



Fresh Fresh Seafood owners Darlene and Rick Parker, holding a picture from when they originally opened their shop in 1983 at Greenmount Avenue and 20th Street in East Baltimore, relocated their restaurant last month to 507 York Road in Towson.

PHOTO BY DON WATKINS

Business Beat

Meredith Schlow

Seafood/deli combo gets additional nibbles at fresh location



After 17 years of doing business in the city, Darlene and Ricky Parker have moved north; now, their Fresh Fresh Seafood, Produce, Deli Inc. is settling in to its new home on

York Road, just north of Towson Commons.

The owners say it was the increasing number of customers making the trek from surrounding counties to their city location that led them to believe that relocating would only increase the popularity of their fresh fish sandwiches, stuffed shrimp, chowders and salads, as it made them more accessible.

When the couple opened Fresh Fresh Seafood on Greenmount Avenue, they sold raw fish and fresh produce mostly to customers who lived in the surrounding community.

"Our first day, we had just enough money to buy 50 pounds of fish and 25 pounds of white potatoes," Ricky Parker recalled.

It took a year before the couple had saved enough to purchase cooking equipment and expand their business to include cooked seafood as well. But soon after, Fresh Fresh was

serving to increasingly large lunch and dinner crowds — not just from the surrounding area but from Reisterstown, Owings Mills and Howard and Anne Arundel counties as well, Darlene said.

After a while, she added, relocating just seemed to make sense.

"This location is a perfect way for us to bring together all of our customers," she said.

The new location also offers customer seating, something the Parker's didn't have in east Baltimore.

Ricky does all of the cooking at Fresh Fresh, a talent for which he began developing at an early age.

"When I was a child, my mom used to be late coming home from work, and we had a pretty big family — there were six of us," he said. "Since I was the oldest, my brothers and sisters would ask me to make them something to eat. And in those days, the basics that you always had in the house were flour, milk and butter. So I started making biscuits and cookies."

His mother had no idea he was cooking for his siblings until she came home one evening and saw a small amount of flour spilled on the kitchen floor, Ricky said.

"So I told her what I'd done, and she started showing me how to cook.

"It's always been a passion for me."

Ricky's crab cakes have no breading or fillers, his coleslaw is from his grandmother's recipe and all of the salads are home-

made, he said.

But he his best known, perhaps, for his stuffed jumbo shrimp.

"That's our signature dish," he said. "It takes a little longer, to make everything fresh, but the final product is always better."

Darlene's background includes a psychology degree from Frostburg State University and a master's in counseling from Loyola College of Baltimore. Though she said she does some counseling part time, she is happy to run the business side of Fresh Fresh, allowing her husband of 23 years to "carry out his dream of cooking."

Fresh Fresh Seafood is located at 507 York Road. Hours are 11 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday through Thursday; 11 a.m. to 10 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. For more information, call 410-821-FISH (3474).

► The Towson Business Association will host a Networking Breakfast to welcome new and prospective members on Tuesday, Feb. 27, at 8 a.m. at Souris' Saloon, 537 York Road, in Towson. The cost is \$15 per person, and all members of the Towson business community are invited.

For more information, call 410-825-1144.

Send business-related items to Meredith Schlow, c/o Towson Times, 409 Washington Ave., Towson, Md. 21204, fax them to 410-337-2490 or call 410-337-2425, ext. 3509.