

About BAKE & Co. Fundraising, Seattle WA

The best way to describe **BAKE & Co.** is to describe how we started, what we're doing, and where we're headed.

In 1993, a window of opportunity allowed me [Brenda Blair] to step back from a monthly paycheck and explore what I really wanted to do beyond age #\$\$^&. I volunteered, served on a couple of boards, and completed the *University of Washington's* one-year *Certificate Program in Fundraising Management*. After a year of grant writing for *Make A Wish Foundation* I still didn't have the independence I was seeking.



Then a unique business opportunity presented itself. Two moms had started a pizza-making company here in Seattle and it was for sale. They brought parents together under the Company's direction to assemble and wrap ready-to-bake pizzas for the presale orders they had collected as a school fundraiser. **Abigale Corp., dba BAKE & Co. Fundraising** was born, and with gloves, aprons, bowls and utensils, and my husband help, we headed off to school cafeterias every weekend to orchestrate these pizza-making events. Was I nuts? Exhausting! Demand grew and I finally found a manufacturer to make the pizzas to my specifications. What a relief. When the manufacturing business was sold, I said goodbye to pizza, hello other stuff.

In the interim, however, I had been researching other products for fundraising. My goal was to be different from the usual fundraising vendor—I didn't want to offer giftwrap and imported novelties with the associated prize programs; rather, I wanted to avoid delivering embarrassment and disappointment. I wanted people to be **"happy"** with what they bought and want to buy it again. I chose to offer only USA-made goods shipped directly to the client from the manufacturer. This ensured the customer received fresh, consistent, readily available, quality products that could be sold for a realistic retail price. No warehoused stale products here. After all these years, I still subscribe to this same philosophy and only offer products made in the USA with the exception of rubber flip flops made in Brazil. I work with some terrific suppliers now and am proud to offer you their products

Thanks to the internet, the **BAKE & Co.** web site (www.bakeco.com) made it possible for me to meet an ever-expanding group of fundraising chairpersons all across the country. With easy-to-download Adobe .pdf brochures directly at my web site, chairpersons can print information in a nice format to take directly into their meetings for discussion. Coordination materials such as announcement letters, order tally spreadsheets, and other promotional items are easily sent via email.

I continue to evaluate fundraising products for their **usefulness** and **quality** before offering them to clients. We test EVERYTHING! We still offer the traditional frozen and non-frozen cookie dough, but our favorite programs include an assortment of coffee, tea and cocoa, spring & fall flower bulbs, a preservative-free cookie dough mix; a hand soap for kids that changes colors, soy wax candles, and an expanding line of cancer and cause-related awareness products. Then there are program I developed myself including the custom rubber flip flops for schools and the Stars & Stripes collection to show our USA pride. Lastly, in addition to our cancer and cause-awareness programs, you will find I particularly enjoy promoting locally made products from Washington State including our great car wash program, firestarters from Edmonds, and WA State Apples from the Yakima Valley. We still offer snacks, preferring low-fat popcorn, fruit snacks, quality milk and dark-chocolate, \$1 pops, \$1 coffee packs, and more. Our mantra: **Make people happy, never disappointed, and they come back again--to you and to me.**

I am still a sole proprietor working from an office in my home in West Seattle with the help of my staff assistant pictured left--also named **Brenda**, pictured with **"Ms. Testarossa"**, a Bouvier des



Flandres (almost 14), and **"Pearl"** our feline supervisor.

Support staff now also includes **"McGee"**, the Norfolk Terrier at right who often disagrees with **Pearl** on most issues as noted. Most supportive, however, is my husband **Bruce** of 28+ years who keeps the computers, peripherals and web site operational.



In an effort to work smarter, not harder, I try to keep abreast of trends in the fundraising industry, taking advantage of the internet as an advertising tool while still staying personally involved with my customers. I'm not looking to grow or hire commissioned reps, rather I enjoy the one-on-one relationship I have with each chairperson. I attend trade shows to keep my eye open for good products, and often create a program around a product I find of particularly good quality and good for fundraising. I'm always looking for ways to improve the positive aspects of fundraising. I personally assist with announcement letters and promotional strategies and love the ease e-mail and even facebook has brought into our lives.

To those of you who have let me serve you for so many years, a heartfelt **THANK YOU!** To those of you who are researching a new vendor, I hope to be able to provide you with the kind of products and service you deserve. 6/14/11.

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