

The Journal News

SERVING THE LOWER HUDSON VALLEY SINCE 1850

Mt. Kisco bakery brings charity to hospital

SEAN GORMAN

MOUNTKISCO - Connie's Bakery & General Store is bringing its nonprofit mission to Northern Westchester Hospital.

The Mount Kisco-based bakery formally opened a new cafe and gift shop in the main hospital lobby yesterday.

The new setup comes complete with signs announcing that all profits will go to charity.

The gift shop has teddy bears with Santa hats, white bean and roasted garlic soup mix, lemon mint green tea, lollipops and grape jelly among its selections.

"It's kind of a country store," said the hospital's president, Joel Seligman. "It's the kind of place where, if you were driving in the country and you saw it, you might pull over and spend 20 minutes just wandering around."

Ken Waldron of Mahopac, who was visiting his granddaughter at the hospital yesterday, bought a cup of coffee at the cafe, which is across the lobby from the gift shop.

"It's a nice presentation when you walk in here," said Waldron, 53. "I think it's a great thing that they would take all the



Connie Milstein in the doorway during her grand opening of her Connie's Bakery & General Store in the lobby of Northern Westchester Hospital in Mount Kisco. All profits from the store will go to charity.

profits here and put it to charity."

The bakery opened its main store in February 2005 on the South Moger Promenade at Shoppers Park.

Its founder is Connie Milstein, a

philanthropist and former director of Emigrant Savings Bank.

"We're getting a chance to partner with the community again," said Milstein, who grew up in Scarsdale and

has homes in South Salem and New Canaan, Conn. "We feel we need to give back to our community."

Although the bakery has yet to post a profit, it still gives out donations from a foundation it oversees, said Debbie McCarthy, its director of marketing and community outreach.

"Like any small business it can take three years to break even, but we had donations in our foundation," McCarthy said. "People are able to support Connie's

mission in ways other than purchasing."

The foundation last year gave \$3,000 to several organizations, including the Mental Health Association of Westchester and Food PATCH, which distributes food to soup kitchens and pantries.

The charities that will receive donations this year have yet to be chosen. The hospital will get a slice of the profits from the new gift shop and cafe, McCarthy said.

The baked goods at the cafe are

prepared by apprentices who have gone through a Westchester County program that provides job-skill training to low-income residents.

The new cafe has jars of homemade biscotti and an array of miniature apple crisps, pecan and pumpkin pies.

"It gives sort of a homey welcome to the hospital," said Simeon Manber, the executive pastry chef. "It's another avenue for us to be able to try and make profits to give back."
