

Benefit

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the presentation of gifts. "People ask me why I'm crying but if you were a parent and you couldn't provide for your kids, you'd understand."

This year's recipients benefitted from the generosity of more than 35 campus organizations and eight community sponsors, explained event co-founder Joevan Palmer, a senior sports management major from Syracuse, N.Y. Though he will soon be graduating, Palmer said he was glad to have the chance to leave behind a philanthropic legacy.

"I've been blessed and fortunate enough to have the things that I have in my life, so I want to give back to others who don't have those things," he said.



Chef Jon Gentry

Boston native Courtney Thompson will take the helm of the celebration - which is presented by the school's Campus Life Marketing Committee, Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity, Inc. and the Campus Activities Board - next year. The Benefit, which increases the number of families it serves each year, holds special meaning for Thompson, a junior, justice studies major. Her own family was once the beneficiary of a similar project.

"I really like helping out the community and this is a great opportunity to do so, and it's just really close to my heart helping out other kids," said the 20-year-old, the third of four children. "I always had a big heart for stuff like that because they helped my mother. It meant a lot because I knew she was struggling."

Junior Class Council president Jayson Dawkins and Junior Class Senator Nick Gilchrist were among the students who adopted families this year. Dawkins, a Charlotte native, said he felt good about contributing to the cause.

"I can't stop smiling," said the political science major. "It's for a great cause."

Gilchrist, a native of Wagram, said participating in the event was simply the right thing to do.

"It's really just reminded me of how



Pamela Moore (left) with her sister Mozzlle Shuff and her two daughters Miracle (bottom row, left) and Maya.



From left: Stewart Esters, Keith Ferguson, Alex Wiggan and Edwin Pellicci serve the meal.



Jayson Dawkins and Nick Gilchrist of the Junior Class Council.

important it is to give back when you can. If you have the opportunity to give back, you should," said the English major. "I'm very excited to see their reactions (to the gifts)."

For Pamela Moore, an employee of Rock-Tenn packing company since 2008, the event was a bright spot in what has been a trying week. Moore, the mother of four children, and her husband had been taking turns camping out at the bedside of her oldest son, who was recently hospitalized with an


infection. On top of that, the family is trying to make ends meet on one salary. Moore's husband is currently out of work.

"It was great to come out here," Moore said as she enjoyed herself at the event.

Jon Gentry, a sous chef for Aramark, one of the event's sponsors, helped to prepare the sumptuous meal the attendees enjoyed. Gentry - a graduate of Second Harvest Food Bank's Triad Community Kitchen program, said he was hopeful the home-style Thanksgiving meal of turkey, greens, macaroni, stuffing, fresh salad and cobbler would help to put smiles on the faces of the families.

"What drove me to cook in the first place was to make sure that somebody has a good day, has a good time. Generally, people tie a great meal with a good experience," explained the 25-year-old. "It's just wonderful to be able to see people that are in a bind still be able to have a good time and be able to push for a brighter day."

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