GROWERTALKS

GT in Brief

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Filling a Need, Serving the Community

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On the way back from Plantpeddler's 15th annual Poinsettia Variety Day, we stopped by their new retail location across the street from the original greenhouses in Cresco, Iowa. They'd just opened right before Thanksgiving and were still putting some finishing touches in the greenhouse and wrapping up construction on the second floor of the main store. But they were up and running, selling Christmas décor, gifts and accessories, along with a few houseplants and cut flowers.

Plantpeddler's owners Mike and Rachel Gooder's son John became an official partner in the business last year, and to keep it all in the family, Molly, John's wife, will be general manager of the new retail location. Plantpeddler started with a small retail greenhouse across the street for more than 45 years, but the building was outdated and they couldn't expand. Last fall, when Mike and John started discussing adding on to the young plant production location, Rachel put her foot down and said, nope—not until we move retail to a new location with a new facility.

So, in April, they broke ground on land that the Gooders already owned that housed a few Quonsets. Once the Varco Pruden building and Westland greenhouses were up and they were able to put out some inventory, they opened November 22, with an official grand opening planned for January or February of this year.

Molly said the store will be offering gifts, flowers, plants and more to be a one-stop-shop. Plantpeddler Floral, Garden & Gift will fill the need for the community to get gifts, flowers and plants for Mother's Day and Valentine's Day, but also for special occasions like weddings and funerals.

The home décor and accessories you'll find at Plantpeddler will cater to a wide demographic (from kid's toys and books to higher-end apparel) and be a place where families can come to not only buy stuff, but to hang out. Molly said they'll have a space that serves ice cream and there are plans to put in a coffee bar. She also wants to eventually hold classes and workshops, like "Mommy & Me" painting classes, to make Plantpeddler Floral, Garden & Gift a destination and a place with something else for local families to do.

Molly has lots of plans and ideas floating around in her head, and this is why the Gooders asked her if she'd be willing to quit her job as a nurse that she's had for the last 15 years to manage the retail location. Mike and Rachel wanted a fresh perspective and new ideas to go with the new store. That's where Molly comes in. Plus, since she's now officially part of Plantpeddler and not just married-adjacent, she'll be closer to John on a daily basis to offer him support as he continues to elevate in his family's business.

Molly admitted she was nervous about completely changing her career path—especially with three young children under the age of 6—but she's excited for the flexibility and opportunities it will offer her family.

"Having a destination storefront is huge for this community," said Molly. "A lot of people [around here] think Plantpeddler is only a small retail shop—they'll get to see a whole new side of the business." **GT**