

# Food for Thought

People · Products · Purpose

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**"Today's goal is only the starting point of tomorrow's journey."**

— Indian spiritual leader Sri Chinmoy

**"Everyday is a journey, and the journey itself is home."**

— Haiku poet Matsuo Basho

In the days leading up to Christmas, after a fire broke out and severely damaged several small businesses downtown, Bread and Butter Neighborhood Market organized a benefit cookout and gave 100 percent of the proceeds to the affected businesses.

"We didn't have a lot of money to give but we did have folks like Ranch Foods Direct willing to generously donate supplies," explained Aubrey Day who co-owns the store with Stacy Poore. "It's much easier to do this sort of thing on a small scale than to jump through all the corporate hoops big businesses require. We could come together and respond quickly."

As the store's primary meat supplier, Ranch Foods Direct immediately stepped up by providing burgers and brats.

Heather Huizing, one of the volunteers helping with the event, recalled being at a co-working space just blocks away when the fire broke out: "This happening right before the holidays made it exponentially worse than it already was."

Working downtown and living nearby, Heather makes frequent visits to Bread and Butter market. "I should have been born in Europe. I shop more like a European," she said. "I have a small refrigerator at home, and I get a few days worth of stuff that is fresh and ready to go, and then I come back a few days later when I need more. They know my name when I walk in the door, so it's a very personal experience." She also appreciates the wholesomeness and quality of Callicrate meats. "I lived in Africa for a number of years doing mission work in Sudan, and I experienced what it is like living in an environment where you don't have all the preservatives and additives we have in our food supply," she said. "When I came back to the U.S., I noticed that I didn't feel as good and would gain weight more rapidly. I felt like it wasn't just how much I was eating, but what I was eating. I prefer things in a natural state as close as possible to the way God made it."



**Mike and Don, above, cooked brats and burgers for a fire relief benefit hosted by Bread and Butter owners Stacy and Aubrey, below, with assistance from volunteers like Heather, left.**



# A natural foods store with history and heart

*Julie Sasinka is the owner-operator of longtime local Mountain Mamma Natural Foods, a Westside source of Callicrate meats that serves some of the community's most historic neighborhoods. "My husband is crazy over the Wagyu steaks," she says. "The meat cuts like butter." Her dad, Kent, shown at right, prefers the flat iron: "I slice it and marinate it in an Asian style sauce."*



## **JULIE, TELL US THE STORY BEHIND YOUR BUSINESS:**

My parents started the store in 1979, when I was nine years old. I was always helping in the business after school. I would stock groceries, sweep floors, take out the trash. So I've been doing this all my life. How it came about is that my mom had gotten sick, and when she was laid up, she went to a chiropractor and they gave her books on herbal medicine. So she started reading about natural medicine, and then she suddenly got well, which was interesting to her. They lived in Michigan at the time, but my dad had come out to Colorado hunting and fishing and fallen in love with it. So after they met he said he wanted to take her somewhere special, and this was it. When they got out here, they decided to open a health food store, really kind of on a whim. Back then, this part of town was still out in the country. There weren't many options to choose from. They opened a small store across the street from the current location. Then my dad started making my grandmother's

whole wheat bread, and when people would walk by — there was a Furr's Cafeteria in the neighborhood back then — they would smell that fresh bread and pop in. That heavy, dense, 100 percent whole wheat bread started a fan base, and it just grew from there. When the shopping center was built across the street in the early 1980s, they asked if we would be their anchor store, so we agreed to do that. We started with a small portion of the space, and as other businesses moved out, we gradually took over their spots. Now, my son, who works here full-time, and my daughter are the fourth generation in the business.

## **HOW HAVE THINGS CHANGED OVER THE YEARS?**

We're about the only health food store on the whole Front Range area that isn't part of a chain. It makes me feel sad, and blessed, all at the same time. Sad that other small businesses haven't

been able to make it, but blessed that our community has supported us all this time. The best business advice I ever heard came from Oprah. Back when so many of the talk shows were sensationalized and really terrible, she said, I didn't pay attention to what anybody else was doing, I just paid attention to what I could do the very best. I try to hone in on my own community and what they want and what I would want to put in my body. We feel like it's our job to vet every product.

*"Shopping should be an experience. In most countries, food is culture. Everything centers around food, and the quality of food. People take time to connect. I want to create that same vibe here," Julie says.*

## **WHY STOCK CALLICRATE MEATS?**

There's always been a debate about plant-based diets. Everyone has a right to their opinion, and you have to do what works for you. But in my experience with my own health, I've had naturopaths and acupuncturists who say you have to eat red meat. In doing my own investigation, I came to the realization that it's the quality of the meat that's important. Callicrate meats are the best quality in our area, plus they're local, and we always support local whenever we can.

## **WHAT'S YOUR BIGGEST CHALLENGE?**

So many companies are getting bought up by ginormous conglomerations, and then you're concerned whether the quality of the product is still what it was when it started. It's something we battle all day everyday, sorting that out for our customers.

## Customer Spotlight

# Meet long-time customer Linzee Jewell



### ARE YOU A COLORADO NATIVE?

I moved here 31 years ago from the Midwest, but my son, who is 23, he's a native, a true Colorado kiddo.

### WHY SHOP RANCH FOODS DIRECT?

My community's really important to me. I think shopping local is the ultimate expression of really appreciating where you are planted, by giving back to your community, and just knowing that you get to vote with your dollar, knowing where your money goes and feeling happy about that, and making a conscious purchase every time. I feel good coming in here,

not just the meat but the veggies are locally sourced, and I also like seeing the items produced by people in the community all in one place. Like the effervescent kombucha that's been fermented over there, or the Sourdough Boulangerie breads made by Shawn over on the bread rack. It's just really neat to see everybody's contribution and that they can all be part of it, each in their own way.

**FAVORITE PRODUCTS?** I like to get the bulk chicken and the Wagyu burger patties. I eat them by themselves a lot, just grill them up at home with some mushrooms on top. I switch it up among all the different kinds of mushrooms from Colorado Fungus Farm. I get the broth for my dogs, because it's really good for them as well as for me. I warm it up and pour it over their meals and let them join in on the fun. And then I always get a big bag of frozen marrow bones for them as well to keep in the freezer, so then I can bust one out and put it on a towel and go do what I need to do while they enjoy a treat.

**ANY ADVICE ON EATING HEALTHY IN THE NEW YEAR?** I had a holistic doctor tell me once that 80 percent of the groceries that are in the regular supermarket are basically not good for you and only 20 percent of it is actual real food. Ranch Foods Direct is like a Mountain Mama's store, in that the inventory is condensed to where it's all the good nuggets you really need. Food in general has become overdone, I think. These are the staples, the salt of the earth stuff that allows us to thrive without all of the additives. They're keeping it real here.

Shop the perimeter. That's standard advice on how to buy more fresh natural foods and fewer ultraprocessed items. At small stores like Ranch Foods Direct, Bread and Butter Neighborhood Market and Mountain Mama Natural Foods it's quick and easy to find the good!

**DESCRIBE A NEW DISH YOU MADE RECENTLY:** Soup in a pumpkin. I found out it's like chili — even better the next day! I made it by adding herbs, cheese and some broth to a pumpkin and baking it in the oven.

## In store now

**COUNTERACT COLORADO'S DRY WINTER AIR** with tallow balm from JoJo's Apothecary. Now available in fresh new scents, including Lavender and Cedar. Prices range from \$20.99 to \$23.49 for a jar that will last a couple of months.

**ALWAYS IN SEASON** locally grown gourmet fresh mushrooms from Colorado Fungus Farm, \$12 per pack. Several varieties to choose from. Selection varies.

**FIND EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO STUFF A PUMPKIN:** Combine cooked ham, sausage or ground beef with your favorite veggies, cheese, cubes of bread and cubes of butter, stuff the mixture inside a small pumpkin or winter squash that's been cleaned of seeds and any tough threads. Gently pour a little beef bone broth or some cream over the mix to moisten, then bake the squash until it softens but before it falls apart. Start checking it about an hour into your baking time to find out if the flesh is tender.



# Meet Daniel Smith, manager of the Peak to Plains retail market

**TELL US ABOUT YOUR BACKGROUND:** My dad was in the military, so I grew up moving around all the time. When I graduated high school, I decided to go into the Army. Lots of deployments, lots of action. I was medically discharged in 2018. As far as my agricultural background, my grandfather's parents had a farm, and they were all butchers. They raised pork and cattle. With the move to the cities in the 1940s and 50s, the farms were all kind of dying out, so that's when my family got out of it. When I decided I was done with doing military stuff, I wanted to get more in tune with my food again and eventually went into meat cutting. So it was kind of like coming full circle for me.

**WHY RANCH FOODS DIRECT?** I'm all about what (owner) Mike Callicrate is doing. It's fantastic. We need more of it! We need more regenerative agriculture. I'm a big supporter of knowing where our food comes from. Big Pharma and the big retail stores are putting stuff into our food that is making us sick.

**FUTURE GOALS?** In 3 to 4 years, I would love to have my own small farm and do something similar to what Mike is doing.



Need recipe ideas or cooking instructions? Just ask a sales associate or butcher for help!

*Happy New Year*

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