

## Every Cart Counts

One million Meijer grocery carts seem like an impossible number for anyone to push. But when you've worked at our Grand Ledge, Mich. store since 2008 and bring enthusiasm to your job every day, team member Dave Esch proves even the largest goals are possible.

When hearing about the achievement, his supervisor Scott Flanagan said he wasn't surprised. He remembers the time he asked Dave to take a break because of rainy weather coming through.

"I sent someone to take his place and asked him to come to the team center," Scott said. "He found me and thought he was being punished. He asked me what he did wrong."

When he heard the reason was because he was doing a great job – that the extra time was a chance to warm up – Dave was very matter of fact with his supervisor:

"He told me pushing carts is why he comes to work and asked if he could get back out there," remembered Scott with a big smile.

"That's the last time we suggested he take a break."

In late July, our Grand Ledge store hosted a small celebration a few days before Dave officially pushed his one millionth cart. A peer group of men from South Church in Lansing asked Store Director Dana Beattie if she could help them surprise Dave by hosting a small celebration with friends and family.

The event was a huge success. Meijer leadership recognized his achievement by presenting him with a Meijer cart and gift basket. The store's bakery team designed a large cake. WILX-TV's mid-afternoon community show and a reporter from the Lansing State Journal interviewed Dave, his mom, Carolyn, and sister, Phyllis.

Because Dave is a lifelong Michigan State University fan, his friends even arranged to have Sparty, the university's mascot, and new Michigan State men's hockey coach attend the event. When asked about his achievement, Dave joked he wanted to challenge Sparty to a competition.

Perhaps most unbelievable about the achievement is that hardly anyone knew about his goal. He only shared his count with his group of friends at church. Unbeknownst to anyone at our Grand Ledge store, he had been keeping track of his cart count in a spreadsheet for more than 12 years. Each day, he dutifully logged onto his computer as soon as he got home from work to enter the tally.

While the number of carts entered for a day's work varied over the years, Dave found that he pushes between 400-500 carts per shift on average.

"He really loves to do his own thing," his mom said. "Because he was born with a disability, he doesn't have to work, so we didn't know what would happen as he got older. But he's been working since 12<sup>th</sup> grade at Waverly High School and we don't know where he gets the energy."

When he answers the question most frequently asked since revealing why he didn't ever want to take a break, Dave proudly states an impressive tally.

"I'm not saying I have muscles like The Rock, but there was one time I did 700 carts in a day," he said. "That day must've been a very long one (day)."

<https://meijercommunity.com/Every-Cart-Counts>