

Born Again Grillers serve heaping helping of hospitality

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Gatesville's Born Again Grillers, a community ministry in Gatesville, seeks to share Christ's love through cooking,

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GATESVILLE—Some people say, "The way to a man's heart is through his

stomach.” David Braziel believes that adage holds true not just in romance, but also in spiritual matters.

Braziel and a team of 15 other volunteers from Coryell Community Church in Gatesville stand ready to feed all they can. Born Again Grillers cook at civic events such as a recent American Heart Association walk, golf tournaments, birthday parties and anniversaries.

Cooking primarily for outdoor events, the grillers prepare hamburgers, hot dogs, chicken, steaks, fajitas, fish, brisket, ribs and sausage. They encourage people to “challenge us with your menu.”

Each time, Braziel gives the people who hold the event an accounting of costs the group has incurred and asks them to recover the costs and then pay whatever they feel the service the group provided was worth. That process has worked well so far, he said.

All the money raised goes directly back into the ministry to either buy food or build equipment, Braziel said.

One of the grills the group uses is circular with a spinning grate. That enables the cooks to prepare up to 200 hamburgers without walking around the circumference of the grill, since it brings the burgers to the cook.

Braziel, who used to cook in competitive events, said the focus of the ministry is to serve others so they might see the love of Christ lived out. The food is the tool the team uses to attract others to give them the opportunity to be a living witness.

That means that the ministry extends far beyond the head grillers—Braziel and Juliana Hankins. The team includes other grillers, workers who prepare the vegetables and other fixings and people who help with administrative details—and every one is crucial to the team’s success, Braziel said.

Hankins' testimony on the team's website, www.bornagaingrillers.com, sums up the attitude of the participants: "I love God, I love people and I love to cook. This is the perfect place for me."

Pastor Walter Davidson said the feeding ministry is just one of the ways the congregation is seeking to let the community know that it is a group of caring people.

"It's often someone's initial introduction to our ministry," he said.

A few weeks ago, the church contracted with a local barbecue restaurant to prepare food for the more than 2,000 employees of the prison system in Gatesville.

The six-day ministry was a little more than what grillers can cook for right now, but that did not stop the team from staffing the serving line with other members of the church.

Coryell Community Church also sponsors Celebrate Recovery groups that meet at the church every Tuesday evening.

"We are healers and heart-menders, helping people put their lives back together," Davidson said.

The congregation's ministries all stem directly from the hearts of its members, he added.

"We're a little different from some churches in that we're a gift-based church," Davidson said. "We don't just put someone in a position but wait until we find someone who is gifted and passionate about an area of ministry. That sometimes means we have to wait a little longer to do some things, but they get done on God's timetable."

Davidson and his wife, Pat, began the church five years ago with 19 people. Now 400 people are a part of the congregation.

The church is building a 23,000-square-foot facility without incurring debt.

“It has been amazing the miracles God has performed,” he said. “This is a miracle church. We see the miracles of transformed lives and also the miracles of God as he works to help us with this building.”

And seeing God at work in and through the lives of people is enough to whet an appetite.

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