a hunger relief organization located at 1644 Lotsie Blvd. that provides free food, nutrition education and innovative programs proven to reduce food insecurity. With a strategic focus aimed at ending childhood hunger, OFS empowers families and increases access to healthy and affordable food. The agency provides food and services to 200,000 individuals on a monthly basis – one-third of whom are children – through a network of 330 community partners in 27 Missouri and Illinois counties and the city of St. Louis.

To learn more about how farms and volunteers can participate in gleaning efforts, call (314) 726-5355 or visit [Operation Food Search](#).