

Marquette, Mich. Store Director Wins Fred Meijer Award

We are proud to announce Marquette Meijer Store Director John Spaulding as the 2020 recipient of the Fred Meijer Award. With only one honoree each year, the Fred Meijer Award is the highest honor a team member can receive. The award recognizes team members who demonstrate our values of humility, generosity and passion for serving others.

While John's career at Meijer has spanned more than 42 years and 10 store locations, it started off like many other teenagers' first jobs did – in the bottle room of his local store.

"I started to work for Meijer as a 16-year-old boy to earn gas money so I could drive my car... It was a job," John said. "As I began to grow and realize what the company was really all about, it was so much more than a job."

Winning this award is extra special to John because Fred Meijer was one of his many mentors over the years.

"I had the pleasure of knowing Fred Meijer and the way he treated everyone, even a 16-year-old kid working in the bottle room... You quickly became a part of the family," he said.

Fred Meijer and his sons are among the many mentors John says taught him the culture of the company. One key piece of the Meijer culture that would play a key role in making John the leader he is today was the emphasis on serving our community.

"As I continued to grow and advance, I was really impressed by the way we supported the communities we served. I think back then we didn't even talk about it – it was just what we did," John said. "When I became a Store Director, I knew what was expected of me: not only taking care of the business but to be out in the community and supporting what was important to our customers."

It's easy to see that John really took this commitment to heart. Having spent most of his career in Traverse City, he was very active in his support of the beloved Traverse City Cherry Festival and, as an avid cyclist, he frequently participated in the Iceman Cometh Challenge and VASA races – both occurring in the winter. He also supported many organizations in the area including the Father Fred Foundation Food Drive and the local Toys for Tots program.

In 2018, John moved to the Upper Peninsula to open the Marquette Meijer store as its Store Director. Upon arriving in the new community, he immediately began doing what he does best – building connections and serving others.

In his role, he instituted Marquette's first-ever "Shop with a Hero" event to help children in foster care shop for holiday gifts for their families. He also developed a partnership with Northern Michigan University, donating semi-trucks for their CDL certification program, creating the Meijer Student Athlete Refueling Station with healthy snack options for student athletes going between class and practice, and hosting back-to-school events. He is also active with the Upper Peninsula Sled Dog Association and Noquemanon Trail Network and serves on the community committee of the United Way of Marquette County.

As part of his prize for winning the Fred Meijer Award, Meijer is donating \$5,000 in John's name to the Noquemanon Trail Network.

"I have stayed for over 40 years as this job has become so much more than [a job]," John said. "I feel that our company's philosophy of enriching the communities we serve is the right thing to do and I am honored to do this fully supported by Meijer."

Much like Fred Meijer, Spaulding prizes relationships and connections. He makes a point of learning the name of every team member in his store and building personal relationships with them. He also gets to know many of his customers by name and enjoys walking the store floor greeting customers and makes sure his store carries the local products they want.

"Working with so many great people who have also continued to grow the company and teach the culture, I feel so special that I was selected to have received this award," he said. "It is a very humbling thing to be recognized for this award. This is truly one of the highlights of my life."

To view a video about John and see his reaction when we surprised him with this award, click [here](#).

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

<https://meijercommunity.com/Marquette-Mich-Store-Director-Wins-Fred-Meijer-Award>