



OLD FASHION FOODS LTD.

“A Family Affair”

www.oldfashionfoods.com



501 Victoria Avenue

“Weezy”
The Old Fashion
Foods Lady
& Vita-Man

Bridging exceptional service into the future

By Brittany Staines
For L-P Specialty Products

Though sporting a new look with a fresh mural painted at its Victoria Avenue location, Old Fashion Foods is both evolving and steeped in the tradition of outstanding customer service.

“The mural was something we wanted to give back to the city,” said partner Sunny Coles. “We had a big wall there, and we’ve been in the neighbourhood for years and years.” The store hired a team led by Danny Fernandez, who turned the graffiti-prone surface into a prairie scene featuring children, flowers and butterflies. Its theme is both forward-looking and traditional, much like the business itself.

Coles and her business partner, Kari Waldbauer, grew up working in Old Fashion Foods, but they are not the original founders. It began as BEST-O-MILK by Coles’s father, Rene Bilodeau, who offered door-to-door powdered milk sales in 1964. With the Dad’s Cookies factory in east Regina, cookies were added to the lineup. Coles’s mother and grandmother — Marilyn Good and Jackie Hoag — and Waldbauer’s father, Ron

Schroeder, expanded the business, adding more grocery items until they needed a retail location. Bulk groceries evolved into vitamins. Stores multiplied and expanded to Saskatoon, Weyburn and Fort Qu’Appelle. The two families were eventually bought out by their next generation.

Today, Old Fashion Foods carries bulk groceries, spices, vitamins, herbal supplements, organics and products for special dietary needs. The customers’ needs are just as diverse. “Our key to success is that we have the ‘odd ball’ things,” said

Coles. “If people want something, we really do go out of our way to find it and stock it.”

Coles and Waldbauer have introduced other personal touches, such as mascot VitaMan. An employee thought up the character, who was named by Coles’s son, John. Today, VitaMan attends many community events. “He goes wherever we can get him, and he always has something to give away,” said Coles.

Old Fashion Foods owes much of its success to its employees. “We have awesome staff,” said Coles. Some of the location managers have 25 to 30 years of history with the store. They have a great deal of product knowledge and have received significant training from suppliers. Coles and Waldbauer have invested heavily in employee development as a result of their guiding principles. “We’re only as successful as our employees,” Coles said.

As Coles reflects upon Old Fashion Foods’ history, she is grateful to the people who have made it successful. “We are very blessed to have the same employees and customers for years and years. With many businesses, good people come and go, but we have been very lucky.” With a strong foundation, it prepares to welcome the next generation.

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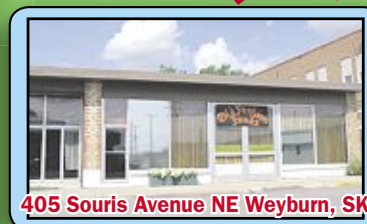
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