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MICHAEL HUNT

Redd dishes out assist

 Posted: [Nov. 21, 2008](#)

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Michael Redd's teammates keep asking when he's coming back.

Soon, Redd assures them, very soon.

And, yes, the need is urgent for the NBA all-star and Olympic gold medalist to return to the floor with the Milwaukee Bucks.

But sometimes, and Thursday was one of those sometimes, the words "urgent" and "need" take on a little more perspective than a basketball game.

"An ankle compared to the economic situation? There's nothing to compare," Redd said.

Redd had just finished giving 250 turkey dinners to disadvantaged families at the House of Peace, a Catholic charity that has long served the city's poor. Inspired by Ray Allen's work with the mission, Redd has been donating Thanksgiving cheer there for four years. But never has he seen times quite like these down on Walnut St., along a needy section in a needy town.

"Some had tears in their eyes," Redd said. "These people have nothing. This is their meal for Thanksgiving. These are tough times. It's the least I can do. It gives you a reality check with what we're going through in this country."

Sharita Williamson was transferring the food she had received from a cardboard box to a roller bag for the walk home amidst snow flurries.

"I'm on a fixed income and it's hard to get food, especially in this economy," she said. "Gas prices are down but everything else is sky-high. That's why this is such a blessing this year."

She knew Redd played for the Bucks but was surprised to see him personally handing out the food.

"That made it a little something extra," she said. "He's doing so much good, and God bless him."

As much as the people who filled the House of Peace needed the food, social worker Linda Barnes said they needed something else from Redd.

"They asked, 'Is Michael going to pray with us?' "

He did.

A spiritual man who lives his convictions, Redd bought his father a church back home in Columbus, Ohio, a few years ago.

"Part of it is that both of my parents are preachers," he said. "They were the perfect example. They were giving away cars when we could hardly afford a car. For me, this is only natural."

There is a Bible passage that goes something like, "To whom much is given, much is required." So sometimes, people get cynical about stuff like this. They know Redd makes \$16 million a year, so what's the big deal about giving away turkey dinners?

To know, all you had to do was look in those wanting faces. Sure, a lot of wealthy pro athletes give back, but not many show up at a mission on a bad ankle on a day off just hours after getting in from Salt Lake City.

"No, not everybody," said Brother Mark Carrico, the House of Peace's executive director. "He likes us, and we sure like him."

Jim Van Hoven, regional director for the Capuchin ministry, said the House of Peace's distribution area now includes three Milwaukee ZIP codes, so great is the need. With help from many, it will continue to donate Thanksgiving dinners throughout next week.

Maybe by then, Redd will be back on the court. The Bucks really need him, but on a cold Thursday in the inner city, there were those who needed him more.

"This is what it's all about, right here," Redd said. "I look at it like this: I've been absolutely blessed, so I should give back. It's a genuine pleasure to give, especially in times like these."

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