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20,000 Brownies for Obama

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20,000 of these brownies will hit Washington during the inauguration.

They've been baking 24 hours a day for two weeks. They've gone through 1,050 dozen eggs, 1,200 pounds of flour, and an incalculable amount of sugar. All of this in preparation for an inauguration giveaway of 20,000 brownies.

Real-estate executive, lawyer, and philanthropist Connie Milstein founded Connie's Bakery in Mount Kisco, New York, four years ago to help low- and no-in-

come New Yorkers get job training and earn a living wage. Each year, four people down on their luck are given the opportunity to spend a year as apprentices under Simeon Manber, former assistant pastry chef at Mario Batali's flagship New York restaurant, Babbo. All profits from the bakery go to local charities.

The bakery has given many people a new beginning, and now it's

contributing to a different kind of new beginning. Milstein, who has contributed money to various Democrats over the years, decided to honor the incoming President by shutting down the bakery for two weeks and devoting all of her attention to baking brownies for the inaugural masses.

"The people who are working for us are thrilled," says Ralph Cwerman, president of Milstein's nonprofit organization, the Humpty Dumpty Institute. "They're



A worker cutting the Obama brownies.

thrilled they're part of something bigger and that they have an opportunity to play a role in this historical occasion."

Assistant pastry chef Jaimie Jeffrey was living in a homeless shelter without a job three years ago. But on Sunday, she'll travel to Washington for the first time to witness Obama's swearing-in and help distribute the truckload of

packaged brownies. She says the program helped turn her life around and support her 11-year old daughter.

"I'm excited to be working for someone who supports Obama the way I do," says Jeffrey, who cried at the news of his election. "It's just surreal to me. I can't believe it."

The brownies will be delivered to

eight events, including 10,000 to Monday's Day of Service event at RFK Stadium. Each is individually wrapped with a red-white-and-blue sticker reading "Congratulations President Obama!"

And don't worry—Jeffrey claims quality hasn't been sacrificed for quantity. "Our brownies are extraordinary," she says. "They're nice and fudgy and soft. Mmmm."