

Holiday Decorating is a Family Affair

While many of our stores often compete to see which store can build the most magical holiday display, Dennis Stickney has always been the team leader to beat. But this year, his son, Dakota, challenged his father for top holiday honors.

While stores in Traverse City, Detroit, Toledo, Columbus and Cincinnati often compete with Dennis's Knapp's Corner location to be the top performer in the company, the recognition has typically been awarded to Dennis's store. After all, the team leader has been known for building some of our stores' best holiday displays over the last three decades.

Some of his best practices have been adopted at other stores, but no one has been able to challenge his uncanny ability to channel the imaginations and buying habits of our customers – until this year.

In nearby Greenville, where the first Meijer store was built 86 years ago, another holiday display dubbed "Fred's Tree Farm" was catching the eye of customers as well as Dennis Stickney. Featuring a fence that invitingly wrapped around a seasonal area full of rustic charm, it had all the hallmarks of something Dennis might have done 30 years ago when he first worked at the Meijer in Lowell. Something that makes Dennis himself smile when told, after years of leading by example, his son was the one finally challenging him at his own game.

"I've watched him since I was little and know how much he loves his job," said 20-year-old Dakota Stickney, who used to help Dennis at home as his dad planned his work projects. "He's always inspired me to work harder and taught me how to work through problems, so I wanted to create something where you enter our store and are immediately welcomed with Christmas spirit. Thanks to the rest of our team, it turned out great."

Customers at the Greenville store took notice of Dakota's talents.

"They walked in pushing the cart, checking their phone and all of a sudden stopped – sometimes they would go back and ask the greeter about it and say they've never seen anything like it," Store Director Leah Brown said. "It created a magical, magnet effect that immediately changed their mood for the whole shopping trip."

Amid a year of challenges and pandemic concerns, the talents of this father-son powerhouse were needed more than ever to bring a little extra holiday cheer to customers and build on the [growing interest in holiday decorating](#) we saw from our customers this year.

"The goal this year was to offer something really stylish and visual to help them see the possibilities and variety to brighten their holidays," Dennis said. "So, I'm grateful that customers started early and were more inspired to decorate their homes."

"Being part of the community is important every holiday season, but when we see the faces of children light up and parents use our store as a holiday backdrop, it makes the connection even more real," Market Director Jay Mahabir said.

Additional assets available online: [Photos](#)⁽¹⁾

<https://meijercommunity.com/Holiday-Decorating-is-a-Family-Affair>