

Iowa Cookie Crumbs

Abbie Crawford and Deanne Over spoke at the Optimist Club about Cookie Crumbs. the organization began in 1990 as Treats for the Troops. They have delivered 1,458,571 cookies since then.

Iowa Cookie Crumbs began in January 2007. They started with 15 women making cookies and their first shipment was 80 dozen. Now they have 130 bakers and send 6,000 cookies per month. The Iowa Cookie Crumbs have sent 155,000 cookies to troops since they began.

Each box to the troops is sent in a military flat-rate box, sent to an APO address. It is addressed to a specific soldier and includes cookies, socks for padding, and a letter from each baker. The beginning of November they try to do something special so they sent 111 boxes of comfort items, including such things as shavers, shaving crème, toothbrushes, toothpaste, socks. The end of November they also sent 31,600 cookies. Mailing costs in November were \$3,852.07. Total mailing costs since the Iowa Cookie Crumbs began are \$10,555.72. The money for mailing is totally from contributions. The flat rate for boxes to military personnel is increasing from \$10.95 to \$11.95 on January 18.

The Rotary, Jenny Edmondson Hospital, Harmony Court, and HyVee have been big supporters of the Iowa Cookie Crumbs. The Rotary has provided \$300 per month since they began.

The Iowa Cookie Crumbs has enough local people requesting package now to keep them busy. They have a lot of support from chaplains and combat hospitals, but are not allowed to send any religious items, following military rules. Since the packages are going to Iraq and Afghanistan, magazines they include cannot contain anything revealing.

For Christmas this year they made hand-knitted scarves. 320 scarves were sent. Since the troops only have plastic eating utensils, they are sending a lot of silverware now also. The packages also include a lot of letters from school children.

Packages are assembled the 3rd or 4th Tuesdays of each month at Emanuel Lutheran Church in Council Bluffs. Cookie bakers include people from Treynor, Missouri Valley, Omaha, Council Bluffs, retired military members, and even a caterer in Omaha. Some of the cookies are almost too tempting to eat instead of ship. In April through October they do not send chocolate chip cookies, because they would melt in the heat of Iraq and Afghanistan.

Information about the parent organization is available at www.treatthetroops.org. They collecting baked goods and other care items for monthly shipments and they also need money for postage. If you'd like to help, e-mail iowacookiecrumbs@hotmail.com or call (712) 328-2558 for information.