

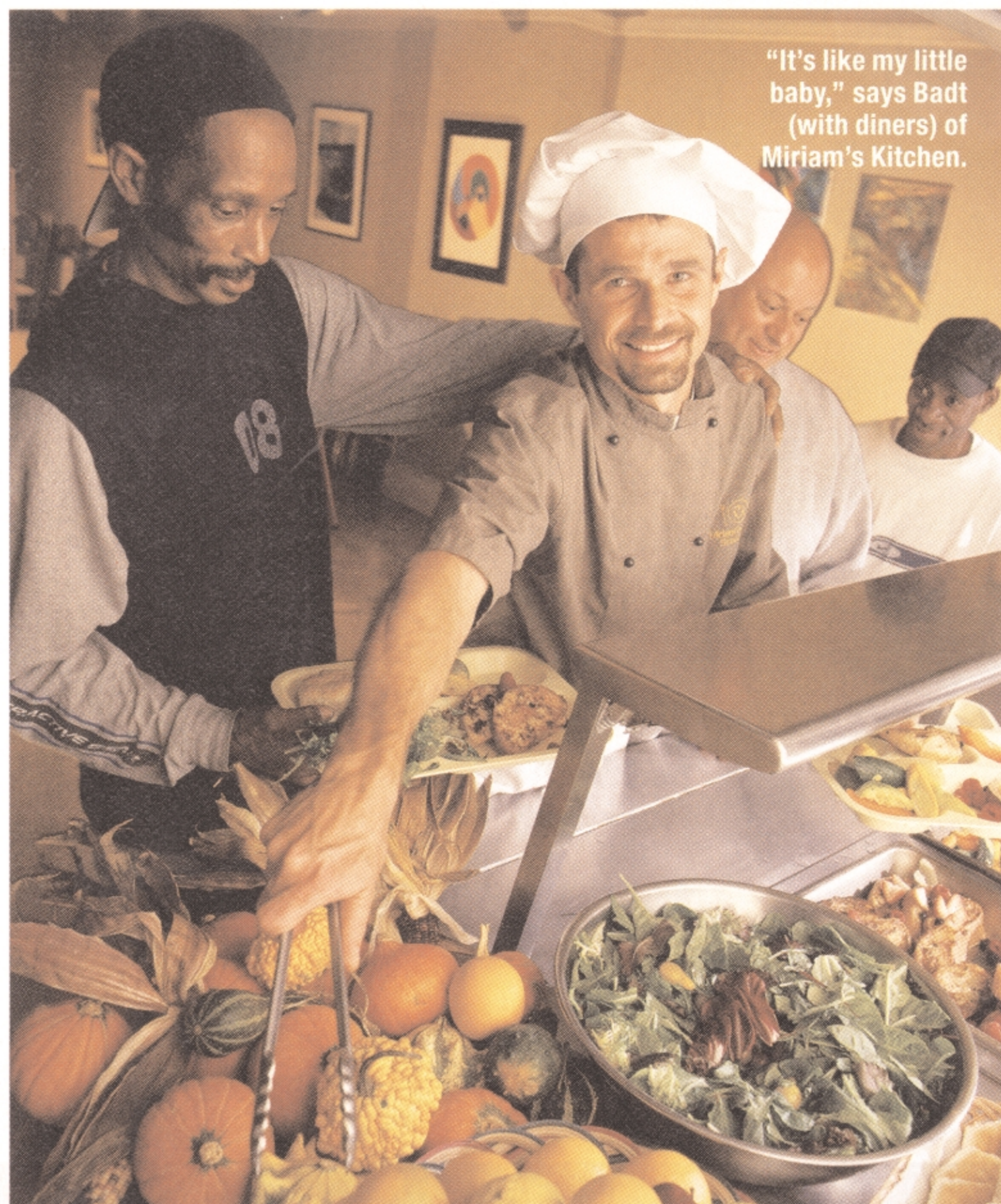
# STARTING OVER

## Steve Badt: Finding Food for the Spirit

Steve Badt did the hip-restaurant thing. In New York City he worked under celebrity chef Alan Harding at Nosmo King, filleting fresh-caught trout and making beet-and-goat-cheese tartlets for downtowners including Matthew Broderick. Next came gigs at top eateries in Boston and Washington, D.C. Then, in 1998, Badt took a look at his life and thought, in essence, "Been there, sauteed that."

"I said, 'Who am I serving? Who am I helping?'" says Badt, 35, a University of Vermont grad with a lifelong interest in social causes. "I wanted to feel like I was making more of an impact on the world." That led him to Miriam's Kitchen, a Washington, D.C., establishment where he serves his creations, free, to homeless men and women. "I'm trying to bring the philosophy of a high-end kitchen to a soup kitchen," says Badt, whose changing menu has featured venison meatballs, scrambled eggs with tomatoes and basil and sweet potato-coconut pie. Ingredients are mostly provided by a food bank or bought with donations, but some come from the garden behind the D.C. home he shares with his wife, Alice Weiss, 33, a health policy director for a nonprofit.

Nowadays Badt rises at 4:45 a.m. to cook a daily meal for 150 and teases old boss Harding that he has "trained a soup kitchen chef." But Badt's new customers remind him there's more to life than five stars. Says Miriam's client Eugene Talbert: "He gives us something to wake up for."



"It's like my little baby," says Badt (with diners) of Miriam's Kitchen.