

## Well-known West Sider celebrates 5-year anniversary alongside Bridge Street Market

John Schultz is a true fixture on Grand Rapids' West Side. As a Bridge Street Market team member and president of the John Ball Area Neighbors (JBAN), John can be found at various community gatherings throughout the year, volunteering his time to help his neighbors at every opportunity.

John started his role at Bridge Street Market on July 16, 2018, as one of the first team members hired for the store. After several weeks of training at the Walker Campus headquarters, he jumped right in to help stock shelves in the newly constructed, still empty shell of a building to help prep for the grand opening on Aug. 29, 2018. Since then, John has been an integral part of the store team.

Today, John works primarily in the meat department, but lends his support wherever he's needed, including customer service, gathering carts in the parking lot, assisting coworkers and helping customers find a specific product on the shelf.

Through his roles at Bridge Street Market and with JBAN, John's community involvement has only grown. From representing the store at the neighborhood Trunk or Treat on Halloween, helping organize "Pop with a Cop" in the store's café and volunteering at National Night Out to rototilling the new community gardens at Sibley Elementary School built by his colleagues, he's nearly everywhere.

Looking back on the last 5 years, one thing that sticks out to John is the transformation of the neighborhood since the opening of Bridge Street Market.

"Neighbors have an affordable place to get healthy food now, and the whole neighborhood is more walkable," he said. "Before Bridge Street Market, you couldn't even buy a banana on the West Side."

His favorite part of being on the Bridge Street Market team? The family atmosphere. "Everyone gets along, and we're all treated really well," he continued. "There's an open-door policy so I can always talk to management about anything, which is really great."

Customers continue to love the store and have grown accustomed to seeing John on their shopping trips. One local shopper recently told him that Bridge Street Market is her favorite place to shop because team members will go out of their way to help her locate a specific item, walking with her to make sure she finds what she needs instead of just pointing her in the right direction.

Bridge Street Market not only supports local organizations in the community, but also helps to launch and grow small businesses by giving them a start on the market's shelves, often for their first retail experience. Currently, the store has more than 300 local vendors and 5,000 local products in addition to national brands and Meijer brand items.

"We love when local small businesses bring in new products to stock and sample," he said. "It really gives us insight into how much hard work and time they put into their products and helps us talk about them to customers, too. We appreciate their trust in us to get started and we love to see them grow and succeed."

While John is very well-known in the neighborhood, he credits the entire store team, especially Store Director Mitchell Cook, for making Bridge Street Market a great place to work and shop.

"Mitchell works so hard to ensure that the store is more than a place to get groceries, but also a good neighbor," John said. "He'll always find a way to donate gift cards or water if someone needs them, and he really cares about our customers."

Bridge Street Market celebrates its 5-year anniversary on Sunday, Aug. 27, with an outdoor artisan market, live music, fresh hatch chile roasting and an adoption event with the Humane Society of West Michigan.

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Additional assets available online: [\*\*Photos\*\*](#) <sup>(4)</sup>

<https://meijercommunity.com/Well-known-West-Sider-celebrates-5-year-anniversary-alongside-Bridge-Street-Market>

