

Stan Curtis's Dream

Stan Curtis will be initiated as the 2011



Our 2011 National Honorary Initiate Stan Curtis is founder of USA Harvest, a nonprofit that moves food from those who have too much to those who have too little.

Stan Curtis started his adult life as a professional tennis player touring the world. After retiring from tennis, he then entered the world of investment and finance. During that new career, he founded Kentucky Harvest in 1987, which led to the founding of USA Harvest, a national organization, in 1989. USA Harvest focuses on “food-raising,” not fund-raising, and moves food from those who have too much to those who have much too little.

Standing in line at his favorite local cafeteria one night, Curtis noticed a worker remove a tray that still had green beans in it and replace it with a new one. After dinner, Curtis asked the manager what happened to the green beans and learned that the cafeteria liked to keep the trays steaming hot, so they replaced the beans even though they were still edible. According to health department laws, once food has been removed from a steam table, it can't be put back and is thrown away. Curtis read an article three days later that named Louisville as one of America's leading cities in the growth of their

homeless population. Still upset about the waste of food at the cafeteria, the idea occurred to Curtis that the homeless could use a few green beans—and Kentucky Harvest was born.

From the start, Kentucky Harvest has had a very unusual, but simple, premise: take no money, take food. When Curtis first announced the new organization, he had more than 100 phone calls on the first day. The majority wanted to volunteer (Curtis had said not to send money, it would be sent back) while 20 more wanted to donate food and six needed food. In the first year alone, Kentucky Harvest collected more than 750,000 pounds of food.

On Thanksgiving Day in 1988, Ann Landers published a letter titled “Louisville Feeds Its Own” sharing the story of Kentucky Harvest in national newspapers. More than 5,000 people called from around the world to ask if they could start the program in their town. At the time, Kentucky Harvest had no paid staff and Curtis still worked full time as an investment banker. This made answering phones a challenge, but Curtis and his friends somehow managed.



Curtis meets with a group of students after receiving their new backpacks. The backpacks are sent home Friday filled with food and returned Monday for the next weekend.

USA Harvest was born soon after the Ann Landers column, quickly growing to become the largest all-volunteer food distribution organization in America. Harvest volunteers pick-up surplus food from restaurants, hospitals and food suppliers and deliver it to missions, soup kitchens and people in need. It's a very simple and passionate concept that people can really relate to and USA Harvest now has more than 125,000 volunteers in more than 130 cities.

And because hunger doesn't take the weekends off, Curtis also founded Blessings in a Backpack in 2005, a nonprofit organization feeding more than 37,500 children. The unique program began with two schools and now reaches more than 200. It is designed to feed elementary school children whose families qualify for the Federal Free and Reduced Price Meal program on the weekends for only \$80 per year. Every Friday, students receive their backpacks with staples that require little to no preparation and they return with their backpacks on Monday ready to learn.

Local community members and entertainers alike support USA Harvest and Blessings in a Backpack. The Goo Goo Dolls, Hillary Duff, Miley Cyrus, Neil Diamond, Bill Cosby and the Rolling Stones have all helped raise food donations and visited local schools, raising awareness for these programs. In addition, Curtis has appeared on numerous radio and television shows throughout America including *Larry King Show*, Reverend Robert

Makes a Difference

National Honorary Initiate Thursday, August 11

Schuler's *Hour of Power*, Tom Snyder on CNBC and the CBS television series *How'd They Do That?!* Also, Stan has been featured on MTV in the documentary *Rock in America and The American Way*.

He has also received numerous awards for his work with USA Harvest and Blessings in a Backpack. In 2008, he received the Tree of Life Foundation International Global Heart Award and the internationally recognized "Lewis Hines" award for his contributions to programs that affect the health and well-being of children.

House. Additionally, he was recognized with the National Caring Institute's *Caring Award* for being one of America's most caring and giving citizens and the *America's Award*, or the *Nobel Prize for Goodness*, which recognizes American heroes who personify the American character and spirit.

In addition to his work with USA Harvest, Curtis serves on many boards of directors, including those of *USA Today's Make A Difference Day* and the Heart of America Foundation.

Join us August 11 in Louisville when we welcome Stan Curtis as our 2011 National Honorary Brother! ▲

In 1997, President Bill Clinton presented Curtis with the nation's most prestigious volunteer award, *The President's Volunteer Action Award*, in a Rose Garden ceremony at the White



Curtis speaks at the inauguration of Blessings in a Backpack, a program that feeds low-income students on the weekend.

Climbing the Congress Ladder

The many boxes of archives at Delta Sigma Pi Central Office house an assortment of trinkets and treasures from over 100 years of Deltasig history. Past Grand Chapter Congress souvenirs are among the most cherished. A tradition that coincides with Congress is the official ladder. Each rung of the ladder displays the location and year of a Grand Chapter Congress, recognizing those individuals who are loyal GCC attendees.

Many would be surprised to find out that ladders were not introduced until the 36th GCC in New Orleans in 1987 as a way to recognize brothers who had attended many Congresses over

the years. Golden Council Member Bob Hughes, *Pennsylvania*, was presented with ladders from the GCC's he had previously attended starting with the 14th GCC in Chicago in 1942. This summer will be his 32nd GCC! The Fraternity also ordered extra ladders from past GCC's so other long-term attendees could be recognized.

How long is your ladder? To purchase rungs or a headbar for the upcoming or past GCC's, visit www.dspnet.org. They will also be available in Louisville. As the years go by, the ladders serve as a reminder of our bond at Congress. ▲



Bob Hughes and his wife, 2009 National Honorary Initiate Arlene, at the 2009 GCC in Washington, D.C.