

## Not Just Another Pretty Cupcake.....by deborah fagan carpenter



“Hey, if you can’t sleep Thursday night, could you bake one of your delicious chocolate cakes for my party Friday?” Requests such as this from friends who realized that Kat Gordon was baking cakes at all hours of the night to fight insomnia came with such frequency, that a significant career change resulted. That demand coupled with the realization that she was more passionate about baking for open houses than actually trying to sell the houses, prompted her to leave real estate and open one of the most popular bakeries in Memphis, ***Muddy’s Bake Shop***.

***Muddy’s*** took off like gangbusters and Gordon learned how to run it by jumping in baker’s hat first! She credits her parents with allowing her to pursue childhood entrepreneurial endeavors, which gave her an early interest in business, but she had no idea about hiring and training employees, ordering supplies, getting out payroll or the many other aspects of running a bakery. Kat Gordon was however, equipped with a passion for baking and the energy, spirit and willingness to learn and to accept help where it was offered. Fortified with a recipe collection of her own plus those of family members, she immediately turned out such delicious baked goods that she was running out long before closing every day.

“Without the overwhelming community spirit we received, this place wouldn’t be open!” says Gordon. There was a cooperative spirit from Memphians who were encouraging and supportive, and instead of being mad at her when she would sell out, she received comments like, “Oh my

gosh, good for you! I'll be back earlier tomorrow." She actually had people say, "You look tired; whatta ya need? I used to be a waitress. I'll wash some dishes!"



Today, the owner of the successful bake shop is well known for her scrumptious cupcakes, and the icing on top is a dedicated community spirit. Her Grandmother "Muddy," for whom the business is named always had a corner of her modest kitchen filled with baked

goods ready to be delivered to a sick friend or a new neighbor. Refreshing examples of that spirit of giving are evident at **Muddy's Bake Shop** in ways as simple as the donation of the "tip jar" money to the charity of the staff's choosing, or as broad as the initiation of an in-house Community Service Project currently being organized by a former staff member. The staff came together and narrowed their community involvement interests to Education and Hunger, and Muddy's will allow them to partner with organizations focused on those issues and to contribute their time to such activities as delivering "meals on wheels," while receiving their regular salary. Gordon hopes this participation in the community will instill in her employees a lasting desire for involvement in service work.

There is only a little green icing to be found in the glass cases filled with delectable pies, cakes and cookies, but green is at the heart of every recipe. All are baked with free range eggs and whole, organic, locally produced milk. Additionally, all of **Muddy's** packaging is recycled and recyclable and the business composts organic wastes. Partnered with Project Greenfork, who advises businesses on green practices, they continue to upgrade their methods of environmental accountability and to learn new ways of applying those concepts and to discovering new sources to help sustain their current green procedures.

Gordon's amazing dynamism is reflected in the attitudes of her dedicated staff members, all of whom learn every aspect of the business from day one. They are a team and perform as one, all dedicated to the continuation of the remarkable vitality that pours from the doors of **Muddy's Bake Shop**.



Many of the delicious recipes are a result of their contributions and experimentation.

Kat Gordon delivers delicious goodies with a spirit of joy, confidence and universality and oh, did I mention that she has "blue hair?"



[www.muddysbakeshop.com](http://www.muddysbakeshop.com)

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