



## community development partnership

*Creating opportunities for people to live, work, and thrive on the Lower Cape*

### Eastham Superette: Never too old to improve

*“I feel it is important for businesses to show respect for our environment, especially here on Cape Cod.”*

**Sarah Wilcox**  
Co-Owner, Eastham Superette



*Ed and Sarah Wilcox stand outside the Eastham Superette*

A number of Lower Cape businesses, such as Truro Vineyards and Sunbird Kitchen, have gotten their start working with the CDP. But many of the established businesses we work with approach us because they want to improve operations and grow their business. Such is the case with the landmark Eastham Superette, which is now in its 67<sup>th</sup> year.

The Eastham Superette has been serving Cape families and visitors since 1952, when the Brown family founded the store. The Superette is viewed by locals as a staple of the community, has an unassuming exterior and a portion

of the façade is covered in flyers promoting local events. Inside is a busy deli, liquor store, and a market that offers a wide variety of items: from food to books, cards, pliers and nightlights.

In 2012, after 60 years of running the business, the Brown family decided that it was time to slow down and retire. They didn't have to look very far to find the perfect couple to buy the business.

In 1988 the Browns hired Sarah Wilcox, an Eastham native, to work in the bottle redemption center – also known as the “bottle shed.” She was only 14 but loved the work and the working environment. Throughout high school and college Sarah continued to work at the Superette. While studying at Bridgewater State College, she met Ed Wilcox of West Barnstable, and in July of 1997 the two were married.

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3 Main Street Mercantile, Unit 7 Eastham, MA 02642  
P 508.240.7873 F 508.240.5085 E [contact@capecdp.org](mailto:contact@capecdp.org)

[www.capecdp.org](http://www.capecdp.org)



Sarah and Ed returned to live on the Cape and settled in Eastham. When their son Owen was born in 1999, Sarah returned to work part-time at the Superette. In 2001, the Wilcox's welcomed a baby girl, Hailee, into their family, and as the children grew older, Sarah took on more hours and assumed greater responsibility at the store. Eventually she was working full time and helped manage operations.

When it came time for the Browns to sell, they were pleased when Sarah and Ed offered to purchase the business. Having worked at the Superette on and off for the better part of twenty-five years, Sarah felt like it was the natural thing to do. "We came to the endeavor with great understanding of the importance of maintaining it as the community store it had become," says Sarah.

Pam Andersen, the CDP's Director of Business and Credit Programs, knew Sarah and Ed through school and community connections. Sarah was interested in creating a brand for the Superette and Pam suggested that she attend the CDP's Grow Smart workshop, a series that focuses on enhancing operations. After taking the courses, Sarah worked with a marketing specialist to implement a full marketing campaign that included the creation of a logo, branded merchandise, a website, outdoor signage and menu. It was a huge project that took months to complete, but "was very beneficial to the growth of the business."

The Eastham Superette received its Level 1 Cape & Islands Green Certification from the CDP in 2014. "I feel it is important for businesses to show respect for our environment, especially here on Cape Cod," says Sarah, "and I think that local customers appreciate this." Following the training and certification, the Superette implemented a full recycling program (cardboard, plastics, plastic wrap, mixed paper, glass, aluminum), with the support of their grocery company, Associated Grocers of New England. "This saves us up to \$100 a month in the high season," notes Sarah.

The Wilcoxes recognize the importance of being a family business and retaining the charm that has characterized the Superette for 67 years. That said, Sarah and Ed know that it is critical to respond to changing economics, customer needs and ensure that the way they do business is sustainable. Ed and Sarah are so dedicated to the community that despite hurricanes and winter storms – the Eastham Superette has never closed its doors. "We've been here providing our customers with what they needed when they needed it most," says Sarah Wilcox, co-owner.

The CDP is proud that we can support the varied needs of our business community on the Lower Cape. Helping businesses to grow and thrive is essential to the long-term sustainability of this place we call home.