

## **PRAISE | WORSHIP | SING**

**A special benefit concert for Sus Manos Gleaners**

**Artists include Country Praise, Promise 2, Redeemer Church musicians and combined choir**

**7pm Sat. May 6 at Redeemer Church, 8605 Fulton St E. in Ada**

**No tickets necessary.**

**For more information [www.smgleaners.org](http://www.smgleaners.org)**

### **HE'S GOT THE WHOLE WORLD "IN HIS HANDS"**

Tim Paauw has watched a fledgling idea grow into a sophisticated, faith-based operation that has sent millions of meals to hungry people around the world.

"Our slogan is we have to quiet the rumbling bellies in order for people to hear with their hearts – and their ears – the word of God," he added. And that massive food output comes from right here in Ottawa County's Georgetown Township. Sus Manos (Spanish for "His Hands") incorporated 15 years ago and has grown to fill an 8,000 square foot warehouse for its food preparation and dehydration process.



The dynamics and scope of their all-volunteer effort is amazing. "A three-hour shift here produces about 8,000 meals," he noted of their packages which are sent to overseas ministry partners.

The non-profit Sus Manos will get a boost at a special fundraising concert at 7pm May 6 at Redeemer Church in Ada (see details above).

*Katherine Paauw and son Evan work on dehydrated potatoes to be sent to Syria.*

### **THE FOOD STORY**

The whole idea came from a mission trip in 2004. Tim and his nutritionist-doctor father Jim Paauw took their church youth group to a gleaner's ministry on an orchard in British Columbia, Canada. Taking in surplus fruit and vegetables from area farms, the volunteers prepared them for dehydration to be mixed together in bags and sent out to mission organizations. "We realized the impact and said.... we should do this closer to home," Tim recalled.

But his research found no other place in the country doing similar work.

The challenge came to them: with plenty of area farms and a good volunteer spirit, why not try to start something here? The slow-starting venture hit plenty of bumps... but with a donated warehouse and then a trailer to bring excess food from area farms, they got things going.

Key was a grant from an area business which required matching from community donations. That's when family friend Dr. Randy Baker and his musical associates stepped in to host a fundraising concert. That event eight years ago helped enable Sus Manos to buy its first dehydration oven. And now this concert on May 6 will help again as they are running at capacity and may need to expand.



## THE FOOD TECHNIQUE

Here's the Sus Manos process: volunteers unload the produce from trailers and put them through a large vegetable washer. Then they are passed to a chopping area, where bad spots are removed. From there they go into a commercial "dicer" machine. "We bought that used from Campbell Soup," Paauw noted of the precision unit run by specially trained volunteers. It's also a powerful one.

"I could throw a mallet in there, and it would dice it into cubes."

The resulting food slices or pieces are placed down firmly onto trays. "That's the patty-cake station...the flatter the better," he smiled.

Flattened food trays slide into large, wheeled racks which roll into the industrial, garage-sized oven for a long, slow bake overnight. The efficiency is shown in statistics. The process retains 99 percent of the nutrition, while removing 100 percent of the water content. The products' shelf life is almost indefinite, and the shipping weight is greatly reduced. A favorite is apples. When sliced and dried they become "apple chips" and can be eaten as is. "Other foods take a bit to make something out of them," Paauw said of items such as dried soup mixes.



*Crates of produce are trailered from area farms.*



*Dehydrated soup mixes are a Sus Manos staple.*

## WORKING TOGETHER

Paauw and associates learned that many area farms have excess crop that they cannot sell because it doesn't meet contract standards.... for appearance or other reasons. And even area food banks may not be able to use it because of certification rules. That's where Sus Manos comes in. Incredibly, they take in thousands of pounds of food daily to be prepped and sent overseas.

And that's year-round. "Some farmers harvest beets and root veggies in the winter," Paauw said. "And many of the orchards and farms we partner with have refrigeration so produce lasts longer into the year."

The organization has made strong connections with ministries in Haiti where the food need is great. The small island nation has long been known as the poorest in the western hemisphere. "We lease land there through a partnership, so we have a hub and staging area," Paauw said of the troubled nation where theft and kidnapping are all too common.

After the Ukraine-Russian war began last year, Sus Manos joined with the international agency Barnabas Aid to send more than a million meals.

"So many of the people there are living in churches because their homes have been bombed," he reported. "So, the meals were sent there, with some of them actually delivered to troops on the front line."

When an earthquake hit southern Turkey and northern Syria in February, that same partnership allowed Sus Manos to send a million meals to that hurting region. All of this with only one paid employee, a part-time executive director who works out of her Jenison home. The rest are all volunteers.



## BUOYED BY MUSIC

The upcoming concert is under the direction of Ginger Pasma, Redeemer Church's music coordinator. She did the same for the original 2015 concert, and this one features some of the same performing groups, including a combined choir.

"It's really special to pull so many people together, and I love the variety the evening will offer with both listening and singing," Pasma said of the audience experience. The evening kicks off with the joyous contemporary anthem, "House of the Lord." But there also will be some of the

more traditional hymns such as "Abide With Me." Randy Baker will be at the keyboards with his old gospel group Country Praise, which includes the singing Suwyn brothers.

Baker's adult daughters Arielle and Courtney will rejoin Pasma's daughters Hailey and Taylor, reprising their days as a girls quartet. Pasma estimates the combined choir will feature approximately 50 voices. "With everyone singing along with harmonies, we are looking forward to an awesome night of Praise and Worship to our Great God!"



*Moms and student volunteers from Zeeland Christian School give the sign of Sus Manos – His Hands.*