



Applebee's® Recognizes Restaurant Performance, Innovation and Community Engagement at Annual Franchise Conference

November 22, 2021

The Bill Palmer Legacy Scholarship was unveiled to honor brand's late founder. The scholarship will provide access to continued learning for up to 100 team members and their children each year

GLENDAL, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Nov. 22, 2021-- Last week, [Applebee's Neighborhood Grill + Bar®](#) held their annual franchise conference in Scottsdale, Ariz. to celebrate triumphs, recognize excellent restaurant performance and community involvement, and outline plans for future growth and performance.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20211122006021/en/>



During the conference, Applebee's President, John Cywinski announced the launch of the **Bill Palmer Legacy Scholarship** in honor of Applebee's late founder, Bill Palmer. This new scholarship program aims to award 100 scholarships annually to current Applebee's restaurant team members and their children. The program was established by Neighborhood Restaurant Partners, Palmer's former franchise group, in his honor.

"Since its founding, Applebee's has always focused on its people and making a positive impact on our neighborhoods, and that was because of Bill," said Joe Langteau, CEO, Neighborhood Restaurant Partners. "Bill loved this brand and giving back to those people who believe in it. This new scholarship program will allow team members working for Applebee's and their children the opportunity to continue their education."

Current Applebee's team members and their children who are interested in applying for the scholarship, can visit

Restaurant General Manager of the Year (Photo: Business Wire)

[LearnMore.ScholarsApply.org/BillPalmer](#) for more information. Applications will be accepted starting December 1, 2021, through January 31, 2022. The inaugural group of scholarship recipients will be notified of their award by April 1, 2022.

"Bill was a true pioneer and an industry icon," said John Cywinski, President, Applebee's. "Most importantly, he was a champion for our exceptional restaurant teams who represent the Applebee's brand day in and day out, under challenging circumstances. I can't think of a better legacy for Bill than providing annual college scholarships for deserving team members and their families. He would be very proud of this program."

In addition to announcing the new scholarship program, Applebee's awarded this year's franchisees who are committed to brand success, guest service, operational excellence, and community involvement.

The 2021 top award winners included:

Restaurant General Manager of the Year

Applebee's acknowledges that the most important people in its organization are the General Managers who lead the more than 1,500 in-restaurant teams across the country. At this year's conference Applebee's recognized the top 16 restaurant general managers in its system: awarding **William Reed as 2021 General Manager of the Year**. A 20-year team member at The Rose Group, Reed runs the franchisee's Roosevelt Blvd. location in Philadelphia, Penn. and two ghost kitchens in downtown Philadelphia. Reed is the first-ever to achieve Applebee's highest service results in two different locations and has trained more than 100 managers who consistently achieve high service results. Reed is noted by his team for leading every shift with energy, enthusiasm, and accountability. He is the best operator in the system because of his attention to detail, communication skills and guest-first focus. [Hear more about William Reed in this video.](#)

Abe Gustin Franchisee of the Year: Apple American Group

This award, in honor of the man who helped Applebee's become one of the nation's most iconic brands in casual dining, recognizes a franchisee that embodies what it means to be *Eatin' Good* and *Doin' Good in the Neighborhood*. This year's Franchisee of the Year is **Apple American Group (AAG)** for its ability to serve Applebee's, its team members, and communities so successfully, especially through one of the brand's and industry's most difficult years. Facing Covid's ongoing state closures and openings, AAG recovered from being one of the system's most challenged franchise groups to one of the fastest and most successful sales leaders. [Hear more about Apple American Group in this video.](#)

"Greg Flynn and Apple American Group have always walked the talk on culture, restaurant excellence and results, which is why they were awarded Applebee's 2021 Franchisee of the Year," said Cywinski. "With 441 Applebee's restaurants across 23 states, Greg and his Apple American Group team are role model operators and exceptional leaders. Nothing they accomplish surprises me. They are rock stars and deserve every bit of recognition that comes their way!"

Lloyd Hill Neighbor of the Year: Doherty Enterprises

This award, named after one of the brand's historic leaders, celebrates an Applebee's franchisee that has displayed a tremendous amount of love, compassion, and care for their neighbors through a variety of causes, activities, and initiatives. This year's recipient is **Doherty Enterprises**, a franchisee whose commitment to its communities has never wavered. By building relationships, holding team members accountable to giving back, and engaging with their community on an ongoing basis, the team at Doherty has given back more than \$900,000 to its neighborhoods. [Hear more about Doherty Enterprises in this video.](#)

Bill Palmer Heart of Applebee's: Neighborhood Restaurant Partners

This award is named after the founder of the Applebee's brand and recognizes a franchisee that has shown the greatest commitment to an individual cause or organization over this past year. The 2021 recipient is **Neighborhood Restaurant Partners (NRP)**. The team at NRP has proudly teamed up with multiple organizations in their communities to provide ongoing support to the lifesaving cause of donating blood across the four states in which the Franchise operates, participating in more than 260 blood drives. [Hear more about Neighborhood Restaurant Partners in this video.](#)

About Applebee's®

As one of the world's largest casual dining brands, Applebee's Neighborhood Grill + Bar serves as America's kitchen table, offering guests a lively dining experience that combines simple, craveable American fare with classic drinks and local drafts. Applebee's makes it easy for family and friends to connect with one another, whether it's in a dining room or in the comfort of a living room, *Eatin' Good in the Neighborhood™* is a familiar and affordable escape from the everyday. Applebee's restaurants are owned and operated by entrepreneurs dedicated to more than serving great food, but also building up the communities that we call home. From raising money for local charities to hosting community fundraisers, Applebee's is always *Doin' Good in the Neighborhood®*. Applebee's had 1,696 franchise and company-operated restaurants in the United States, Puerto Rico, Guam and 11 other countries as of August 5, 2021. Applebee's is franchised by subsidiaries of Dine Brands Global Inc. [NYSE: DIN], which is one of the world's largest full-service restaurant companies.

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