

## Good Business Award honours restaurants committed to community

The restaurant industry was one of the sectors hardest hit at the start of the global pandemic, but two local restaurants who found new ways to reach customers while giving back to the community at the same time were at the receiving end of gratitude last year.

Tina's Grill and Topper's Pizza Aurora shared the 2022 Good Business Award, part of the Town's Community Recognition Awards program, awarded last Spring at Town Hall.

Each year, the Good Business Award is presented to a business that has shown its commitment to corporate responsibility and community involvement through its ongoing support of charitable causes, events and programs.

Tina's Grill, said event emcee Erin Cerenzia, Manager of Neighbourhood Network, has been active in the community since opening in 2019, supporting members of the community and residents beyond Aurora.

Once a month, Tina's has been feeding five families in need who are nominated by the community, she said. Even though all businesses have struggled during COVID, Tina's has found a way to keep in touch with the community, adjusted to the changing conditions and limitations, and still found ways to give back and help as needed.

Tina's Grill has answered the call for hygiene products, shampoo, body lotions, tooth brushes and more for patients at Southlake and has collected several boxes of items from their patrons. Most recently, they also ran a collection of blankets, sleeping bags, clothes and medical supplies to support the refugees of the conflict in Ukraine and provided hundreds of bags and boxes that were gathered at their restaurant and shipped to those in need.

Accepting the award on behalf of his family, Tina's Grill owner Sam Saberi, who was also named 2022 Citizen of the Year at the same ceremony, said they couldn't thank the community enough for all their ongoing support.

This community has been a big, giant family to us and the honour of this award truly means a lot to us, he said. We can't thank you enough from the bottom of our hearts.

Topper's Pizza Aurora was saluted for their support of local sports teams, arts groups, and lending a helping hand wherever it is needed.

Paying tribute to owners Deepak Raj Rana and wife Sheetal, Cerenzia said while they themselves have suffered hardship with their business throughout the pandemic, they have still managed to give back to the community in a variety of ways.

They have supported Marquee Theatrical Productions, local sports teams, grocery store employees in need, the Welcome Table, and more, she said. They are always willing to step up to the plate when they see a need. They are also incredibly supportive of other restaurants in the community, offering positive reviews on social media and offering a supportive and friendly environment. Topper's Pizza Aurora, despite the pandemic, continues to show its commitment to the community, local businesses as well as local heroes.

Accepting the award, Raj Rana said the community means a lot to him, Sheetal and their family.

Whenever I give back, I don't expect anything back from whatever I give, he said. We have partnered with many non-profit organizations in Town, so we are partnering with the Aurora Food Pantry so we have set up our station in our store. There's a little station so everyone can bring in their donation. I would like to thank the Town for the Good Business Award because it will motivate me as well as it will motivate others around me and people in our community to do better for everyone.

By Brock Weir  
Editor  
Local Journalism Initiative Reporter