

FOR THE HOMELESS, ONLY 'THE BEST'

◆ *A SEATTLE COUPLE who have tasted the harder side of life now do 'gourmet cooking for the homeless,' providing weekly meals for 150 without skimping.*

BY BETH KAIMAN

Seattle Times staff reporter

There is no Velveeta here. No powdered cheese. This is a home where peace of mind comes with going the distance.

Steve Bearden has searched the Internet for the tastiest, richest, most comforting macaroni and cheese. Hundreds of recipes were narrowed to 25, and on this afternoon, as Bearden's wife, Margaret Walkky, prepared a side dish for 150 of Seattle's homeless — as part of a menu that already included 60 pounds of chicken and black-eyed peas, corn, cornbread, brownies, hot cinnamon-spiced apple cider and two "Happy Holidays" mocha-almond sheet cakes — the cheddar, provolone, mozzarella and Muenster, not to mention the sour cream and half-and-half, melted and mixed with 10 pounds of macaroni.

"We're trying to make the best food you've ever had in the world," Walkky said. "Our goal is we do gourmet cooking for the homeless. . . . I've never understood that, somehow, how good the food is wouldn't matter as much to someone who is homeless and hungry. It matters more."



TOM REESE / THE SEATTLE TIMES

For Margaret Walkky and her husband, Steve Bearden, every Saturday is a frenzy of cooking for the homeless.

Every Saturday, for more than 1½ years, Bearden and Walkky have cooked hot, elaborate meals for the 100 residents of the roving tent city, now in North Seattle, and 50

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