



## **Big sales for healthful treats**

**By Tom Grace**

Cooperstown News Bureau

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MORRIS \_ Melinda Crofford began making cookies as medicine about a decade ago.

Now, she's selling them at schools and at health-food stores as far away as New York City.

“It started when my son had eczema,” she said Thursday at her home on Larchwood Lane in Morris. “I was concerned about what he was eating and began to do some research.”

She found that flax, rich in Omega-3 fats, could provide a variety of health benefits in the typical American diet.

“So I began to bake him little banana muffins with flax in them,” she said.

The eczema went away, but she continued baking, experimenting while making healthy and tasty cookies that had some flaxseed meal in them.

Crofford's foray into dietary research caused her to read labels closely and look at food a little more critically. She said she didn't like the ingredients in commercial cookies, and she knew she was making a nutritionally superior food at home, with ingredients like oats, chocolate, flax seed and walnuts.

A few years ago, she began to market them at health-food stores such as Solstice Whole Food and Herbs in Norwich. Now she has cookies in health-food stores in Oneonta, Cooperstown, Norwich, Hudson and New York City.

“They're available in the schools in Sherburne and Cooperstown,” she said.

And she's planning to expand.

Earlier this month, Crofford received a \$13,500, seven-year loan from Otsego County to install a commercial oven and refrigeration equipment in her home.

``That should make it a lot easier, because it has been taking a lot of time with what we've had," she said.

Crofford offers organic treats including ``raspberry oat-flax clusters, iced with chocolate" and ``Mayan Jungle Brownie."

When she made her proposal to the Otsego County Board of Representatives at its Dec. 5 meeting, she came armed with a bag of cookies.

They disappeared quickly.

``They were delicious," said Rep. James Powers, R-Butternuts.

Crofford is teaming up with Evan's Farmhouse and Creamery in Norwich to produce an ice cream sandwich.

She said ``Northern Lights," made with organic milk, is ``a dark chocolate and flax cookie and vanilla ice cream."

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