

## Jan's Homemade Candies, Inc., sends chocolate gifts to wounded service men and women at Walter Reed Medical Center

By Phyllis J. Neuberger  
POMPANO PELICAN STAFF

Stepping into Jan's Homemade Candies, Inc. and inhaling the mouth watering smells of homemade chocolate cooking, turns a visitor into an instant impulse buyer. As the eye scans the showcases displaying elegant chocolates in every artistic shape and design imaginable, it's hard to resist owner Jan Lendi's generous offer to sample a taste of this and a taste of that.

But The Pelican didn't come to this store in Lauderdale-By-The-Sea at 4327 N. Ocean Drive for personal pleasure, but rather to meet the lady who ships her delectable candy off at least once a week to our wounded men and women returned from battle with physical and mental challenges, all being rehabbed at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, Bethesda, MD.

Jan smiles and says, "My obsession to thank these American heroes began when my brother emailed me asking me to pray for Josh Wetzel who had stepped on an IED in Afghanistan and lost both legs. I put 'Prayers for Josh Wetzel' on my Facebook page and 5,000 people prayed for this young man. My husband Bob and I decided to send him a huge piece of solid chocolate with his name and army medallion on the top. We became friends."

"There he was, all banged up and struggling to learn how to walk on his new legs, and yet he cared enough to ask us to pray for another soldier, Eric Hunter, who had also lost a leg in the same way, same place. We sent Eric a large personalized chocolate also. Then we sent a collection of chocolate army medallions to both of these heroes to pass out to all of their fellow patients."

"Corey Garman became our next friend. He, too, had lost his legs. We heard from his friends that he and his fiance, Megan, were going to be married in the hospital in September so I made them wedding favors. They kept postponing the wedding and we couldn't understand why. They froze our chocolate wedding gifts and explained that Corey wanted to stand on his new legs like every groom on the day of his wedding. They hope that will be soon."

"We now send one or two packages of chocolates every week to our growing list of new friends. These men and women fought so valiantly for us. We get notes of appreciation every day. Some are emails. Some are written by supportive family members for those



with no arms. Whenever one of our boys is having another surgery, off goes a shipment of their favorite fudge or chocolates. We now know their favorites.”

“Why do we do it? We do it because I wouldn’t have my shop if it weren’t for boys like these who fought for our freedom and paid a terrible price. They are heroes who deserve gratitude, good wishes and friendship from every one of us. When I see their faces I realize these boys and girls have barely left childhood and yet they have lost essential body parts defending our way of life. Bob is actually growing a beard during No Shave November to draw attention to these wounded warriors.”

Jan and Bob do even more. LBTS has its own way to thank the military. The town regularly hosts a military couple, found through the U.S.O., for a weekend of rest, relaxation and romance.

Jan and Bob further enhance those weekends with sweet wishes baskets of chocolates. So far Jan has sent 30 baskets to visiting military couples.

Jan’s Homemade Candies, Inc.

Come March, it will be 12 years since Jan and her husband helper, Bob, opened their store in LBTS. “The past few years have been a struggle because of the economy,” Jan says. “With God’s blessings, we’ve made it through. We hope business will pick up in this new season.”

Jan makes almost all of her chocolates and fudge in the shop, producing small batches at a time so there’s no waste. Everything is natural. No preservatives are ever used.

“Our chocolates can be frozen,” Jan says. “Be sure they are in an air tight container and thawed completely before reopening. We ship year ‘round using frozen gel packs and insulated boxes. Our chocolates arrive as fresh as if they had just been purchased that day. We have many loyal customers. In fact some of our arriving snowbirds make this their first stop on the way to their hotels.”

Bob, who assists his wife, says, “We do a lot of personalizing chocolates for events and individuals.” He holds up a chocolate cross, saying, “We just finished baking 100 dark chocolate crosses for a special dinner at Holy Cross Hospital.” Then he shows off a beautifully colored chocolate shark, saying, “We just made 100 of these for an alumni group from Nova Southeastern University.”

Jan’s newest creation, called ‘Berry Healthy Bark,’ contains, 72 percent dark chocolate with organic cherries, cranberries, blueberries, almonds, pepitas [shelled pumpkin seeds] and acai berries. It’s become an instant best seller.

While Jan was being interviewed, a new customer, Bob Brockman, stopped by at the suggestion of his friend. He said, “My very good friend, a Western Buddhist Monk, Gen Kelsang Norbu, loves the all natural goodness of Jan’s chocolates.” Brockman sampled the pumpkin pie fudge and raved. He promised to return before Christmas for some eggnog fudge. As he chose one of those, and those, and those, sampling a few as he went along, he laughed and said, “I guess I am that kid in the candy store.” He walked out of Jan’s with a \$27 box of assorted goodies feeling thrilled with his choices.

Thank you Jan and Bob Lendi for your generosity and support for our wounded GI Joes and Janes, who are patients at Walter Reed Medical Center.

Jan’s Homemade Candies is open 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Monday to Thursday; 11 a.m. to 8 p.m. Friday and Saturday. Call 954-202-9495 or 1-800-795-5267. For a look at Jan’s variety, go to [www.janscandies.com](http://www.janscandies.com)