



Photos by MATTHEW JONAS | The Courier

**VOLUNTEERS WAIT FOR COOKIES TO COOL** before boxing them March 20 at Evergreen Lutheran Church.

## Sweet gesture for troops

*Cookie Project gathers to bake treats for GIs stationed overseas*

By CHESLY WOODS KLEIN  
*For the Courier*

Sometimes a familiar treat can provide the sweetest reminder of home.

With that in mind, a small battalion of volunteers gathered at Lutheran Church of the Cross in Evergreen on March 20 to bake and box cookies to be sent to American GIs stationed overseas.

The Cookie Project was started just after the Sept. 11 attacks, when Evergreen resident Kay Bohan watched as her husband and friends were deployed overseas.

Bohan sent her husband care packages but soon realized there were people stationed overseas, away from everyone and everything familiar, who had no one sending them anything. Bohan found herself wondering, "What can I do to help?" The answer, she decided, was to put her baking skills to work making cookies.

"When you think about the conditions that these guys are in — how wonderful is one little chocolate chip cookie?" said Evergreen resident Christine Harris, Cookie Project co-organizer.

According to Bohan, a few years back one of the soldiers wrote a thank-you letter that said: "The cookies were a better creation than the 'Mona Lisa.'"

"Some of these guys," said

Bohan, "we have sent cookies to them three, four and five years in a row."

This year Harris and Bohan pre-made enough cookie dough for approximately 1,000 cookies. They also received donated boxes of Girl Scout cookies. "People want to buy Girl Scout cookies because they want to help the Girl Scout, but they don't want to eat all of the cookies, so many people donate them to us," said Harris.

Harris and Bohan agree the Cookie Project would not run as smoothly without Bentek Energy.

"Bentek Energy has been our biggest financial supporter," explained Harris. "Without their support, we wouldn't be able to afford to ship (the cookies) overseas." Shipping costs last year were approximately \$1,500.

"This year, we actually have less

volunteers because of the weather," said Harris. But fewer volunteers didn't slow production down. The volunteers, who ranged in age from small children to senior citizens, managed to make and box all of the cookies.

Volunteer David Leek is a West Point graduate who served in the Army and was deployed overseas.

"I know what it meant to me to get a package from back home in America," said Leek. "I have friends who are still in the military, and my brother is still over there, and I wanted to do something nice for them."

Leek coaches football, lacrosse and wrestling, which is how he met Harris.

"The food is sometimes not that great in the military, so getting a package from somebody back in

Please see COOKIES, Page 5

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