

A Kentucky Classic, Shared Broader: Bringing Ruth Hunt Candies to More Neighbors

In central Kentucky, a box from Ruth Hunt Candies is more than something sweet. It's a taste of home, passed from one generation to the next. Founded in 1921, Ruth Hunt Candies began in Ruth Hunt's home kitchen in Mount Sterling, Kentucky. What started as sweets shared with her bridge club became a business when friends urged her to sell her treats. In an era when women rarely owned companies, Ruth took a chance and built something that's still going strong more than a century later.

Today, that legacy is carried by Larry Kezele and Toby Moore. Larry purchased the company from Ruth's daughter in 1988. He was 39 years old and ready for a new challenge after a career in local government. Toby joined as a high school student looking for a summer job, an early start that would turn into a career. He stayed on through college while studying business, helping introduce new systems and technology that strengthened day-to-day operations.

"It was small, and it was falling apart," Larry said. "But it had a history, and it had a reputation."

From the beginning, they focused on protecting what makes Ruth Hunt Candies special: time-tested recipes, hands-on craftsmanship, and signature treats like the Blue Monday candy bar. For families in and around Mount Sterling, Ruth Hunt Candies isn't just a local business. It's part of the way they celebrate, gift, and gather.

"At holidays, it's become a tradition," Toby said. "People introduce their new friends to a taste of their childhood."

Those moments show up all year, especially at Christmas, Valentine's Day and the Kentucky Derby. That's when customers line up for favorites like chocolate-covered strawberries, bourbon balls and boxed chocolates, ready to share with family and friends.

"What makes our candy special is that it's still handmade," Toby said.

In 2000, when Meijer expanded into Kentucky and opened its Lexington store, the team wanted to feature high-quality local products. Ruth Hunt Candies, with deep roots in central Kentucky, was a natural fit.

Today, by carrying Ruth Hunt Candies in stores in places like Lexington and Louisville, Meijer is helping more customers discover a brand many Kentuckians have loved for years.

"Meijer has helped broaden our customer base," Larry said. "There are people who have never heard of us."

The partnership also spotlights another Kentucky staple: bourbon. Ruth Hunt Candies creates bourbon-infused chocolates and works with well-known brands on products that reflect the region's flavor and culture.

More than a century after Ruth Hunt began making candy at home, her legacy is still thriving in Mount Sterling and reaching new neighbors across Kentucky in partnership with Meijer.

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

<https://meijercommunity.com/2026-07-15-A-Kentucky-Classic.-Shared-Broader-Bringing-Ruth-Hunt-Candies-to-More-Neighbors>