



## PRODUCER PROFILES: Camphill Village Bakery

*By Tim King*

*Whole Farm Cooperative Correspondent*

LITTLE SAUK, MN - The Camphill Bakery has a big job. Its crew bakes bread and cookies for a village of more than fifty people. They also make baked goods for Everybody's Market Cooperative in Long Prairie and St. Cloud's Good Earth Cooperative. For years they've also baked for Whole Farm Cooperative.



Efraim mixing ingredients. Photo by Jan King.

Tuesday afternoon is cookie baking day. Tony, Sarah, Mike, Victor, and Brenda made up the baker's crew on the Tuesday that we visited. Work starts at 2 p.m. Mike arrived early. So did we.

"We make a lot of cookies," Mike said. "There are peanut butter-chocolate chip, Andy's, and oatmeal raisin."

Mike continues his long list of different types of cookies.

"It can get really crazy in here," he said. "Efraim will be here in a few minutes."

Efraim is the head baker. His job is to keep the craziness to a simmer. He does this with a smile and an intense but gentle focus that allows him to multi-task with

warmth and graciousness. He starts by turning on the lights, tying aprons on those members of the crew that are not able to do so, and reminding Mike to wash his hands.

Efraim explains that this Tuesday is a slow Tuesday.

"We bake forty-five bags of cookies for Good Earth every other Tuesday," he said. "We did that last week. Today we are making bags of cookies to give to people for thank you gifts."

While Efraim is explaining how things work in the bakery, the crew is getting out the cookie ingredients. Flour, sugar, oatmeal, peanut butter and raisins in big white containers are all carried out and placed on the table. Everybody has a job based on their abilities. And everybody knows what their job is. Victor confidently begins assembling the power mixer. Efraim signs to Brenda. She sits in a chair between the door and the refrigerator.

"I just asked her to get butter out of the refrigerator," he said. "She can't speak or hear. She likes to be here and when we're done she cleans up."

Brenda also has a sense of humor. While Efraim is stirring peanut butter, he and Brenda are goofing off a little. Brenda scrunches up her face in delight at the interaction. Meanwhile, Sarah is starting to measure

out ingredients under the watchful eye of Efraim.

"I like to measure things," she says.

"She's good at it," Efraim says as he carefully examines a large cup of raisins. He points to the two-cup line for Sarah and jokes that she must like extra raisins. She agrees that she does.

By now the big mixer is going and Efraim and his crew are darting back and forth on purposeful cookie making errands. It's getting kind of noisy. Mike takes a little break to visit.

"It can get crazy in here," he reminds us.

Everything swirls about Tony. He is patiently and quietly awaiting his task. His task of scooping cookie dough out of the big kettle and putting it on cookie sheets is also everybody else's favorite. When Efraim takes the kettle off the mixer and places it on the table, Victor, Sarah, Mike, and Tony all grab small silver and black ice cream scoops. They begin enthusiastically scooping out caramel colored dough, leveling the sweet-sticky stuff off, and depositing it into the squares of the wooden grid placed on the cookie sheet. There is parchment paper between the pan and the cookie dough. The wooden grid was crafted by the carpentry crew in the Camphill wood working shop, according to Mike.



Sarah, Mike, & Tony scoop cookie dough onto baking sheets. Photo by Jan King.



Victor flattens cookies while Tony & Mike watch.  
Photo by Jan King.

"Be careful not to make your scoops too big," Efraim reminds his crew.

Most everyone that works in the bakery takes delight in scooping cookie dough. Some people need a little help though.

"There are some people who don't have the strength or dexterity to use the scoops," Efraim explains. "I can help them scoop by holding their hand a little."

After all the squares are full of scoops of peanut butter-chocolate chip cookie dough, Victor flattens them using a fork. He presses down carefully one way and then turns the fork 90 degrees and presses down a second time.

Now the cookies are ready for the oven. Efraim opens the big black oven doors, slides the huge silver cookie

sheet into the preheated oven, closes the door, and sets the little red and white timer.

"The timer is the most important tool in the kitchen," he says.

Soon the kitchen fills with the sweet aroma of baking cookies. But before that happens the crew is already busily preparing a batch of oatmeal raisin cookies. By three o'clock the golden brown peanut butter chocolate chip cookies are cooling, the oatmeal raisin cookies are tucked in the oven, and the timer has been set again.

With the work done, some of the crew takes a tea and cookie break and others leave the bakery for other projects. While the crew is relaxing, Efraim begins preparing to make the next day's bread. Tomorrow, he says, they will bake sourdough bread.