

Interviewer: Is there anything that you'd like to share about your background or history?

Adel: I was born and raised in Buffalo, NY. I've been here in Buffalo most of my life. I grew up in the inter-city. I'm married and have six beautiful daughters. My family is from Yemen, which is a country in the Middle East. I come from a hardworking family.

Interviewer: Would you like to share more about the community in Buffalo that you grew up in?

Adel: Yeah, I grew up in the city of Buffalo, literally around the corner from our store Trade Fair Food Market. It's a tight knit community, most of my customers have known me since childhood or are people that I went to school with.

Interviewer: How long have you had this store?

Adel: This store has been in our family for about 30 years. I took over complete operation in 2000.

Interviewer: What made you want to get involved in the store?

Adel: I'm a people person. I like to talk. I like to get to know people. I like to meet different people. I'm interested in other characteristics of the customer service business so it just felt right filling in the shoes of my father and stepping in and taking over the family business.

Interviewer: How did you get involved with the Healthy Corner Store Initiative?

Adel: The Healthy Corner Store Initiative actually started out with Food Plus Market on East Amherst Street. I was invited to the Healthy Corner Store Initiative opening ceremony for this store on East Amherst Street. When I understood what this initiative was trying to do, I encouraged them to come to my store to show them the produce that I was offering. With the Healthy Corner Store Initiatives help I was able to offer more produce to the community. As well as information regarding healthy eating. It didn't start out with me, but it took off with me.

Interviewer: It sounds like having fresh produce in your store before joining the initiative created the foundation to be successful with the Healthy Corner Store Initiative.

Adel: Yeah, this way of eating has been more persistent in my life. My daughter was born a vegetarian. So, with that it just gave me more incentive to learn more about what I can offer my community as something healthy for themselves. What you offer your family is what you offer the community. So, I want my family to be healthy. I also want the community that I serve to be healthy.

Interviewer: Would you like to share anything else about your experiences with the community?

Adel: The community that we live and work in is very resilient. No matter the ups and downs the issues and problems the community always comes together to work with the problems and try to correct things as we go. As a business owner and as an individual from this community at the end of the day, what we do with our life and the community that we're a part of make us who we are.

Interviewer: Do you hold any special events for the community?

Adel: We hold a customer appreciation day once a year. At the end of every summer we also hold an event where we do a BBQ and school giveaway, which includes bookbags, pens, and pencils for the kids. Also, in the month of August the Arab American Business Association does a huge BBQ with a pony ride, bounce house, and supplies pencils, pens, notebooks, and bookbags for kids that are going back to school. It's like the last hurrah for the summer.

Interviewer: Is there anything else that you'd like to say about customer appreciation day?

Adel: We do a BBQ, bring out hotdogs and hamburgers. Show the customers that we appreciate them coming out to patronize us. We try to give back to the neighborhood to show them that we appreciate them for coming into the store. We know each other, it builds the bonds, makes us stronger. They get to understand who the people are that own the business and the culture that we come from. Also, our employees get to understand the neighborhood that we work with and the people that come into the store.

Interviewer: Is this a free event?

Adel: Yes, this is a free event. All paid for by us. All the events held by us are held by us at our cost.

Interviewer: Do you have any thoughts about how your store may grow in connection with the Healthy Corner Store Initiative?

Adel: We are working with the Healthy Corner Store Initiative to have an outside farmers market. In the neighborhood that we serve, there are a lot of elderly and many people that don't have vehicle transportation. So instead of going several miles away to a farmers market, why not provide the farmers market in our local neighborhood. If we can get that going that would be phenomenal.

Interviewer: Is there anything else that you'd like to share?

Adel: It's been a long and tough ride for us, the Healthy Corner Store Initiative, and everyone that's been working on this. I think that the group working together is making a lot of progress. Moving forward I think we're not just impacting regular people, we're impacting kids. So, by us teaching the older and younger generation new habits of eating. I think that the knowledge in that is more than anything else. The Healthy Corner Store Initiative provides knowledge to the community. By instilling new education and information on how to eat healthy and have the food taste good at the same time I think brings a lot of progress for this community.