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## Lending a Helping Hand to a Community in Need

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### IGA USA International Retailer of the Year Finalist Perspective

November 30, 2011

Look to The Independent View over the next week to learn more about each of the seven Finalists in the running for IGA USA International Retailer of the Year. Today, Dennis Darling of Foods Etc. IGA shares the retailing philosophy and "best practices" that set his IGA store apart from the competition.

The town of Clearlake is home to a very low income, older population, which means there's really no end of need here. These residents need a good store to shop in—and that's why we use all our IGA resources to keep our operational standards high—but at the end of the day, what they really need is a community center that cares about the issues they're facing and tries to help. Here in Clearlake, Foods Etc. IGA fits both roles.

Being a Hometown Proud community center isn't an easy job, and certainly not one that you can do on your own. Everyone who works in our store is involved in some kind of community service, whether it's being a member of the school board, the Rotary Club, Chamber of Commerce, or acting as youth league coaches or volunteer firefighters. It comes naturally to them, so it's not surprising that we have a great think-tank here for coming up with ways to help our community.

One of the most important of those recently has been our participation in the Christmas Food Basket Give-A-Way. Last year it was apparent early on that the local community action agency that normally handles holiday food distribution for the needy had been hit hard by the economy. They weren't going to be able to help like they had in previous years, so we teamed up with our IGA Licensed Distribution Center, C&S Wholesale Grocers, to supplement the agency's food distribution. We all worked together in our warehouse to assemble and distribute 600 bags of food filled with IGA products like canned vegetables, flour, sugar, mac & cheese, margarine, turkey gravy, chicken broth and bread.

On the day of distribution we had over 1000 people go through our warehouse to pick up their food. We've never felt more needed or more appreciated, and we pledged right then to make this an annual event.

This is just one more way our employees work together as a family and with a passion for serving our community. And one more way we connect on a local level that no chain can match.



Thanks,

Dennis Darling

Dennis Darling  
2012 IGA USA International Retailer of the Year Finalist  
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