



Fresh fruit and vegetables — many organically grown — will be a specialty of the store. Here, Viola Schult of Livonia chats with Good Food manager Joe DeFranco about one of her selections.

Health food supermart offers large variety

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The treatment is based on the theory that certain diseases can be cured by giving very small doses of drugs which in a healthy person and in large doses would produce symptoms like those of the disease. "You get worse first, then the relief can be quite dramatic," DeFranco said.

IN THE FALL, DeFranco and his staff hope to get into catering. How does it happen that the Good Food Co. settled in on Eight Mile Road, just west of Farmington Road in Livonia?

"We began looking for a spot a year ago, and we were actually looking at Southfield," said DeFranco. "When this opened up."

The "we" are DeFranco and the store's owner, Patricia Breen of Bloomfield Hills, an account executive with a major stock brokerage firm.

The two became acquainted when DeFranco managed another health store, Betty's Grocery in Birmingham. Breen was a customer.

He left Betty's more than a year ago, he said, "because it was time to move on." It was an amicable parting, he said.

BREEN TRACKED HIM down, he said, and proposed the venture. DeFranco agreed. He then went to California to study marketing techniques. "This is a combination of the best of the California stores," DeFranco noted.

For DeFranco, a Detroit, the store is like a dream come true.

He got into natural foods about seven years ago, he said. The interest stemmed from the fact that he "was fat all my life."

"I read the book 'Sugar Blues,' and that was a turning point," he recalled. By cutting the sugar from his diet, DeFranco began to shed pounds — about 25 to be exact. "That's a lot for someone my size," said the 5-foot-5-inch DeFranco.

The book also fueled his interest in natural foods. The upshot is that he has become knowledgeable about the subject.

"I read tons of stuff and talked to everyone I could who knew anything about health foods. Some of it came through personal experimentation. A lot of it came from talking to customers," said the genial DeFranco.

What he also learned is that while natural foods may be healthy, "they aren't necessarily low in calories." He still has to watch those binge-eating urges.

A SENIOR studying psychology at Wayne State University at the time of his metamorphosis, DeFranco said he knew that the thing he wanted to do most was to work with health foods. The opportunity came when he answered an ad for help at Betty's Grocery.

The Good Food Co. is also aiming high to shoot down the high-priced image that health stores usually have.

"We are making these foods available at the lowest everyday prices found in Michigan, with most products priced at 20 percent below regular retail," said DeFranco.

Located at 33521 Eight Mile, the store will be open from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Saturday, and 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Sunday.

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