

Sticky paws straight from home

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Down a Crescent City residential street, the aroma of fresh-baked brownies and baklava waft through the air. In the early-morning hours, Mary Corcovelos-Mullin is prepping bakery orders while her four children sleep.

Welcome to a typical day at Sticky Paws Baking Company.

Mary Corcovelos-Mullin opened the bakery with her mother, Venita Corcovelos, late last fall, combining her two great loves – baking and family. Mary does the baking, Venita handles the finances.

“I’ve been told for a while, you know, ‘You should go into business,’ but it’s scary when you have children, to take that first step,” said Corcovelos-Mullin. “Now I’ve taken the step and hopefully I can take many, many more.”

Sticky Paws is not your typical bakery; it’s a cottage food operation: The county issues a permit for people to sell low-risk, non-refrigerated food made from their home. Instead of baking out of an industrial kitchen, Sticky Paws is run entirely out of Corcovelos-Mullin’s home.

Prior to starting Sticky Paws, she was employed by the County of Del Norte. Her mother watched the four children during the day. But this summer, she found out her mother’s breast cancer had returned.

So, Corcovelos-Mullin left her job at the county to be available to help her mother and to watch her children. However, she still needed an income to support her family. That’s how the home-based bakery got started.

“I needed a job to support my family (and to) be able to help [my mother],” she said. “I was like, ‘I’m good at baking. I enjoy baking. It’s my passion.’ And (her mother) was like, ‘Well let’s see what we can do with it.’”

From her home, Mary bakes a variety of items that include salted caramel brownies, chocolate chip cookies, her grandmother’s sugar cookies, cupcakes, and her perfected baklava, a treat symbolizing her heritage.

“(The business is) family-based, it’s family-oriented and it’s just good products. I have the biggest critics, which are my children,” said Corcovelos-Mullin.

Her signature dessert, for which the company is named, is the sticky paw – a cinnamon roll drizzled in salted caramel, topped with glazed pecans and leaving the eater’s hands coated in syrupy sweetness.

“We want to make sure that everyone has a quality product that they enjoy, and they want to come back,” she said. “Our main thing is quality and food safety and customer satisfaction.”

With Valentine’s Day approaching, Corcovelos-Mullin is sidelining some of her traditional holiday recipes and adding more cakes and cupcakes in flavors of chocolate, vanilla, Italian cream, pineapple and strawberry.

And she’s hoping a tradition in her family will appeal to her customers: family cake and cookie decorating.

“It kind of gives them more of a memory,” she said. “People can have a family moment, or whatever, and make a memory of decorating.”

Her children typically don’t ask for birthday gifts, said Corcovelos-Mullin. Instead, they plan for their birthday cakes, choosing the flavors and themes. Her oldest son asked for a birthday cake in a Black Panther movie theme.

Then, the family makes an event of it, decorating the cake together. She hopes she can sell frosted cakes and cookies as a blank canvas for her customers to decorate.

“People don’t have the time to bake or to make something special, and if we can help engage that to bring memories for families to have, then we’ve done our job. You know, it’s all about bringing joy.”

Sticky Paws doesn’t have regular business hours, it bakes on-demand. Customers can call 707-458-8618 or email stickypawsbakingco@gmail.com with a bakery request, at least 24 hours in advance.