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Flavors of home bring Katrinas evacuees peace

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Posted: Sunday, August 27, 2006 12:00 am

Claire Parker Staff writer

Michelle Johnson started cooking Friday night and continued straight through until 5:30 a.m. Saturday, preparing jambalaya, jambalaya pasta and red beans and rice.

She wanted the smells and tastes of Cajun cooking to be a happy reminder to the people who left New Orleans a year ago after Hurricane Katrina.

Mary Flood and Ruth and James McCloud reminisced about the strong scent of Community Coffee, the tangy sting of Louisiana-made hot sauce and the perfect texture of Camellia brand red beans, while the food Johnson prepared was being set up in an corridor at Marketfair Mall.

Good food can bring all kinds of people together, and the gathering gave those displaced by Hurricane Katrina a chance to sample their beloved foods and say thanks to the Fayetteville community for embracing them after the storm.

The past year has seemed like a downward spiral, according to Johnson, but after she moved to Fayetteville, her life was lifted by several helping hands including Joe McGees.

Without him, I would have had to leave again but now I am going to stay here and make Fayetteville my home, Johnson said.

McGee is the head of the GOTDAD organization that has raised money for families like Johnsons.

He helped organize the gathering Saturday, put together a collage of photos from the hurricane and provided prayer cards and balloons that were released to commemorate the anniversary.

Beth and Ricky Froeba held hands with their two sons while they looked at the pictures of distraught families and flooded parishes.

The boys, ages 7 and 4, held balloons and waited patiently for the food.

Ricky Froeba said the memories of the storm are still fresh in all of their minds. The boys remember the winds and the flooding and the youngest still refers to his things being drowned.

They decided to come Saturday, not to relive the tragedy, but just to enjoy the food and relax in the town they now call home.

The McClouds were there for the same reason. The couple is trying to move on from losing everything they had in the storm.

They spent three days in their attic or standing watch on the roof of their flooded house waiting to be rescued.

They have been back to New Orleans five times since the storm to clean up what remains of their home and bring back the little comforts that made The Big Easy so special hot sauce, pickled meat and red beans.

They dont know how to make gumbo around here, James McCloud said with a chuckle. So he picks up the essentials when he is down there.

He is making his new home in Fayetteville a little closer to Louisiana.



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Benson, NC
(<http://www.fayobserver.com/calendar/MULE-DAYS/1441057/2015-09-23T00>)
- WED 23**
Murchison Road Community Farmer...
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- WED 23**
Fall Revival 2015
Friendship Mission... | Fayetteville, NC
(<http://www.fayobserver.com/calendar/REVIVAL-2015/1697375/2015-09-23T19>)
- WED 23**
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