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Bakery program makes life sweeter for isle nonprofits

By Erika Engle

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Brug Bakery Hawaii team members Kaileen Yamane, left, Zoe Engle and Travis Oshiro posed with Mahealani Richardson, second from left, director of public relations at Shriners Hospitals for Children, and the Shriners mascot, Fezzy the Bear, when they came to pick up pastries from Brug as the bakery kicked off its program that assists nonprofit organizations.



gesture to help nonprofits by Brug Bakery Hawaii to mark its first anniversary has become a regular part of the way it does business.

The Japan-based bakery opened at Shirokiya in July 2013. To mark its one-year anniversary, President Miho Choi and her publicist, Mona Wood-Sword, decided to donate its sweet and savory pastries to local nonprofit organizations as a way to do "something for society, the community," Choi told TheBuzz.

The anniversary program lasted for around three months last year, but the decision was recently made to "continue in 2015 full blast," Wood-Sword said.

"So far we have donated to Shriners, Kapiolani Medical Center, Abilities Unlimited, Rainbow for Japan Kids (Fukushima) and several more," she said.

The nonprofits have picked up pastry donations for such events as volunteer drives, to give to individual service providers as thank-you treats, for special board meetings and for other purposes.

The typical donation is two to three dozen pastries, Choi said, though there are exceptions, such as a mother-daughter event next month for St. Andrew's Priory for which the donation will be significantly larger.

The bakery already is giving away unsold pastries daily to the Angel Network to help feed those in need, as do many other food businesses, but Choi and Wood-Sword believe the ongoing Brug Community Program is unique.

The program also has benefited the bakery's bottom line, and not just via write-offs for charitable donations.

Some people who were unfamiliar with the bakery's offerings prior to sampling them at a nonprofit's event have become paying customers.

For example, a Shriners doctor who received a pastry picked up by Mahealani Richardson, director of public relations, "comes in and gets (the pastry) all the time," Wood-Sword chuckled.

It seems to prove the precept that if a business helps its community, the community will help the business, and Choi is happy with the result.

"Hawaii is a very special place," she said. "There are a lot of kind people here, and I wanted more people to know, to taste our pastries, because I'm very proud of the quality."

Running a bakery that needs to hit a certain amount of production each day and making enough extra to cover donations requires some planning, so nonprofits are asked to submit their requests at least two weeks in advance and to understand that the bakery will fulfill one request each week.

The Brug Community Program is specifically for 501(c)3 nonprofit organizations.

Requests should be emailed and should include the name and a brief description of the organization, when the event is, how many pastries are needed and the day and time of pickup. The bakery will respond within two to three business days.

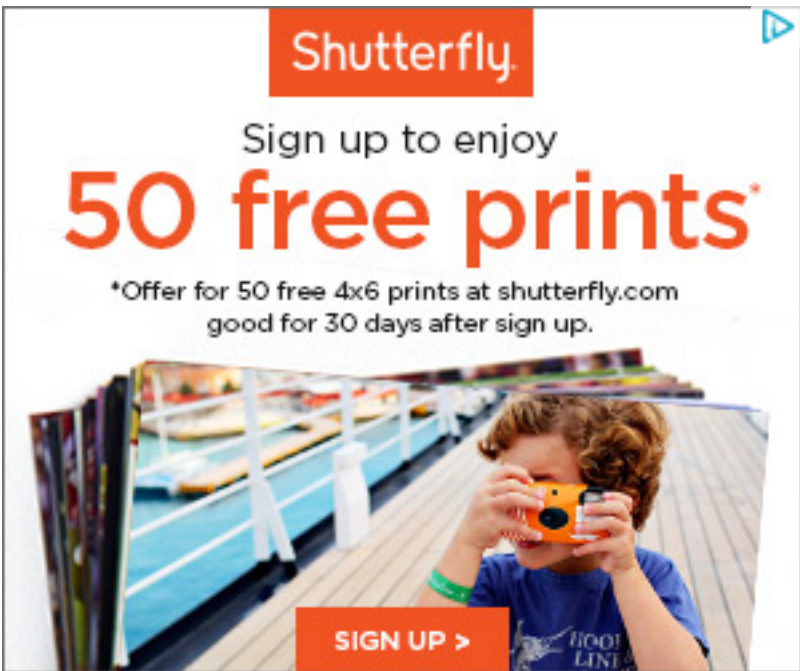
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Those making pickups for their selected nonprofits are asked to wear the organization's T-shirt and be ready to pose for a picture that will be posted on Brug's Facebook page. Organizations also can bring their mascot, volunteers, signs or other props to make the photo op fun, Wood-Sword said.

Reach Erika Engle at 529-4303, erika@staradvertiser.com or on Twitter as [@erikaengle](https://twitter.com/erikaengle).

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