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# Talk Loudoun

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## Talk's Farm-to-Fork Loudoun update



As a media sponsor of this new, dynamic culinary celebration, we're thrilled to share a few of the latest Farm-to-Fork *Loudoun* updates from the project's Facebook fanpage:

Followers -- we're waiting to hear what participating restaurant you've made your reservations at during Farm-to-Fork *Loudoun*'s 11-day culinary celebration! First 10 to let us know by Friday, July 8th, will receive a \$25.00 gift card to one of 3 participating spots. After that the first 25 people's names will be entered into a contest for a \$50.00 gift card at one. So decide, make that call and let us know!

Pick up some fresh produce & food at Wednesday night's Leesburg farmers market from Endless Summer Harvest, Potomac Vegetable Farms, & Stoneybrook Farms. Pick up some wine to go with it from Fabbrioli Cellars and/or Notaviva Vineyards.

WOW! We have a banner on the Dulles Greenway! Make your reservations at a F2F *Loudoun* restaurant before they're booked!

For daily updates, like us on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#)!

## Going the extra mile

By Dianne Murphy

Over a period when the county has been growing, with big-box stores and mega-drugstores proliferating, Leesburg Pharmacy has been a constant neighbor and friend. Anyone who has visited this very special business knows that it is about so much more than prescriptions, with a very



personal approach to service, as well as a selection of health goods and gifts that are both diverse and specialized.

When asked why Leesburg Pharmacy has grown -- even thrived -- during the age of big-box convenience and health care reform, co-owner and pharmacist Cheri Garvin boils it down to customer service. It is the heart of this business. She feels that it makes a tremendous difference to be able to go the extra mile. "I'm really lucky to have such wonderful partners and employees who are all just as dedicated to service and go about their work with the customer's best interest in mind," Garvin said.

The heart of the business truly is the employee family. Lisa Strucko is the director of operations and has been with the pharmacy for more than six years. You can often find her busy at work in the compounding center, measuring and concocting different cocktails of medication for people or animals. Chris Poland is the general manager and has been with Garvin for more than 14 years. "Chris is my right hand man and the glue that holds everything together," Garvin remarked. Jay Gill is the director of business development and has worked with the pharmacy for nearly a decade. In all, the business employs more than 50 and includes a store in The Plains -- as well as a medication management center, which services patients in assisted-living facilities.



## A legacy of service

In 1976, original owner Bruce Roberts, a pharmacy graduate of West Virginia University, opened a 1,000-square-foot pharmacy, complete with couches, side tables and coffee service. For years, he worked the business and made changes based on community needs. Slowly but surely, he added elements that kept the locals coming back. He

started to network with local doctors and continued to offer services like compounding, as well as a wellness center for consultations and a plethora of medical supplies.



Close to the pharmacy, there is a Ben Franklin arts and crafts store, where Roberts met the very young and eager daughter of store owners Chick and Sharon Shipley. Cheri Garvin worked as a clerk at

the store from a very young age. A graduate of Loudoun County High School, Garvin decided to go to George Mason University where she majored in biology. She later went on to the Medical College of Virginia in Richmond, graduating in 1990 with a degree in pharmacy. After school she came back to Leesburg where she started work with Roberts as pharmacist. She became an active owner of the pharmacy in 2004 as part of an employee buy-out program and eventually completed the purchase from Roberts with three other partners in 2009.

## A prescription for success

"Go with your gut" and "Follow the golden rule" are not the first things that you would read in a customer service manual, but they have always been at the core of Leesburg Pharmacy's business practices. Roberts relates a story about a family whose mother was dying from cancer. She was in her final days, at home with hospice and in uncontrollable pain. Bruce was called late in the evening, went to the pharmacy and mixed the medication to bring relief, and delivered it to the house. He did not hear from the family for a few weeks, but eventually the daughter and her sister came in to personally thank Bruce and his team for helping to make their mother's final days peaceful and pain-free. It is this kind of service that defines the business.

On another summer day, a customer brought cupcakes to the staff to say thank you for all the great service she has received over the years. Her son is autistic, and she is a frequent visitor to the pharmacy as she assists her son in negotiating his day-to-day world.

Wanda Alexis Alexander, a fellow member of the Loudoun CEO Cabinet, came into the pharmacy and asked to see Garvin. Recognizing Alexander, Garvin worried that something was wrong. "As a business owner I felt that it was important to let Cheri know personally about my experience with the pharmacy," Alexander said. "I think it is important to give great feedback, just as much as unpleasant feedback, but I was overly blown away by the gracious and helpful attitude from everyone I encountered in the pharmacy and had to let her know in person."

In fact, such service is not confined to the people in our area. Customers Greg and Candy Fazakerley credit the pharmacy with extending the life of their family pet, Viola, a 14-year-old, 4-pound Chihuahua. Left as payment for a rental property debt, Viola captured the Fazakerleys' hearts early on. When the dog was 10 years old, she was diagnosed with congestive heart failure. They found a fabulous cardiac vet, and he suggested that they visit the Leesburg Pharmacy for the special compounding process for medications. Four years after that diagnosis, Viola is still going strong.



Although most often present on the floor of the pharmacy, Garvin has a private space tucked in the back of the store that she has made her own with soft colors, family photos and comfortable furniture. It is her "quiet space" for working and growing the business.



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Leesburg Pharmacy offers creative gifts and "Made In Virginia" items that can't often be found in popular malls. The gift shop staffers travel to specialty gift shows to find the latest and greatest products on the market, and the selection changes with the seasons.

"I drive an hour-and-a-half each way to the Leesburg Pharmacy because Jay Gill is always so wonderful and caring," Candy said. "I also needed special compression hose after an injury, and they took such great care to fit and measure and make sure that all was correct. You can't find that in a big-box store. I also love the small town feel of the store, and that they carry my favorite lemon drops," she added with a laugh.



Nancy and Jim Haynes have been longtime loyal customers. "I grew up in a small town and was looking for a pharmacy like I knew at home," Nancy said. "I found the Leesburg Pharmacy. I am so impressed with Cheri Garvin and her staff. Every one of them goes above and beyond and takes the time to personally help you. I've called on numerous occasions to ask Cheri's advice about some medication, or a recent article or new drug on the market, and she always calls me back and spends the time to help me understand or advise. I just love them all and am grateful for their service."

### Just what the doctor ordered

A close working relationship with the medical community is another highly important ingredient to the success of the pharmacy. Many practitioners who go beyond the norm when it comes to care gravitate toward the central philosophy of personal service and have partnered with the pharmacy when making recommendations about medication, compounding solutions, or home care medical equipment and devices.

"We have used Leesburg Pharmacy for many years," said Dr. Matthew Gavin, a Leesburg-based orthopedic surgeon. "They have always been very helpful with our patients fitting braces, TED (Thrombo Embolic Deterrent) stockings, specialty prescriptions and DME (Durable Medical Equipment). They have also been very helpful with anything needed by

The Fazakerley family drive back and forth to Leesburg Pharmacy from Middleburg for especially compounded medications for family

the Loudoun Free Clinic. Cheri Garvin and her staff are always very accommodating for our patients, and if we have any questions we can always call there and get a quick answer."

Dr. Martha Calihan, a practicing Loudoun physician for more than 20 years, has been a partner with the pharmacy for as long. Her practice has gradually evolved into a holistic, integrative approach to medicine, and she said that the pharmacy has been a vital partner for her business.

"I've found the pharmacy to be responsive and innovative as well as hugely helpful in a collaborative way," Calihan said. "The compounding center is the mainstay of what I do for integrative medicine. My patients have the benefit of my recommendation, but the added benefit of a secure and trustworthy partner to give them what they need and a relationship to continue if there are questions concerning their medications. I'm also highly impressed with the hospice work they do. They walk on water, as far as I'm concerned."

When asked about the business and what she loves about it, Cheri noted that, "The knowledge that we are making a difference in our customers' lives makes me extremely satisfied, and I know that I am in the right place at Leesburg Pharmacy. It's my hometown pharmacy, and to be able to carry the legacy that Bruce started, of going the extra mile or being caring and compassionate, is a very good thing."



Compounding has become a huge part of the business for the pharmacy. Leesburg Pharmacy has one of the only accredited compounding labs and often uses common household equipment to get the job done. Families with autistic children as well as families with members who suffer from the effects of Lyme disease can benefit from the compounding center. Dr. Martha Calihan, a local holistic and integrative physician, works closely with the compounding center when prescribing for her patients. The pharmacy staff is active in the community with these issues, speaking and educating the community about wellness options.

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