

Lockwood/McKinnon

Spotlight Series



There are so many new managers who have joined our team at Lockwood/McKinnon. We have people who have quick serve restaurant experience and those who come to us with little to no restaurant experience. There are those who have been with us for several months to a year – to several years that are stepping into the role of Shift Managers, Associate Managers and Restaurant General Managers. Back in the day – tenured managers became leaders in their stores. Today, we meet and get to know one of those tenured managers.... **Tami Reyes.**

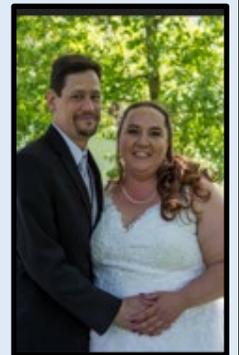
Tami began her journey with us 14 years ago in November in our Taco Bell in Westerly, RI... (closed approximately 10 years ago) under the supervision of Jim Schmidt (who has moved onto another venue). She transferred to the Coventry Taco Bell, where she now leads her team – as the RGM.

She has experienced a number of leadership styles in the Coventry Taco Bell – where there has been a revolving door of RGMs who now lead other locations. The RGMs and AGMs she has worked with are: Sheila Richardson (Who happened to be the subject of our very first Spotlight Series years ago, no longer with the company); Stephanie LaMotte (who moved onto another field of work – entirely); Jenny Marchessault (RGM of Bald Hill); Chelsea Couto (RGM of Fall River); Wilfredo (who has also moved on); and Candace Russo (Manager at the Warwick Mall). Her Area Coach, Dave Collins, has been with Tami throughout her career with Lockwood/McKinnon.

There are three role models that Tami tells me she admires. Candace Russo is consistent with everything she does; Priscilla Conde has great restaurant knowledge; and Dave Collins is not afraid to question or challenge her abilities. He is supportive and has faith in Tami.

Tami has remained the constant throughout the changes in Coventry and became the RGM of the store after a number of conversations with Dave Collins. She had been – essentially – performing many of the job skills that an RGM would be executing and it was time for her to step into the role. After some convincing that Tami owned the skills necessary to become the RGM of a store, Tami decided that she would make that move to better her family.

It's her family that is the driving force behind her actions and decisions each day. There have been a number of changes over the past few years. She married Rey last year in May. She met him at her previous job with Dunkin Donuts. Together – they have a combined 5 children: Breanna (18); Jaelee (17), Cameron (17), Xander (9) and James (6). She bought her first home. She bought her first car. All changes and events that she is proud to share.



Her time off from managing the Coventry Taco Bell is spent with her kids. They hang out outside when the weather permits. There is a blow-up pool or bike riding. Tami says she is goofy when she is with her kids it makes her feel like she can relate to them better. One of her unexpected and quirky talents is "gleeking." If you don't know what gleeking is – you are in for a surprise! (I'll let you look it up.) Too funny! Tami has taken to gardening. She has planted: lettuce, kale, cucumbers, tomatoes (her favorite), broccoli, radishes and eggplant (doesn't really like eggplant but wanted to see if she could grow it). It bothers her when she is scheduled to work and her kids ask her, "Do you have to work?" It's tough to leave them, but she readily adjusts her focus and gears up for her work day with her work "family."

Tami's dream is to take her family to Disney someday so she can be the kid! Her favorite Disney movie is the animated version of Robin Hood. She states that she wouldn't go somewhere if kids were not allowed. Usually,

when they are invited to cook-outs, she volunteers to bring things for the kids. This year her kids asked about the company summer outing to Canobie Lake Park and Tami had to tell them it was not happening due to Covid-19. She says that's the closest they've been to Disney...hopefully next year we will be able to go to Canobie Lake Park again. They really enjoyed it.



The theme of family threads throughout our discussion. Tami's mother is the first born of 10 siblings and her father is the first born of 9 siblings. Family get togethers are not small. Tami recently lost her maternal grandmother to cancer and shows me a tattoo she has on her forearm to commemorate her grandmother. The tattoo is a picture of an elephant with a butterfly from its trunk (maybe blowing a kiss) with the words, (in her grandmother's writing) "Love You Always." Stories of family get-togethers permeate the conversation. Her grandmother's Chicken, Sausage Pasta and Meatballs with the voice of an Italian grandmother in the background - saying, "Eat, eat, eat..." and loving gifts and affectionate references to "My Tami" - confirm that this was a special bond.

Tami says that when they had get-togethers, it was not just the flavor of the food – it was the environment that made the meal. A small home was transformed to accommodate the large family gatherings. Bedrooms were emptied out to add tables so that everyone had a place. All about family.

Even in the restaurant – it's like a family. (During our interview – Tami's team was in the kitchen making her laugh.) Tami smiles and says, she is a mom at home and sometimes her team calls her mom. She describes herself as caring, honest and loyal. She is proud of that and her commitment to those virtues are mirrored in her team.

Sometimes the most difficult part of her job is "discipline." Tami states that she tends to let things go on for too long before acting on it. She admits that she is improving in this area. Something she won't allow – is any negative talk or inappropriate language in the store – particularly within earshot of the customers. "I'm big on how people speak when customers can hear them." Along the same lines of thought, Tami states that her pet peeve is when people don't bring work problems to her and they talk about their problems with others in the store. It can be disruptive.



One of the best compliments that Tami ever received was from a couple who live in the Richmond/Charleston, RI area (about a 30-minute drive). One day they sat with Tami in the dining room (when it was open) and told her that they noticed that her store was always clean and they loved how the team treated each other in the store. They made it a point to drive to the Coventry Taco Bell on a number of occasions. They wanted her to know what a great job she and her team were doing.

I ask Tami if she could share a few Taco Bell differences from her earlier years compared to now. She states that there used to be steam tables and now there are grills.... more recently – Frutista Freezes changed to Freezes, the constant being the Baha Blast. Tami shares a story from years ago – where she had had a fire in her home and there was a company drive (even though she had not been there that long) to help with supplies to get us through. I remember the same instance – people donated furniture, clothes, and food, ...it was such an amazing feeling to help someone who really needed it. The times we face today may not be similar, but the desire to help is just as strong.

Personnel seem to be more transient now compared to years ago. The company employed people who stayed and stayed. There was a different feel. Now, there are new people, new ideas, and new ways of doing what we have always done. The team at Coventry is a mix of new and tenured people and it seems to work well. Tami captures the feel of Lockwood/McKinnon...the caring connections that we all make every day, at home, in the community and at work.

The more things change the more they stay the same....

Lisa Privette