

## The Kookie Monster

Written by Elizabeth Barrett  
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### **GHS grad launches baking business**

God was opening and slamming doors in Sara Raymond's life last June when one blew wide open, launching a business with a name suited for Halloween.

The Kookie Monster.

Raymond, 33, custom bakes cookies, bars, breads and other goodies.

With varieties such as peanut-butter smoothies—the most popular bar—to brownie bites with white chocolate chips to no-bake cookies (a popular family hand-me-down recipe) Raymond bakes about nine regular selections.

“And I try to accommodate anyone's request,” she said as her two daughters frosted Halloween sugar cookies in the kitchen.

Plus her famous quarter pounders—a giant four-ounce treat she claims is popular at events such as craft shows.

“People see it as a large single dose of cookie,” Raymond said.

The Kookie Monster was born after a week of oral surgery for Raymond and a little sleep, followed by 262 hours (nine days) of insomnia.

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To kill time during her waking hours, Raymond baked.

And baked and baked, churning out 22 dozen cookies that she plated and took to various businesses in Gothenburg.

“I felt I had frequented them but never properly thanked them,” said Raymond, who was employed at Subway. “They were received very well. People kept telling me I was in the wrong business.”

To get over her sleeplessness, the 1997 Gothenburg High School graduate consulted her local doctor and shared her dream of baking cookies as a business.

“She liked the idea,” Raymond said.

Together they bounced around names for the business until her 10-year-old daughter, MaKayla, came up with the “Cookie Monster” which the doctor suggested be changed to Kookie Monster to avoid plagiarizing the character from the kids’ television show Sesame Street.

“MaKayla said that fit me because I’m kookie,” Raymond said with a laugh.

Raymond came up with a business plan with help from her parents and friends and, on July 1, breathed life into the Kookie Monster.

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Since then she's filled orders from Gothenburg Public Schools, from individuals and sold her cookies at craft shows and vendor events in and out of town.

She was also recently featured on NTV's Friday morning news program "The Good Life."

"That was exciting and helped boost Saturday sales," Raymond said about selling cookies at an event in Lexington the next day.

She's tried unconventional marketing methods as well, stopping her white van in downtown streets to hand out her wares through the window for people to taste as they walk across the street.



Most of her orders are received through Facebook. Customers can also call Raymond at 537-6030 or visit her website [www.thekookiemonster.com](http://www.thekookiemonster.com).

The day before an event or when an order is needed, the mother of two usually starts baking in the afternoon or evening, pulling cookies in and out of the oven at her home often until the wee hours of the morning.

"So they're always fresh the next day," Raymond said.

So far, the biggest challenge to her baking endeavor is time.

Because she baby sits a toddler as well as 4-year-old, Abigail, during the day, she can work in baking around caring for them.

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“But it’s my perception of time, that I don’t have enough, that’s the challenge,” Raymond said. “And sometimes I don’t get enough sleep.”

The best part of the business, she said, is getting ready for an event or completion of an order.

“I get all excited,” Raymond said, noting that it’s difficult to not ask if customers like her cookies. “I like to see their faces when they try a cookie.”

Her goal in three years is to have a bakery, with a commercial kitchen, in a downtown building.

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