



PRICE CHAMBERS / NEWS&amp;GUIDE PHOTOS

Kelly Hammond and Bruce Bollinger cooked hundreds of quarter-pound burgers at MacPhail's on Thanksgiving. Generous Jackson donors helped the restaurant provide a free meal to whomever came through the door.

## Thankful for burgers

MacPhail's feeds 200 people a nontraditional Thanksgiving meal.

By Lindsay Wood

Every wooden table was crowded with people. The smell of fresh pickles and onions permeated the air, and the pop and sizzle of french fry grease whispered in the kitchen.

From 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Thursday, about 200 hungry, homeless or lonely people filed into MacPhail's Burgers for a free Thanksgiving burger feast.

Some had forlorn, gruff faces and kept to themselves. Others talked jubilantly as if that Thanksgiving was the first they'd experienced in years. Mothers and shiny-faced children smacked on quarter-pound cheeseburgers with all the trimmings and sucked down soda with record speed.

The swarm of people MacPhail's was able to feed and the 15 volunteers who helped serve and clean up was something owner Bruce Bollinger was thankful for, he said.

Will Gilliam, who has been in Jackson for six months, said he was just happy for the meal, his sleeping bag and gas in the car he has been sleeping in while looking for work. Gilliam, casting his grayish eyes down at the table, said he struggles with dyslexia, making it hard for him to multitask and keep a job.

Relocating to Jackson has been daunting for Gilliam, but he says he tries not to think about the tough times and just moves forward.

"You don't go hungry here," he said about MacPhail's and the Good Samaritan Mission.

Good will and charitable businesses are not lacking in Jackson. All of the food for MacPhail's nontraditional Thanksgiving lunch was donated by its suppliers, Bollinger said.

All the servers, cooks and bussers gave their time and holiday to work for others. With the recent closing of



Forgoing a cheeseburger, Liam McPeak heads straight for an ice cream desert on a stick as Taylor Bollinger checks in with him and grandfather Bill McPeak.

Teton Steakhouse, many of the volunteers who participated in that restaurant's free Thanksgiving meal signed up to help at MacPhail's.

"It was a nice team effort to serve a hot meal on a day that people should be together," Bollinger said.

TR Pierce, a senior vice president at Bank of Jackson Hole and long-time friend of the Bollinger family, spent his day greeting and handing out burgers. Forgoing any other plans, Pierce said helping out at the restaurant was the only thing he planned for turkey day because it was "a great thing they're doing for the community."

Bank of Jackson Hole's vice president of commercial lending, Dan Buchan, also spent his day as a host, handing out the one-page menus to people and seating them.

For other volunteers, like Cathy O'Shea, it was a way to give back and

be around others on the holiday.

"My children spent the day with their father," she said. "So I decided to do something for the community."

Good Samaritan Mission board member Dale Moyer and his wife, Doris, sat enjoying the sunlight coming through the window at their table while waiting on a burger.

"We're amazed sitting here and seeing the diversity of God's creation," Dale Moyer said. "Each individual is special and unique. It's wonderful of MacPhail's to allow people to come in and have free food. I see people here that I know that really, truly do need it."

Despite Bollinger's protests, \$250 in tips was donated to MacPhail's from people "who wouldn't take no for an answer." He plans to give the money to the Rotary Club of Jackson Hole.