

Martha's Kitchen delivers lovingly made meals

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Since March 2002, volunteers have gathered every other Monday in the Church of the Good Shepherd's kitchen on Jacksboro Pike. They efficiently prepare 25-52 meals to deliver to friends and neighbors, the sick and the lonely.

"We don't limit it to someone who is sick," said volunteer Nancy Griffith. "Just someone who needs our love and attention."

Some recipients are on the church's sick list. "Over 50 percent of our recipients are our neighbors

and friends, not our parishioners," said co-organizer Melinda Davis.

"We make a master menu twice a year for the next six months," said Roz Yenser. "People sign up to do different parts of the menu. A separate group does dessert."

Volunteers shop for ingredients, cook the food at home, and then meet in the church kitchen to assemble the full meal and add dessert to the delivery bag. Assembly usually takes no more than two hours.

Previous meals have included baked spaghetti, chicken and dress-

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Nancy Griffith, one of the Martha's Kitchen organizers, checks on meal packaging supplies. ALI

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ing, salmon patties, beef stew and lasagna. Side dishes such as beet salad, squash casserole, baked apples and bread are added. In January they often make Hoppin' John Beans and cheese biscuits. Any leftovers are stashed in the church's freezer for an emergency situation, such as a sudden hospital visit, a death or injury.

The program is named after a Bible story where two sisters, Mary and Martha, are visited by Jesus. "Jesus comes to visit their house and Mary wants to talk to Jesus, while Martha wants to be in the kitchen," said Davis.

Martha's Kitchen is completely funded by donations, sales of their cookbooks and specific food items - such as chicken salad and their July 4th "As American as Apple Pie" pie sales. Parishioners contributed their favorite recipes to the currently sold out cookbook.

"We deliver food to an elderly couple in their 90s," said Davis. "She only eats our food and said she just wanted us to deliver to her every day."

Another time, Davis said, one of the volunteers was dropping off a meal to a 92-year-old man who was up on the roof cleaning out the gutters. "We called his daughter and told her where he was," she said.

"We deliver food to people that are always so appreciative, they are almost in tears and don't expect it," said Yenser.

"It's more than the food, it's just the fact that they are acknowledged," said Davis. "For some people we may be the only person they see for days," added Griffith.

At the core of the program, there are 10 volunteers. "Not everybody can make it every time, so this takes the pressure off if life happens," explained Davis.

"We started recruiting deliverers, because after we had cooked we were done," she said. "A separate delivery crew means we have the time and energy to spend some time with a person if they want it."

"We want other people to realize that you can do a simple thing and have it make a difference," said Davis. "It doesn't have to be a major endeavor."



Before the Martha's Kitchen volunteers leave to make deliveries, they gather in the Church of the Good Shepherd's kitchen. From left: Nan Harless, Nancy Griffith, Melinda Davis, Cheryl Snell, Sue Kluck, Roz Yenser, Janice Wade and Mary Lou Jones. PHOTOS BY ALI JAMES/SHOPPER NEWS



Cheryl Snell, left, and Sue Kluck add some color to each meal with raw vegetables.



Three volunteers take turns making desserts. This week, it was the baker with a fondness for cupcake decorating, according to Nancy Griffith.