Nomination: Crest Haven FarmMarket
Shawn Snyder, Co-Owner
Scott Keefer, Co-Owner
Small Business Person of the Year

Submitted by Bucknell University Small Business Development Center

December 7, 2022

Scott Keefer and Shawn Snyder have demonstrated commitment to honoring the history of the business they acquired and the community they serve; and have dedicated themselves to growing Crest Haven Farm Market for the long term. In their 6 years of ownership, they have made a 46 year old company more successful than ever before: tripling their sales in the last three years and more than tripling their employment.

They not only added a second location to meet the needs and desires of the community - but they did so DURING the PANDEMIC. COVID challenged them, but it was a time when they truly showed their resilience as a company. They remained open and provided life-giving sustenance to a community afraid to shop in larger grocery stores. The SBA’s PPP support saved this company by helping to keep the doors open and people employed.

Beyond their own two buildings and rapidly growing number of employees, they support over 20 other small businesses who supply their goods. One local baker even needed to build their own new facility to keep up with the increased demand as Crest Haven grew.

Their success can not only be measured in sales, employment, and net worth; but also importantly, in the many ways in which they consistently go above and beyond to serve their community. Crest Haven is the go-to for all community fundraisers: they help everyone!

Growth in Employment and Expansion

When Shawn and Scott acquired Crest Haven, there were 10 employees, but with their dedication, ambition, and responsiveness to the needs and desires of the community, they
increased the number of employees to 25 in 2019. They dramatically increased again in 2020 through 2012 when they expanded to a new location, and now employ 40 staff!

**Rapid Sales Growth and Net Worth Increase after Acquiring a 46-Year-Old Company**

In the third year of operation, they saw the net worth of the business break into positive territory, and they are grateful to have had the opportunity to be building a community institution of tangible value not only to their community, but also to themselves, their families, and their employees. They were able to break an early goal of $1 Million in sales in just their second year of operation, and in 2021 have more than tripled that figure across the two locations. Their goal of hitting $5 Million in annual revenue seems not that far off!

**Overcoming Crisis, Demonstrating Resiliency**

Although Crest Haven is a success story today, the “train” of this business was almost stopped in its tracks before it even got out of the station. Shawn recounts how the initial lender they approached was not able to arrive at a deal to support them, and their dream was almost dashed. However, with the help of the SBDC, and expert SBA specialists at M&T Bank, they got back on track with a SBA-backed financing package.

The second major crisis they faced came at a critical time, as they were first experience sales and employment growth: the COVID-19 pandemic. Scott and Shawn recall the incredible stress they felt as they took steps to keep they employees and customers safe. They also shared that the PPP program saved the company - without the SBA’s assistance, they may not have made it past this challenge.

**Contributions to help their community**

Crest Haven has frequently helped organizations such as schools, churches, and fire companies in their fundraising efforts. The company has donated products such as whoopie pies and offered low cost materials for hoagies to help a variety of community group raise funds. One of these hoagie fundraiser campaigns helped a local church raise over $1500, and another fundraiser involved the sales of over 1000 whoopie pies. The Danville & Riverside Food Bank recognized them for their service in helping those less fortunate during the pandemic.

Scott Keefer served on the Catawissa Borough Council, which gave him great insight into the needs, operations, and traditions of the local community. He brings this experience, and the many connections he made during that time to the operations of Crest Haven.

Their remarkable level of community support and engagement is demonstrated in amazing ways on their lively Facebook page, https://www.facebook.com/cresthavenfarmmarket/ which is followed at present by 17,232 people. One of their most engaging posts (featured in the
supplemental materials) included expressions of gratitude, gift card giveaways - and over 800 comments and over 800 shares by Crest Haven fans.

**SBA Loan Activity and SBDC Technical Assistance**

In addition to six years of SBDC consulting assistance across business planning and expansion, financial counseling and marketing advising, and human resource management advising; Scott and Shawn sought SBDC consulting assistance as they applied for U.S. Small Business Administration’s (SBA) Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) as soon as it became available early in the COVID-19 pandemic. They are exceptionally grateful for both PPP support and for the initial support of a SBA-backed loan through M&T Bank.

Summary of SBA financial support:

- SBA-backed loan for initial acquisition of business: $575,000
- COVID-19 Paycheck Protection Program (SBA): $37,000

They emphatically state that “**Crest Haven would not have happened without the SBA!**”.

**Conclusion**

Crest Haven, now in its 52nd year of operation, and 6th under their ownership, is one of the most beloved businesses of the Susquehanna Valley. Their vision is to stay in business and keep growing for at least another 5 decades of success and service to their community.

I am proud to join my entire team in nominating Shawn Snyder and Scott Keefer for recognition with the S.B.A.’s award as Small Business Person of the Year; I hope that you will find that they are highly deserving of being selected!

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at sstumbri@bucknell.edu or 570-577-3791.

Best Regards,

Steven Stumbris
Director
Bucknell University Small Business Development Center
Crest Haven Farm Market has been a tradition in the Danville-Riverside area since 1971. In 2017, with an SBA backed business loan, Shawn Snyder and Scott Keefer purchased the business. The business expanded to a second location in Bloomsburg in 2020.

A ribbon cutting celebration was held in May of 2018 with new owners Scott Keefer and Shawn Snyder. Joining in the celebration were Rush Township Supervisors, M&T Bank, and the Bucknell University Small Business Development Center (SBDC).
Crest Haven Farm Market - Is in the News

Daily Item, July 6, 2017
Snyder and Keefer take over 46 year old farm market.
Crest Haven Farm Market has Digital Presence

From Facebook to Website, Crest Haven keeps their digital audience engaged on a daily basis.
Crest Haven Farm Market has been recognized for going above and beyond for community members at risk. The local Food Bank recently recognized them for their service in helping those less fortunate during the pandemic.
Crest Haven Farm Market Has an Audience

With over 15,000 followers on Facebook, Crest Haven Farm Market engages with their customers daily. This one post received 819 comments and was shared 828 times.
Crest Haven Farm Market has Products
Lots of Products!!
Crest Haven Farm Market Smokes.....Everything
Crest Haven Farm Market is Good People -
and a Grateful Community

At the Grand Opening with the Bucknell SBDC…

5 years (and a few more gray hairs) later:
Nominees for U.S. SBA Small Business Person of the Year!
Crest Haven Farm Market is a Success Story!

New Owners Firmly Planted at Crest Haven Farm Market

Interested in growing a new career, entrepreneurs Scott Keefer and Shawn Snyder reached out to the Bucknell University Small Business Development Center (SBDC) for assistance in buying a farm market. This wasn’t just your ordinary roadside farm stand, it was the Crest Haven Farm Market, a locally famous institution for nearly 50 years.

The SBDC helped Keefer and Snyder throughout the entire process of purchasing the business: consultants aided in reviewing business plans, developing pro-forma financial projections, creating market and industry analysis, and assisting with securing the capital they needed.

Crest Haven Farm Market carries locally produced raw milk, fresh fruits and vegetables, maple syrup, and baked goods… basically every food from Apples to Zucchini. While keeping Crest Haven Market’s traditions of supporting the community, maintaining high quality, and offering customers affordable prices, Keefer and Snyder have made improvements which will continue to lead the market to success.

Since taking over, Keefer and Snyder have lead Crest Haven Farm Market to attaining the highest daily sales the market has ever seen. Their commitment to always putting the customer first is paying off. In a recent post on their Facebook Business page, one customer wrote “Visited the market today. Store was very nice and clean. Staff was very friendly and helpful. New owners are great and have done an awesome job with the store”. Words every new business owner wants to hear!