

Volleyball team volunteers at 'Curt's Kitchen'

BAYTOWN, TX — The Lee College Volleyball Team brought its signature spirit this week to the serving line and dinner tables at Curt's Kitchen, a ministry of Cedar Bayou Grace United Methodist Church that provides a free meal every Wednesday to hundreds of the hungry in Baytown and surrounding communities.

Wearing aprons, plastic gloves and glittering visors, the student-athletes and their coaches joined church volunteers to dish up sausage, beans, buttered noodles, pie and drinks – then spent time posing for photos, signing autographs and personally inviting diners to see the team in action Saturday, Sept. 10, at the Lee College Sports Arena against the Coastal Bend College Cougars. Former-LEE, the Lee College alumni association, will host the free Redzone Tailgate Party for fans before the game.

"It's important to give back to the community that gives us the privilege to coach and play the sport we love," said Head Coach Tracie Johnson, noting how humbled the team felt by the warm reception they received. "What we are doing for them is so small; we gain so much more by being here. It shows the coaches and players how fortunate we are, and I think it will make all of us work even harder in appreciation of what we have."

Nita Davis, who coordinates Curt's Kitchen for Cedar Bayou Grace, said she enjoyed having the team serve and share time with the more than 100 people that come to eat each week at the Coat of Many Colors in Baytown, where the ministry hosts the dinner. The program operates strictly from donations and volunteer support, preparing dinners for crowds that can top 250 patrons.

As diners finished their plates and packed up free canned goods and loaves of bread to take home, the team cleared tables and chatted with Curt's Kitchen children and families.

"I loved it," said Hannah Larsen, a sophomore outside hitter and defensive specialist from Dickinson. "I met new people I wouldn't otherwise have met, and it was special to see how appreciative they were to have us. It helps us remember how much we're blessed."