

# BakeMeHome

ANNUAL REPORT • July 1, 2009 – June 30, 2010

*“Baking cookies is a good way for moms to re-connect with their kids. I also think it’s really fun when we go to the shelters with our mom and play with the kids.”*

*-Amy*

*“Helping is not hard. You can help. Start with giving up birthday presents from your friends to give to shelters—it’s not as hard as you think. A very memorable moment for me this year was our Boutique. I made a lot of new friends.*

*- Emma*

*Bake Me Home is a charitable organization dedicated to providing homeless and disadvantaged moms and kids with direct services that encourage shared family experiences.*

## From the Founders

Another year has gone by, Bake Me Home is two years old, and Amy and Emma are nine. Unbelievable! Like all non-profits, not to mention a small, new one, we have experienced quite a year. I realized the girls’ economic education needed a bit of expanding when Amy said, “I wish there was no such thing as the economy.” They have learned a lot since that innocent comment, including a big lesson in determination. We didn’t let anything get in the way of our goal to serve 210 families this year. In fact, the 15 fundraisers we held this year (accounting for 60% of our income) allowed us to SERVE 222 FAMILIES with our Tote Bag Program! We are proud to have filled so many ovens with warm cookies, and so many families with warm memories. We never could have accomplished this without the more than 150 volunteers who contributed over 3,000 hours of their time this year.



*Emma, Alison and Amy Bushman*

*(photo by Neysa Ruhl, as seen in Cincy Chic Magazine, May 2010)*

As with many other organizations, our individual donations decreased while our costs increased. For example, prices for sugar and chocolate chips have doubled since we began Bake Me Home two years ago. We were especially grateful to receive ingredients donated to us by Doscher’s Candies, Clark-Theders Insurance, and our Bake Me Home Boutique guests. However, in an effort to make sure we maintain our own “shared family experiences” and still sit down together for a family dinner every night, we are planning to scale back on the number of fundraisers in the coming year. Doing this means setting realistic goals based on the current economy. We will continue to focus on quality fundraisers, such as Bake Me BACK Home and our Boutique, while committing to a budget that ensures long-term viability for our organization and meaningful programming for our families.

Spending time with our shelter families is still Amy and Emma’s favorite part of Bake Me Home. As the girls get older, some Bake Me Home tasks admittedly are losing their thrill. They no longer jump ahead of each other in line to measure baking soda. Amy is now our self-appointed “Tote Bag Inspector,” complete with a checklist notebook she made herself, and Emma has been known to check my math on financial reports at board meetings. They will be ready to take over in no time! They do still have some questions for me though. After one visit to a shelter, Emma said, “You know what I don’t like about going to the shelters?” I have to confess I paused and panicked for a moment before I asked, “What?” She responded, “Every time we go I make new friends and then we never get to see them again.” I told Emma that she never knows how her path may cross with some of those kids again. Maybe 20 years from now she will meet one of them and they will remember how she was their friend that day. Maybe they will still have the family portrait that she gave them. Maybe they will remember the delicious cookies that they baked with their mom. Maybe they will grow up knowing that even strangers care about them.

*- Alison*

# TOTE BAG Program

This program, the core of our organization, tested our determination, creativity, and flexibility this year. We're proud to report that we came out on top! Despite a tough economy, we rose to the occasion and through 15 different fundraisers, we even exceeded our goals and served **222 families**. Although many of the ingredients for our Bake Me Home Oatmeal Chocolate Chip Cookie Mix became more costly (*when we began \$5.00 could buy enough sugar for 55 jars of mix, but now it only fills 26*), we were blessed with many donations. Our Bake Me Home Boutique guests brought enough chocolate chips for 189 jars!

Our jars of cookie mix found many happy homes this year with families leaving **The Bethany House Shelter**, the **YWCA Battered Women's Shelter**, and the **Tom Geiger Guest House**. However, an unexpected mid-year challenge arose when we discovered that our tote bag distributions were lower than we needed to meet our goal to serve 210 families. The difficult economy caused many families to stay in shelters longer than usual, resulting in fewer tote bags being given as "new home" gifts. Fortunately, we were able to add the **YWCA House of Peace** to the Bake Me Home family. Determined to meet our goal, while not over-committing ourselves to too many additional agencies that we couldn't continue to support later, we found two more ways to maintain flexibility in our giving while staying true to our mission.

First, we provided 36 tote bags to disadvantaged families participating in a Holiday Toy Store through the Inter Parish Ministry. According to Executive Director Lindsey Ein, "The 'Bake Me Home girls' brought an extra touch of joy with their tote bags filled with all of the ingredients and supplies to make homemade cookies—and even the toothbrushes and toothpaste for after eating the cookies! It was remarkable to see these little girls proudly carrying in bag after bag. The families who received the tote bags were thrilled!" This successful partnership led us to our second brilliant idea, if we do say so ourselves—the creation of our **Pantry Totes**. This modified version of our original Tote Bag provides jars of cookie mix, toothbrushes, toothpaste, and \$10 Kroger gift cards to families coming to the **Inter Parish Ministry** and **SEM** food pantries for support. The food pantry staff selects the recipients and distributes one bag per family. The number of bags we can give varies based on our available funds and our Tote Bag Program distributions. These food pantries serve hundreds of families

each year, so it will take us quite a while to get to them all, but we are not afraid of a big long-term goal!

Of our 222 families, 182 received our original Tote Bag (which still included all the necessary baking supplies, cookie mix, toothbrushes, toothpaste, recipe booklet, and \$20 Kroger gift card), and 40 received our new Pantry Totes. There's no way to express our deep gratitude to **Mt. Washington Presbyterian Church** for continuing to donate time to us in their Health Department approved kitchen, or to all of the volunteers who consistently help fill our jars of cookie mix. You make all of this possible! Anyone interested in volunteering (ages 4 and up are welcome), can sign up for our e-mail notifications on our home page at [www.bakemehome.com](http://www.bakemehome.com).

Our goal for 2010–2011 is to serve 200 families with a reluctant reduction in the Kroger gift card from \$20 to \$15. This reduction was a very difficult decision for us to make. At this time, in this economy, we feel this is in the best interests of our long-term viability, and will allow us to maintain a reasonable fundraising schedule for fourth graders! If you would like to make a donation to our Tote Bag Program you can do so on our website [www.bakemehome.com](http://www.bakemehome.com), or by using the insert in this annual report.

"The 'cookie girls at Bake Me Home' have amazed and delighted us at Inter Parish Ministry. Their enthusiasm and generosity have enabled us to share their special tote bags with people whose lives need a boost when they come to our Choice Food Pantry. Their ministry has blessed ours... and the cookies are REALLY good!"

— Lindsey Ein,  
Executive Director  
of Inter Parish Ministry

"Cookies are made  
of butter and love."

— Norwegian Proverb



"It was an awesome blessing to complete the Bethany House Services program. When I received my keys I was surprised to get a "Bake Me Home" bag filled with all the things I need to make homemade cookies for my son and me, including the homemade cookie mix. The envelope containing the letter and the gift card was a huge help to us. When we made the cookies our new apartment smelled like home. Thank you so much."

— Bethany House Mom



# Family Portrait Program

This program brought two new members into the Bake Me Home family this year. Photographers Rachelle Jeffries and Kristin Baker-Moser joined Annette Bryant, our “founding photographer,” to help provide beautiful portraits to families at the **YWCA Battered Women’s Shelter** and **The Bethany House Shelter**. Amy and Emma continued to take charge of our “frame shop” made up of donated 5x7 picture frames, and of course, they still like to make faces at the babies to get them to smile. At one photo shoot a mother remarked how grateful she was for her portrait. “Thank you,” she said, “this is the only picture I have of my kids. I lost all the rest in a fire at Christmas.” Supporters of our mission allowed us to feel like Santa Claus that morning, and all for less than \$1 worth of paper and ink.

Our simple paper and ink touched 53 families this year. This was not quite the 100 that we had set our sights on. Scheduling challenges and shelter construction set us back a bit. However, this inspired us to expand the Portrait Program in a way that will allow us to reach even more families. With help from “In a Snap Photos,” and a generous financial donor, we will be purchasing our own photography equipment. This will give us more flexibility in scheduling photo shoots. We will continue to work with our amazing professional photographers, as well as with trained volunteers. We are looking forward to a year full of smiling faces, and will continue to reach for our goal of 100 family portraits in 2010–2011.

“Before these volunteers came I never had a picture to document my first pregnancy, and because of them I will always be able to cherish the memory.”

— Expectant Mother, YWCA Battered Women’s Shelter



# Bake Me BACK Home

Bake Me BACK Home is a new fundraiser with a special place in our hearts. It gives our supporters the opportunity to help **TWO MISSIONS with ONE DONATION**. For only \$30, we send two dozen of our homemade cookies (not just the jar of cookie mix!) to a military member of the donor’s choice, or one from our list of nominees. Approximately half of this donation supports our programming for disadvantaged moms and kids. All packages of cookies can include a personal message from the donor and they are securely packed with bags of delicious homemade caramel popcorn! A team of volunteer bakers, known as our “Cookie Crew,” from two of our local high schools (the “PRIDE of Forest Hills” youth group)

bake the cookies. Our goal is for the taste of our cookies to help our military men and women feel like they are “back home,” even if it’s just for a moment.

This project launched officially in March, and it is our proudest accomplishment in a year full of fundraising. We’re pleased to report that we have already shipped 576 **Bake Me BACK Home cookies** to troops serving in Iraq and Afghanistan. Please help us break the 1000-cookie mark this year by making a donation at [www.bakemehome.com](http://www.bakemehome.com), or by using the insert in this annual report. **ONLY \$30, ONE DONATION, TWO MISSIONS!**

“I can’t tell you how surprised and pleased I was to receive your cookies, and read your note with the description of your thoughtful mission to support moms and kids, AND service members overseas. How wonderful. Many thanks for what you are doing. We all very much appreciate your support and kindness. Just reading your letter makes home feel much closer, and makes the long days here away from family much easier.”

— LTC Allysa Kropp

“The cookies taste fresh baked, just like Mom’s! People came running when I opened the box, they smelled so good!”

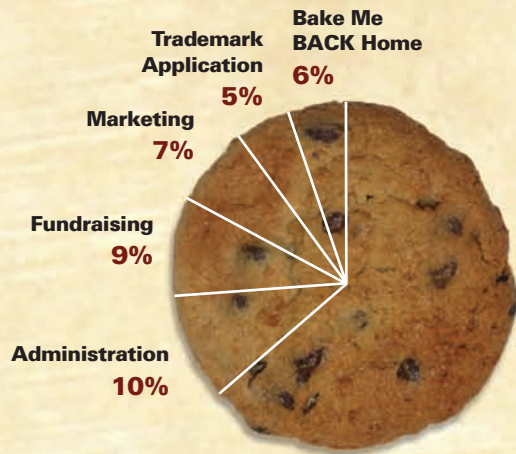
— SPC McKinzie Baker



# 2010 Financial Report

## Financial Summary

Total Cash Donations .....	\$4,903.90
Total In-Kind Donations .....	\$3,609.51
Hometown Heroes Award .....	\$550.00
Fundraising Events Income .....	\$7,570.93
Tote Bag Program Expense .....	\$7,093.99
Administrative Expense .....	\$1,107.86
Fundraising Expense .....	\$1,066.66
Marketing Expense .....	\$735.14
Bake Me BACK Home Expense .....	\$675.54
Trademark Application .....	\$575.00
Reserve Account .....	\$1,500.00
Fund Balance .....	\$4,086.18



## Expenses

*We couldn't do it without you!*

THANK YOU to everyone whose contributions furthered our mission this year. Please forgive us for not having an all-inclusive list here. It is impossible when you are SURROUNDED by so many GENEROUS PEOPLE! We are truly thankful for EACH AND EVERY ONE of our volunteers and donors.

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 MANY, MANY MORE VOLUNTEER JAR FILLERS!



**YOU MAKE US LOOK GOOD!** Many special thanks to Debra Kopena for donating her graphic design services, Market Place Printing for their discounted printing costs, and especially Dave Kuhar of The Media Cellar for designing, maintaining and hosting our website free of charge!

**BAKE ME HOME • P.O. Box 30082 • Cincinnati, Ohio • 45230**

### MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

**Bake Me Home Boutique**  
 Coldstream Country Club  
 Cincinnati, Ohio  
**Saturday, April 9, 2011**  
 4:00 – 9:00 pm