



Applebee's, Franchisees and Supplier Partners Raise More Than \$300,000 for the Bill Palmer Legacy Scholarship Fund at Annual Franchise Conference

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After Record-Setting Year, Applebee's Thanks Partners and Recognizes Franchisees for Restaurant Performance, Innovation and Community Engagement

GLENDALE, Calif.--(BUSINESS WIRE)--Oct. 10, 2022-- [Applebee's](#) recently held its annual franchise conference in Beaver Creek, Colo. to discuss brand vision and strategy, recognize its award-winning franchisees and valued partners, and fundraise for the Bill Palmer Legacy Scholarship Fund, which provides scholarships to employees and their children.

This press release features multimedia. View the full release here: <https://www.businesswire.com/news/home/20221010005131/en/>



Joel Yashinsky, Chief Marketing Officer (L), Applebee's; Kevin Carroll, Chief Operations Officer, Applebee's; and John Cywinski, President, Applebee's (R) present Mark Schostak, Partner, TEAM Schostak Family Restaurants with the Applebee's Franchisee of the Year Award at the Applebee's Franchise Conference in Beaver Creek, Colo. (Photo: Business Wire)

"In addition to the development of team members, recognition is foundational to Applebee's culture," said Cywinski. "Each year we are proud to recognize our exceptional leaders and partners for the outstanding work they do year-round from all levels of the business to make Applebee's great."

This year, Applebee's recognized more than 60 outstanding leaders, including supplier partners. The top five Applebee's Awards winners this year are groups or individuals who are committed to brand performance, guest service, operational excellence, and being a good neighbor. Those winners are:

Abe Gustin Franchisee of the Year: TEAM Schostak Family Restaurants

This award is in honor of the man who helped Applebee's become one of the nation's most iconic brands in casual dining and 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 TEAM Schostak Family Restaurants (TSFR)** - a 10-year franchisee - for its continued commitment to people and brand and their leading sales performance.

With a priority on development and career-pathing for every level of the organization, TSFR leads the way, guided by its core purpose to "create opportunities that make lives better." Their efforts have led to industry recognition as an employer of choice and statewide Top Workplace in their markets across Michigan for the past four consecutive years as well as national recognition this year as a Top Workplace USA.

Since 2019, TEAM Schostak has offered 100 percent tuition-free education to eligible team members as well as their spouses, children, and grandchildren through a partnership with Cleary University. And their TSFR Care Fund provides the opportunity for TEAM members to contribute a portion of each paycheck to support colleagues facing challenging circumstances, which the company matches. To date, the TSFR Care Fund has distributed more than 700 grants totaling \$700,000.

Applebee's unique business model lends to a rich culture of collaboration, partnership, and togetherness, which was visible throughout the conference, and contributes to the brand's success. In 2021, Applebee's outperformed the casual dining category for 51 consecutive weeks, which was also its best performance and highest sales volume under Dine Brands ownership. This momentum has continued in 2022, as the brand still leads the category on important attributes, such as affordability, menu variety, family-friendliness and overall brand awareness.

This year, conference attendees raised more than \$300,000 for the Bill Palmer Legacy Scholarship Fund. Established in 2021, the fund provides financial support for continued learning for all Applebee's Team Members and their children in the United States, in honor of Applebee's founder.

"Bill loved this brand and giving back to the people who believe in it," said Applebee's president John Cywinski. "We're honored to pave the way for our team members and their families to further their education," said Cywinski.

General Manager of the Year: Emily Canady, Apple American Group

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 **Emily Canady as 2022 General Manager of the Year**. A team member of Apple American Group for 20 years, Canady runs the Highland, Calif. location. Under Canady's leadership, Highland has become Apple American Group's number one ranked restaurant delivering elite guest service and financial results year after year.

Lloyd Hill Neighbor of the Year: Apple American Group

Named after one of the brand's historic leaders, this award 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 an Applebee's franchisee of more than 20 years, **Apple American Group**, for the team's determined commitment to community and longstanding work with various charity partners including Alex's Lemonade Stand Foundation, Muscular Dystrophy Association, Special Olympics, The Jimmy Fund, The Flynn Family Fund, and various schools, local law enforcement and churches, among others. As Applebee's largest franchisee, their investment in giving back to their neighborhoods nationwide is astounding and admirable.

Bill Palmer Heart of Applebee's: T. L Cannon and Neighborhood Restaurant Partners

Named after the founder of Applebee's, this award recognizes a franchisee that has shown the greatest commitment to an individual cause or organization over this past year. The 2022 recipients of this award are **T.L Cannon and Neighborhood Restaurant Partners** for their outstanding work with Make-A-Wish Foundation in their local markets. Neighborhood Restaurant Partners, with restaurants across Florida, Georgia, and Texas, has been raising funds for the foundation since 2014 and has raised more than \$1 million to fund 88 wishes. T.L. Cannon, with restaurants in New York, Pennsylvania, and Connecticut, has been committed to Make-A-Wish since 2008 and has raised more than \$1.8 million to fund more than 300 wishes, and has hosted more than 400 wish dinners.

Hometown Hero of the Year: Lisa Alvarez, Doherty Enterprises

In 2019, Applebee's created a program to formally recognize restaurant team members who do more than provide great service to their guests each day and go above and beyond to be a good neighbor. Out of a group of amazing heroes throughout the United States this year, **Applebee's 2022 Hometown Hero of the Year is Lisa Alvarez, a server in Doherty Enterprise's Port Charlotte, Fla. restaurant**. For 21 years, Lisa and her husband served as foster parents to newborn babies. Lisa has provided a welcoming home and love for 121 children, many of whom were born with addictions and other health issues. On top of her great commitment to these children, Lisa is always committed to wowing her guests. There is not a shift that Lisa works where a guest does not stop to let the Manager know how great the service had been and that when they come back, they will be asking for her.

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 franchise and company-operated operations consisted of 1,673 Applebee's restaurants in the United States, two U.S. territories and 11 countries outside the United States as of August 9, 2022. This number does not include two domestic Applebee's ghost kitchens (small kitchens with no store-front presence, used to fill off-premise orders) and eight Applebee's international ghost kitchens. 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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