



What do the 600-employee grocery store and the 3-person not-for-profit profiled in this issue of Sound Advice have in common? Account Executive Deb Haldeman. Based on their enthusiastic reviews of Deb's work, we thought everyone should get to know her a little better.

How did you come to StoudtAdvisors?

After about 15 years working for a third party administrator in everything from client management to claims to marketing, I wanted to be more actively involved with clients. I was looking for that direct, personal connection with clients and knew that StoudtAdvisors would give me that opportunity.

What is your client service philosophy?

Make every client feel like they are your most important client. It takes a lot of organization and time

management skills – especially during those times of year when open enrollments are heaviest — but it's always worth it. It's what makes the job rewarding.

What is your favorite part of your job?

Finding the best solution for each individual client. I love knowing I have found a plan that makes both the employer and the employees feel like winners. I also love open enrollment meetings. I enjoy getting together with the people who are actually using these plans and seeing the results of my work.

What accomplishment are you most proud of at StoudtAdvisors?

The client relationship and real friendships I have established in the last seven years.

What gets you out of bed in the morning?

Knowing that every new day is a new opportunity.

StoudtAdvisors and Darrenkamp's Markets:

Putting the whole team behind you

Plenty of busy human resources professionals can sympathize with doing the work of three people. They can also recognize that while many have mastered that particular skill, they can't yet be in three places at once. Unless they have a relationship like Darrenkamp's Markets and StoudtAdvisors.

The busy season

Julie Duvall, Darrenkamp's Director of Human Resources, performs a regular balancing act, overseeing employment, payroll and employee benefits for three stores across Lancaster County. And while she has a staff member based at each store for support in the day-to-day issues, when it comes time to deal with major issues like health insurance, it comes down to her.

"My time gets stretched pretty thin," Duvall explains. "Especially at open enrollment time. But StoudtAdvisors will just come in and run the show for me. It's great to have someone I can depend on for that."

And it's no small job. Come August, when they are gearing up to start a new plan year, Darrenkamp's will hold four to five open enrollment meetings at each store.

Behind the scenes

There's plenty of work that goes on behind the scenes to prepare for those meetings. It starts with the Darrenkamp's Benefits Committee (which consists of Owner Joe Darrenkamp, Pharmacist Mike Reed, CFO Bob Zigent, HR Supervisor Jen McCloskey and Duvall) putting together information on the company's direction, budget, pharmacy and HR needs. StoudtAdvisors Account Executive Deb Haldeman then begins looking at all the options and narrowing them down based on the committee's data and her experience with the client.

"Deb understands our culture and philosophy here at Darrenkamp's. She knows what kind of plans will work, and which one's won't," says Duvall. "She just 'gets' our employees."

Continued on page 2

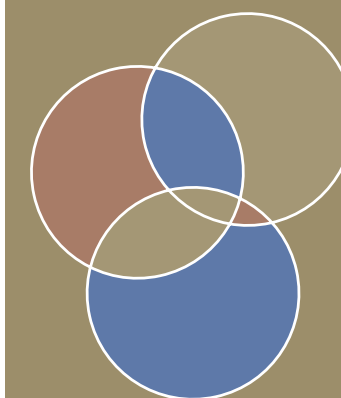


The Darrenkamp Family (l to r):
Dave, Jane, Jerry, Joe, Lynn and Larry

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sound advice



Putting the whole team behind you

Continued from front cover

The options are then presented to the Benefits Committee. StoudtAdvisors President Dan Day often sits in to help the committee figure out the details and manage their budget. Once the details are figured out, the StoudtAdvisors team brings in the carrier reps and presents the plan to the employees at the open enrollment meetings.

Year-round partners

The value of her relationship extends far beyond the window of enrollment season, Duvall says. StoudtAdvisors is there all year to offer information, support and opportunities to expand her knowledge and expertise. One of those opportunities is the quarterly seminar series on topics related to HR challenges, benefits, and legal issues. Duvall has attended dozens over the years, but was particularly appreciative of last fall's session on the new health care legislation.

"I was frustrated and confused [about the legislation]," she relates. "StoudtAdvisors just spelled it all out with a timeline of what changes would happen when. I walked away with a better understanding of the legislation and how it would affect our business."

In between seminars, Duvall knows she'll be kept up to date on any important changes to legislation or regulations with alerts from Client Connections. She checks in to the site frequently to participate in surveys and stay on top of everything in the industry.

And if she still has questions, she just picks up the phone, knowing StoudtAdvisors HR specialists Scott Labrecque or Becky McClure will be ready with an answer. Which is the next best thing to being able to be in three places at once.

For more information on how the team at StoudtAdvisors can back you up, call 717.581.8382 or visit stoudtadvisors.com.



Vital Statistics

- 106 Willow Valley Square, Lancaster, PA
- 154 full time associates (652 total) at 3 locations:
 - Elizabethtown
 - Mount Joy
 - Willow Valley/Lancaster
- Founded in 1932
- StoudtAdvisors client since 1997
- Services employed: Health Insurance, Dental Insurance, HR Support

In the late 1920's, George Darrenkamp started selling produce door-to-door as a "huxter" in the Cabbage Hill area of Lancaster. By 1932 he had set up a permanent store in the front room of his home on Union Street. In 1948, the family built a 3,000 square foot store, operating as George Darrenkamp & Sons. Today, the third generation of Darrenkamps operates three locations totaling more than 100,000 square feet of retail space.

The family business may have grown over time, but it retains the close-knit atmosphere and dedication to exceptional customer service that began in that little storefront on Union Street.

For more information, visit darrenkamps.com

"Deb understands our culture..."
"She just 'gets' our employees"

Community Spotlight

The Gathering Place



In the spring of 1987, Pastor Bob Lewis and his wife Melanie met a young man during a hospital visit. He was dying of pneumocystis carinii pneumonia – a common cause of death among those suffering from a new disease called AIDS. The Lewises ministered to this young man and brought him into their family. He introduced them to a dozen other people he knew who were HIV positive, including his sister.

This was the beginning of The Gathering Place (TGP), a faith-based organization now serving more than 200 Lancaster residents afflicted with HIV/AIDS. TGP has opened its doors and hearts, creating case management and support programs that meet tangible needs for those with HIV/AIDS.

Since 2001, StoudtAdvisors and Account Manager Deb Haldeman have been supporting TGP's mission by helping them find affordable health insurance, a particularly daunting challenge for their small staff. Being served by a dedicated representative from a local firm is a real benefit to TGP.

"I appreciate having the same person consistently rather than calling in and not knowing who you'll get from one time to the next. Deb makes it personal," Administrator Melanie Lewis explains. "Even as a small organization, you feel they really care about you."

For a small organization, The Gathering Place is tackling a big challenge. "Many people don't realize the severity of the AIDS epidemic in Lancaster," Melanie points out. Of the 67 counties in Pennsylvania, Lancaster has the 6th highest rates of the disease. And Pennsylvania ranks 7th in the number of AIDS cases by state. With a full-time staff of three and a dependence on volunteers, both money and labor can be hard to come by. Having a partner like StoudtAdvisors to lead them through the complicated landscape of health insurance and find the most economical plan lets the Lewises focus their energy and resources on serving.

"Deb finds the best programs, wades through all the policies and comes to us with a menu of options to help us make the best choice," Melanie says. "She has a wealth of knowledge and can walk us through all that."

The Gathering Place offers a complete range of services for those living with HIV/AIDS in Lancaster. Much of it centers on meeting basic needs: adequate housing, medical care, nutritional meals and necessary counseling.

One of their most recent endeavors is the opening of The Price is Right Thrift Shop in 2009, which Melanie describes as "a win win." Donors can write off the merchandise they give, shoppers get a bargain, and The Gathering Place takes the 100% profit they earn on all sales and puts it right back into the community.

It's an endless battle, but there are success stories. Bob proudly shares one of their happiest cases: a young woman battling HIV infection, drug addiction and a life of prostitution. "For years, she was in and out of prison, in and out of halfway houses, stuck in this horrible life," Bob relates. "But we were persistent. We wouldn't give up on her." And eventually, something clicked. The young woman experienced what Bob calls "a total turn-around." And in February, Bob and Melanie received an invitation to her wedding.

"Our job is to let people know that we love them and God loves them, and that it's not about what the world thinks of them," Bob summarizes. StoudtAdvisors is doing their part to support The Gathering Place and its message of unconditional love.

To learn how you can help support TGP's mission by sharing your time and talents or attending one of their upcoming fundraisers, including a night of Improv Comedy on May 20 and Lancaster Cares Cut-a-Thon on May 21, call 717.295.4630



Pastor Bob and Melanie Lewis of The Gathering Place at their food bank.