



# Crazy Bake

**Crazy Bake**  
[www.crazybake.com](http://www.crazybake.com)

**Natascha Prigge**  
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**W**e're just a couple of friends who wanted to help," says Natascha Prigge of Crazy Bake, which she and fellow expat Yvonne Gerig founded to assist patients at the Beijing Chaoyang District Mental Health Service Center. Crazy Bake started out as Crazy Grow in 2002, when Natascha and Yvonne first taught the patients to grow and sell their own organic vegetables. "The patients loved it," explains Natascha. "For the first time, they had something they could do on their own. We used the proceeds to improve their living conditions at the hospital." When winter came, the friends began to look for something they could teach the patients to do year-round,

and Crazy Bake was born in 2004.

Crazy Bake converted some hospital rooms into a kitchen, complete with industrial ovens, stoves, mixers and supplies, and they set about teaching their patients to make rolls, bagels, cinnamon buns and other baked goods, which they now sell in places such as Embassy House, the Beijing Institute of Technology and NU2YU Baby Store. Thus far, they've used the proceeds to buy washing machines, dryers and air conditioners for the patients. They've paid to put a roof over the central courtyard and bought patio furniture. And, as Natascha notes with pride, "Last July we rented a small house near the hospital where five patients live and are learning to care for themselves. It is one of the



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first assisted living centers in all of China."

Natascha and Yvonne have big goals for the coming year. "We want to improve the house so more patients can live there," says Natascha. "We want to train more patients to join our baking group. And we're looking to start 'Crazy Holidays,' to teach the patients to make holiday handicrafts."

Want to help? "Yvonne is from Switzerland, and I'm German," says Natascha. "We'd love to have someone from another country teach the patients some of their country's recipes." Or, if you can teach handicrafts, you'd be welcome to share what you know. You could also set aside a few hours to come read to the patients, who range in age from 15-88, or talk to them about your homeland. The patients suffer from diseases such as dementia, depression, schizophrenia and mental retardation, but most receive no therapy, so Crazy Bake is looking for ways to fill their hours and keep them entertained. Kids could help by organizing selling points for the baked goods in their schools. A high school student with an interest in journalism could help with Crazy Bake's website — they especially need new content, photos of their house and translations into other languages. To contact Crazy Bake, call Natascha directly or download the e-mail form on their website.

PHOTOS: JOCHEN PILS