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Cover Story: *Dirks Pest Management Specialist is a 2nd generation family business that provides commercial and residential pest control with a focus on safety and the environment.*



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DIRKS

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Nancy and Micheal Dirks



“When You Choose Dirks, You Choose Family!”

The ornamental sign perched on Nancy Dirks’ desk says it all — in bold, capital letters — **“WE ARE FAMILY”**. The Dirks Pest Management Specialist “family” recently gathered in their new office at 411 North Lewis Road in Royersford to take photographs for this month’s *Route 422 Business Advisor* cover story. Positive energy filled the room, as good-natured banter and incessant laughter made it seem more like the set of a TV family sit-com than a photo shoot. It is quite apparent that members of the Dirks “family” thoroughly enjoy each other’s company, and they love working together, as a company, to alleviate and prevent a myriad of pest issues confronting their extended family of satisfied customers.

Micheal and Nancy Dirks both began their careers in public service professions. Micheal served as a West Norriton police officer and volunteer firefighter. Nancy was a schoolteacher. The satisfaction they derive from helping others is one of the key qualities they both have in common. “We’re very compassionate people,” Micheal Dirks explains.

Micheal was injured in the line of duty in 2000. In spite of a valiant effort during an intense period of rehabilitation, he was physically unable to return to active duty as a police officer. At that point, Micheal and Nancy decided it was time for a collective career change. “We had four children,” Nancy said. “We were trying to think of something we could do.” Naturally, they chose a profession that would allow them to help others — and Dirks Pest Management Specialist was born in 2002.

Terri Castrinoes, Office Manager



PHOTOS BY STYLISH IMAGES PHOTOGRAPHY



Sean Hannon, Pest Control Technician

“People don’t go into business to lose money, but people that keep losing money are quickly out of business. So even though we are in business, we really help people, and at a fair price” Micheal said. “When you choose somebody to handle your pest control, you have to choose someone that you know is trustworthy. Let’s face it, we go into homes and businesses every day. We’re old school, our customers can trust us 100%.”

The Dirks made an early decision to grow their business by bringing in family members. Micheal’s brother Edward Dirks became the company’s first hire, as a pest control technician. Micheal and Nancy’s son Sean Hannon was the next family member to join the team. “We are now a second generation family owned business,” Micheal Dirks says proudly. “We’re not going anywhere, we’re here to stay!”

Today, the business has grown to include additional family members. Micheal and Nancy’s daughter Lauren Hannon now works for the business as an Office Assistant, along with Terri Castrinoes as Office Manager. Cousins Jason Antonowicz and Mike Kubicki are also pest control technicians.

Everyone at Dirks Pest Management Specialist works and trains together as a family, and the company’s “family” philosophy reflects the entire staff’s commitment. “Because we operate as a family, everyone has a vested interest in the success of this company. We have never had to let go of an employee. That’s a big part of what keeps our customers happy, they see the same smiling faces every time we come out,” Nancy Dirks said.

Dirks Pest Management Specialist provides safe and effective commercial and residential pest control inspections, treatment and services.

Dirks integrated pest management program effectively reduces pest issues by focusing on the entire problem. Dirks uses both chemical and organic treatments to manage the infestation and provide monitoring to ensure long-term reductions. Dirks integrated pest management program is the best choice when choosing an environmentally friendly solution that goes beyond short-term fixes and instead provides long-term solutions that use fewer chemicals.

“We are stewards of the environment,” Micheal Dirks explains. “We don’t use any products that we can’t trust. Everything that we use is made and manufactured in the United States by American companies, so we know exactly what’s in them. We stand by them, and so does the manufacturer. Some companies are cutting costs by using white label generic pesticides, and there’s just no way to know that there safe. If they’re bad or misused, it can have terrible consequences. For us and our customers, the savings is not worth the risk.” he said.

Dirks Pest Management Specialist is a member of the National Pest Management Association, Inc. and the Pennsylvania Pest Management Association. Dirks’ experienced technicians have been licensed and certified by the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, and all attend ongoing educational and technical seminars.

Last month, the company opened their new office and training facility in Royersford to better serve the region. “We offer additional training to our employees as well as service industry colleagues that we associate with locally,” Micheal said. All of Dirks’ pest control technicians undergo ongoing training and seminars throughout the year to keep their industry and treatment knowledge current.

(See “Cover Story” on page 8)



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COVER STORY

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"We require everyone who works for us to be certified," Nancy said.

Dirks focus on educating and training so their customers receive state-of-the-art solutions to their pest issues. "We're aggressive about education, treatment techniques and above all, safe product usage," Micheal said. "We use the safest products and most up to date techniques to help prevent pest issues from happening or reoccurring."

Dirks offers mosquito control spraying for yards and lawns to reduce mosqui-

toes; allowing you to enjoy your property all summer long. "We can even come over to your house before special events and we treat the area to reduce the amount of mosquitos so you can sit outside and enjoy the yard," Micheal said.

Dirks is also a canine pest inspection leader and they offer an innovative alternative to labor-intensive traditional search and test methods.

One of the key elements to Dirks Pest Management Specialist growth and success as a company is a marketing program that starts with outstanding customer service, which leads to referrals. "We grew our business one referral at a time," Nancy said. "Our referrals are from satisfied customers who loved our service and are happy to talk about it. When somebody praises us and says what a great job we did, the first thing I do is say, we appreciate the kind words. Would you mind doing a review for us? People are more than happy to do that."

Dirks Pest Management Specialist was recently awarded "Best of Montco" recognition on the *Montco Happening List 2015*. "The fact that our customers took the time to go on a website and vote for us speaks volume!" Nancy said.

(See "Cover Story" on page 10)

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COVER STORY

(Continued from page 8)

"They called us up to let us know they we're voting for us. When customers call, nine times out of 10 they'll say "thank you" for taking the time to answer all my questions. I'm going to go with you because you have been so accommodating and so nice and so patient," she said, adding, "There is so much to educate them on. Not only with what they have to do to prepare for treatment, but also with things they should be aware of after we solve the problem to prevent a future recurrence."

"I'm surprised how many people come to us and say "that's exactly what I'm looking for," Nancy continued. "Family, I don't want to be just a number", and they're not. It's gotten to the point now where customers are so comfortable with us that they call all the time, because they can trust us, and ask us to recommend professionals in other trades."

"And I don't refer anybody who I don't use myself," Micheal added.

The Dirks Pest Management Specialist family is heavily invested in the communities they serve. "For example, every year we spray the fields for Upper Providence Little League," Micheal said. "We spray all of their fences, for bee control. We don't charge them for that. And we're strong in our community. We belong to the Spring Ford Chamber, Perkiomen Valley Chamber and the Phoenixville Regional Chamber. I shop locally because I want to see people in our community stay in business. If our community is doing well, we're doing well," he said.

Dirks Pest Management Specialist is a family helping other families in the community, by providing superior service with compassion and professionalism. When asked what makes Dirks different from others in the industry, Micheal responded, "We just want to set ourselves apart from everybody else. The truth of it is, we're caring, compassionate, hard-working people, who take pride in everything we do." ■

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