

Birthday buffet: Woman invites homeles

By **CANDACE BARBOT**
Herald Staff Writer

All that Chris Ladouceur wanted for her 37th birthday Thursday was to serve. That wasn't much of a birthday break. She runs a catering firm.

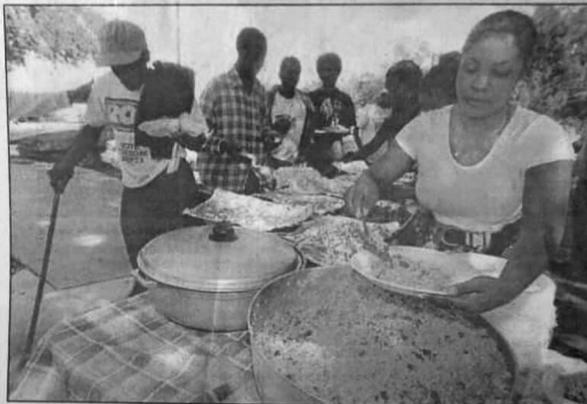
She served 300 hungry, needy people Thursday. She gave them baked turkey, fried chicken, rice and beans, macaroni and cheese, and salad. She paid for the food herself; she and a few friends made the meal.

"The idea just popped into my head," Ladouceur said while feeding 30 in the parking lot of Notre Dame d'Haiti Church, 130 NE 62nd St. in Miami's Little Haiti. "I think about how anyone can be homeless. I know that but for the grace of God, I could be homeless."

Thursday's meal was organized by two Miami police officers — Mariline Penn and Harvey Nairn. They work in the city's Neighborhood Enhancement Team office, 69 NE 62nd St., close to Ladouceur's catering company.

"She came and told us she wanted to do something for the homeless," Nairn said. "We said, 'We'll round them up on your birthday and feed them at Notre Dame d'Haiti.'"

The officers made their rounds. Fifty homeless people were brought to the church.



CANDACE BARBOT / Herald Staff

FREE FOOD: Tommie Gaines, left, was glad to get a meal from Chris Ladouceur, right, in Miami.

"It's delicious. God bless her so that she sees another birthday," said Tommie Gaines, a diner.

After the meal at the church, the officers and Ladouceur's entou-

rage, which included her husband, Robert, went to Camillus House near the Miami Arena. There, they fed another 250 people.

"I don't want to say how much

it cost me or how much time it took me to prepare the meal," Ladouceur said. "What's important is that they enjoyed my special day with me."