

Rochester's Best

Wegmans - a home-grown success story

By Missy McCullum

As a mother of three, Linda Gay, of Brockport, believes Wegmans Food Markets' in-store child care is a "God-send."

The center at the Chili-Paul store was built shortly after she became pregnant with her third child in 1994.

"I didn't have to worry about placing a newborn even though lots of other places won't take one," said Gay who works in the prepared foods department.

Now that her youngest son, Braden, is a toddler, Gay can visit him during her lunch break for excursions around the store in their "bye-bye buggy."

"Wegmans is family friendly," she said, adding that the company seems to think that if their employees are happier at work, they're happier at home, too.

She's not alone in noticing that Wegmans works hard to accommodate their employees.

Wyoma Best, vicepresident of communication for the Greater Rochester Metro Chamber of Commerce, called Wegmans "one of the most progressive employers in the Rochester area."

Wegmans took a leadership role in making employee child care a priority, Best pointed out. "They were one of the first companies here to see the need for it."

Because it recognized that many of its employees work at times when traditional child care is unavailable, Wegmans first opened up a facility on Latta Road in back in 1990, for the children of both employees and customers, said Anne Peterson, Wegmans' director of employment.



Wegmans' employees enjoy flexible hours that fit their schedules

Peterson.

enced manager who taught her the ropes, gave her objective feedback, and evaluated her ideas without judging them.

"They opened up a way for me to contribute," said Tomanovich, who added that Wegman's is a "we" company.

Wegmans' record of "coaching and mentoring young people, as well as supporting them on the job and in higher education is well-respected," said Best.

The supermarket's high regard for its employees has also caught the attention of some marketing and career services faculty members of at least three colleges.

Leigh McAllister, professor of marketing at the University of Texas at Austin, considers Wegmans "one of the best job opportunities in the food industry."

After checking out the Rochester chain on the suggestion of a local supermarket retailer, McAllister now recommends that her candidates for master's degrees in business administration consider working there.

"Wegmans is very forward-thinking and is redefining the industry," McAllister said. "The positions are challenging and give (graduates) an opportunity to show what they can do."

Gene German, professor of marketing at Cornell University, puts Wegmans at the "top of the list of companies with good career opportunities."

"The culture within Wegmans provides opportunities for young men and women to grow, be creative, and feel a sense of accomplishment," he added.

Of his students who have gone on to work with Wegmans,