Foodservice @ Retail

Burns Family Stores Are No Stranger to Foodservice at Retail

by Mike Berger/*editor–Northeast*

Pat Burns, owner of Burns Family Neighborhood Markets, is no stranger to prepared foods and foodservice at retail. He saw its potential in 1996 and seized upon the opportunity. He now owns nine stores, and each has large foodservice sections.

In mid-August, ShopRite of Brookhaven opened in Brookhaven, Pennsylvania, and on Sept. 30, Burns opened up Fresh Grocer store in Upper Darby, Pennsylvania. A third store will open in Grays Ferry, Pennsylvania, a Philadelphia neighborhood, in October.

The 62,000-s.f. ShopRite of Brookhaven is operated by the Burns family, which has more than 30 years experience in the supermarket business in the Greater Philadelphia area.

The family's newest ShopRite stores offer a large selection of fresh produce and natural and organic products along with thousands of sale items each week.

The Brookhaven location underwent an extensive renovation to meet ShopRite standards.

The store has more than 40 varieties of homestyle prepared hot entrees made fresh daily, sushi and Chinese cuisine, a salad bar, brick-oven pizza, fire-grilled chicken, and made-to-order hoagies and sandwiches.

Customers also will find:

• An in-store bakery featuring special occasion cakes, freshly made rolls, breads and pastries;

• A meat department offering a service case with trained butchers available for custom cuts and special orders;

• A wide variety of fruits, vegetables and local produce;

• A floral shop;

• A full-service deli department with gourmet and grab-and-go items;

• A beer garden with domestic and imported beers; and

• A seafood department offering fresh Grade A fish delivered daily to the store along with steam and clean service for lobster and shrimp purchases.

The Brookhaven store employs approximately 180 full- and part-time workers and is open 24 hours daily.

The 53,000-s.f. Fresh Grocer of Upper Darby will employ approximately 200 full- and part-time workers and will be open daily from 6 a.m. to midnight.

Burns said all three stores were former Pathmark locations that were rebuilt with new equipment and merchandise. Greeting shoppers when they enter the store are large produce sections to the right and large open kitchens so shoppers can see all fresh food under preparation and so shoppers can interact with the chefs.

Each of Burns' stores cater to the demographics of the neighborhood, and he plans his menu items from the ethnicity of the area.

Burns said his Brookhaven store director has come up with a unique idea that he uses in all of his nine stores. One customer with a child with Asperger's syndrome was looking for sensory items to touch rather than the traditional candy items. Kourtis came up with the sensory aisle with little balls and toys.

At the ShopRite of Brookhaven ribbon cutting, from left: Pennsylvania State Senator Tom McGarrigle; Bridget Burns, Burns Family Neighborhood Markets; Mayor Mike Hess, Brookhaven Borough; Heather Boyd, chief of staff to Rep. Leanne Krueger-Braneky; Helen Burns, Greg Peil and Bernadette McLoughlin, Burns Family Neighborhood Markets; Patrick J. Burns, president, Burns Family Neighborhood Markets; Paul Kourtis, store director, ShopRite of Brookhaven; Frank Vadino, Cold Technology; Tim Brown, Burns Family Neighborhood Markets; and Councilman Vawn Donaway, Brookhaven Borough.
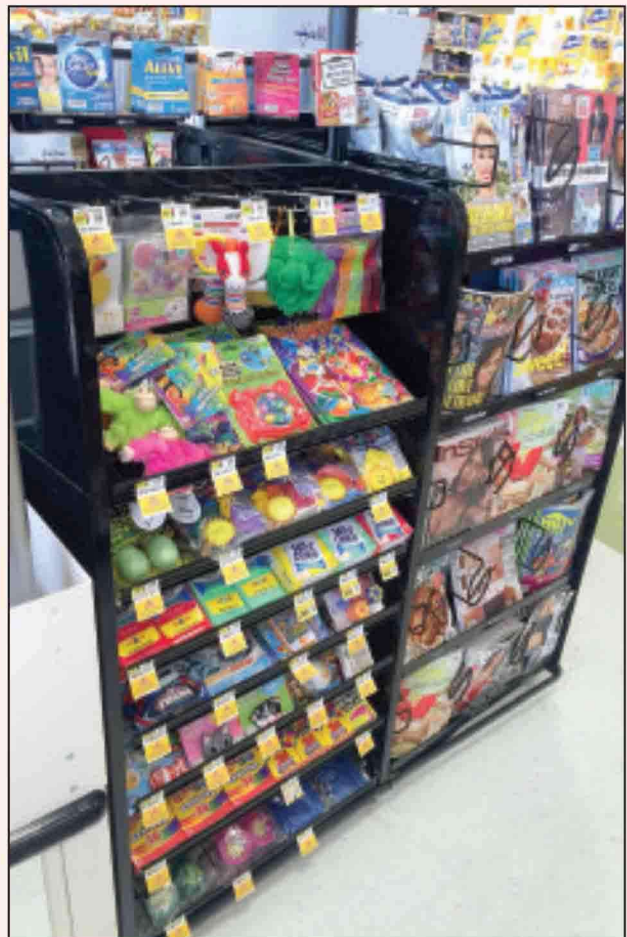
This sensory-friendly checkout section is designed for children who have conditions such as Asperger's.

Shoppers can pick up a variety of already-cooked poultry products to take home.

The Burns family remodeled the former Pathmarks to include large open kitchens so shoppers can see the food being prepared and can interact with the chefs.

A selection of hot soups from the ShopRite Kitchen.

Hot food selections are tailored to the neighborhood.

The "garden fresh" salad bar.

The store offers fresh-baked whole pizzas and slices.

The pizza bar has a smiling overseer.