

By Christopher Burnett | Staff Writer

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FLFHC hosts holiday cookie decorating

Area merchants Sis' Sweets, Country Mart and Price Chopper donated the cookies for second annual event.

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Fort Leavenworth Frontier Heritage Communities hosted its second annual cookie decorating activity as part of its Community Connections program for on-post residents Dec. 20 in the FLFHC Community Center. Area merchants Sis' Sweets, Country Mart and Price Chopper donated the cookies.

Raina Benz, a first-grader at Eisenhower Elementary School, and her 2-year-old brother, Ross, came to decorate cookies with their mother, Blair Benz. The children's father, Capt. Derek Benz, is a Command and General Staff Officer Course student.

"I used green icing to decorate my cookie. I started with the points and then made a heart in the middle," Raina said. "The frosting acts like glue to hold the chocolate chips and sprinkles on the cookie. It's delicious."

Jessica Richardson, whose husband is Sgt. Adam Richardson, assigned with CID, brought her daughter, Chloe, to decorate cookies. She said their family became residents of the Fort Leavenworth community slightly more than a year ago. Richardson has served as the mayor of Osage Village since July.

"I like cookies and I like Santa Claus," 4-year-old Chloe said. "He works with the elves."

Kelly Collins, one of the three FLFHC resident specialists on staff, said the Community Connections program provides opportunities for residents to have fun and connect with one another. FLFHC programs are also designed to connect residents with a variety of people and organizations both on the installation and within the surrounding off-post community.

"Last year was the first year of the cookie decorating event and it was a huge success. We had well over 100 children participate and actually ran out of cookies. Someone made a trip to the Commissary for more," Collins said. "This year we were fortunate to have cookies donated. We included a few more healthy choices like fruit and juice as snacks to balance the fact that children will be eating cookies. We've added the gingerbread cutout and a photo frame for selfies. It is an activity suitable for all ages."

Christina Loredo, wife of CGSOC student Maj. Elias Loredo, attended to decorate cookies with 1-year-old daughter Grace and 5-year-old son Aiden. Loredo said that she was impressed with the quality, variety and quantity of scheduled FLFHC activities.

"There are so many positive things like this that are offered for community residents to participate in at Fort Leavenworth," Loredo said. "This is actually the first time our family has lived on post. I like it because of the opportunity to interact with my neighbors in substantive ways and have potential to become long-time friends."

Santa Claus and one of his reindeer came all the way from his workshop at the North Pole to visit with residents and give surprise early presents to children.

"The main thing I'm checking my list for at this time of year is whether children are being naughty or nice," Claus said. "I have met lots of nice children here today. But, I always encourage them to keep up the good work every day of the year, too."

Fort Leavenworth Frontier Heritage Communities residents have access to the community center to attend and participate in programmed events centered upon wellness, learning and creating memorable experiences. The FLFHC Community Center at 220 Hancock Ave. also houses the staff offices for FLFHC staff and Residential Communities Initiative. The facility includes a fitness center, children's playroom, computer lab, community room with kitchen and an outdoor seating and play area.

"We have many programs at the community center. And, the programming continually develops, based largely upon the interests of the residents," Collins said. "Since this event was so well received last year, we wanted to do it again this year. We try to balance our events across the demographic — from great events for kiddos to something like the cooking classes in the evenings for adults."



PHOTO/ PRUDENCE SIEBERT, FORT LEAVENWORTH LAMP

Finished with decorating, 3-year-old Nolan Mulloy picks up his snowman cookie to taste Dec. 20 at the Fort Leavenworth Frontier Heritage Communities Community Center. Nolan and his mother, Melissa Mulloy, also decorated a cookie for his father, Maj. Patrick Mulloy, Command and General Staff Officer Course student. Photo by Prudence Siebert/Fort Leavenworth Lamp

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