

*17 gleanings
folder*

Metro area gleaning cooperation is "putting it all together" in a four-county area of Oregon. The elements are senior citizens, the handicapped, low-income families, farmers with leftover crops, community service and government agencies, and the old-time "helping hands" principal.

Under the program, local farmers are asked to donate what they have left after commercial harvest is completed. The crops are picked by people with marginal income and shared with handicapped and elderly citizens. The gleaned items involve surplus from gardens, weather-damaged crops, late-ripening items on plants, misshapen products and items that are of non-marketable quality, size or condition.

The gleaning program began when Monika Belcher of the Washington County Community Action Organization of Hillsboro, Ore., took the idea from agency to agency to try to stir interest. In 1973, a committee was formed, and the program grew rapidly and guidelines were established. Some 125 households benefited from the gleaning program's first year.

By 1976, the program served 3,290 people in 1,129 households. In-store value of donated produce was estimated at about \$102,000.