

HUNT.FISH.FEED.

CLUB MEMBERS TREATED WITH 'WILD GAME' DINNER



PETER CURRIER — LOWELL SUN

Members of the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell and their families were treated with a Hunt.Fish.Feed. lunch by the Sportsman Channel and Comcast Sept. 20, 2023. The lunch feature ground venison prepared by Hunt.Fish.Feed. Executive Chef John McGannon.

LOWELL » Members of the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell and their families were treated with a meal featuring meat from wild game Wednesday afternoon as part of the Hunt.Fish.Feed. outreach program from the Sportsman Channel.

Volunteers from Comcast helped Hunt.Fish.Feed. Executive Chef John McGannon prepare and serve 230 meals of ground venison hoagies, egg and rosemary red potato salad, fruit salad and cookies.

Sandy Parks, the senior director of marketing and product for Comcast, said ahead of the dinner that when they were trying to come up with a location for the Hunt.Fish.Feed. lunch this year, she saw an opportunity for cooperation between her company and the club, for which she serves on the board of directors.

“We bring in a chef who can show the kids a different career, along with us wanting them to understand things like sustainability and food and things like that,” said Parks. “So like when people go out and hunt we can show them what happens to it and here is a meal you can eat because of it.”

When hunters go out and suc-



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Hunt.Fish.Feed. Executive Chef and WildEats Enterprises owner John McGannon, right, prepares ground venison sloppy joes with volunteers from Comcast at the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell Sept. 20, 2023 for a lunch for club members and their families.

cessfully hunt, Parks said, they can end up with more meat than they can conceivably use, so they can donate the meat to programs like Hunt.Fish.Feed.

Boys & Girls Club Deputy Executive Director JuanCarlos Ri-

vera said this lunch would be the beginning of their Community Chef Series, in which the club will invite different community partners and restaurants to come and cook meals for the club members.

“We thought immediately it was a great opportunity to not only show our kids what sustainability is all about but also to introduce them to food they may not typically have,” said Rivera.



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JULIUS SEKAYI — COURTESY BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF GREATER LOWELL

Volunteers from Comcast prepare the ground venison to be served in the form of sloppy joe style sandwiches to members of the Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell and their families Sept. 20, 2022.

Game

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McGannon, who was appropriately donning a classic chef's coat and camouflage pants as he prepared the meal, said that the 95 pounds of meat being provided was from farm-raised deer from Sierra Meat Co. in Reno, Nevada, so the meat wouldn't have the infamous "gamey" flavors associated with hunted meat, while still carrying benefits over most store-bought meats.

"It is a natural resource, it has about 60% less fat and 70% less cholesterol and twice the amount of protein," said McGannon. "It is definitely a nutritional advantage, and because it is so rich in protein, you wouldn't be able to sit down and eat a 16-ounce steak."

When McGannon serves the Hunt.Fish.Feed. lunches, they are often to people who live in areas in which hunted meat is extremely uncommon. In places like Lowell, it is unlikely that many people have had the opportunity to



JULIUS SEKAYI — COURTESY BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF GREATER LOWELL

Hunt.Fish.Feed. Executive Chef John McGannon prepares some of the 95 pounds of ground venison that was used to feed 230 Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell members and their families Sept. 20, 2023.

try venison, he said.

"It is very rewarding, not only watching the faces of the people who enjoy this, but also I get to share my stories and techniques, and my 50 years of being in a professional kitchen," said McGannon. "It is fun sharing."

Boys & Girls Club Executive Director Joseph Hungler said the meal was an opportunity to "expand the horizons" of the kids in the club.

"This is not something that is normally on the menu, at least not in my house," said Hungler.

While Lowell is unlikely to have a high population of people hunting or fishing, there are many places around the globe where that is the primary method of getting protein.

"It is a different way of doing it. Exposure in general is really good for these



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Boys & Girls Club of Greater Lowell Executive Director Joseph Hungler has an animated conversation with his daughter, Avery Hungler, 8, as they partake in a lunch of ground venison sloppy joes made by Hunt.Fish.Feed. Executive Chef John McGannon at the club on Sept. 20, 2023.

kids," said Hungler. "If they go up to high school or college and meet someone from the hunting world, they can at least say, 'Oh I've tried game before.'"

Hungler praised the partnership between the club and Comcast, which he said often sends volunteers to club events and has helped to get internet access for people in Lowell who may not be able to afford it otherwise.

Keishla Reyes, who was at the dinner with her daughter, club member Keishlany Matos, 8, said they had never had the chance to try venison before, let alone in the form of a sloppy joe sandwich, but they happily enjoyed it nonetheless.

"To be honest it tastes a lot like beef," said Reyes, as her daughter enthusiastically shook her head to say she enjoyed the meal.