

McKinney

The Dallas Morning News

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Turkey Day touchdown

Community groups team up to feed 700 people from D-FW area

BY BREE CUSH

Dallas Cowboys tight end Martellus Bennett knows the importance of Thanksgiving tradition and family. And although the second-year player from Texas A&M spent Thanksgiving Day on the field at Cowboys Stadium, Bennett resolved to make this day special for more than 700 people from across the Dallas-Fort Worth area.

Partnering with the Salvation Army in McKinney, Bennett's Truly Blessed Foundation fed more than 80 families, providing a full-course Thanksgiving Day traditional meal prepared by Atlanta-based chef and caterer Laurie McGhee and several chefs from the Dallas area.

The families were served at their tables at the Salvation Army location on Wilson Creek Parkway, complete with a Thanksgiving turkey for each family in attendance.

"Thanksgiving has always been a special holiday for my family," said Bennett, 22. "It's also a very important day for the Cowboys, so having my family come here, making the adjustment to traditional Thanksgiving is a blessing."

After the doors opened at 10:30 a.m., an opening prayer from the Rev. Laride Conerly of Light of Life Ministries in McKinney kicked off the feast. Guests were encouraged to stay and watch the game, as the Cowboys defeated the Oakland Raiders, 24-7, at Cowboys Stadium in Arlington.

Bennett said it's an honor to be a Cowboy and that gives him perspective on the unique position he is in to positively impact others.

"The work the Salvation Army does for the community provides an opportunity for Truly Blessed to get involved in some of the great works they've already been doing for years," he said.

Michael Bennett Sr., who traveled from Houston to attend the event with his wife Pennie Bennett, also recognized that the dedication of the community was integral to the success of the event, noting that without the help of so many people, such a success would not have been possible.

"People came out in the days before Thanksgiving, working well into the night for several days setting up and donating items," Bennett Sr. said. "No egos, just hard work, because they understood the cause was for the greater good of our community."

Bree Cush contributes to neighborsgo on behalf of Truly Blessed Foundation.



Many sponsors and volunteers donated prepared side dishes and their time on both Thanksgiving eve and Thanksgiving Day to serve the community.



Pennie Bennett shakes hands with a guest, while the Rev. Laride Conerly looks on. Each table at the event received a turkey and the guests were encouraged to wear Dallas Cowboys attire for the game-watching party.



Michael Bennett Sr., Martellus Bennett's father and vice president of Truly Blessed Foundation, checks on featured chef Laurie McGhee of Atlanta. Chefs from the Art Institute of Dallas, Suze Restaurant, Del Frisco's and Nick and Sam's also prepared and donated dishes in large quantities for the event.

About Truly Blessed Foundation

The Martellus Bennett Truly Blessed Foundation is a non-profit organization established in 2008 to provide assistance to families in need. The first priority of Martellus and his staff is to help those who

have found themselves in unfortunate circumstances. The foundation has the ability to give back and bless those in the community by providing changes in the lives of families emotionally and financially.

MORE INFO

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