

SMALL BUSINESS LEADERSHIP AWARD

Papa Joe's



“Papa Joe” passed away in 1998, but the third and fourth generations of the Iacomini Family continue to celebrate his legacy of strong values and commitment to his customers and his community at Papa Joe’s restaurant in the Merriman Valley. Since first opening in 1932, the Iacomini family has had at least one restaurant in continuous operation in greater Akron — and it wouldn’t be a stretch to say that almost everyone in our region has celebrated at least one milestone at an Iacomini family restaurant.

Joe’s daughter, Judy Amato, and her children Jeff, Kim, and Tommy, were born into a business that Joe treated like a family — and he always taught that family extends well beyond the four walls of the restaurant or the name Iacomini. The restaurant has now expanded to a 320-seat establishment with a 1,300+ label wine shop, carry out deli, and catering service, yet it retains a warm ambiance and casual familiarity among customers and staff. At Papa Joe’s, community is family, and in the immigrant tradition, we all look out for one another.

The number of organizations helped by the Iacomini family over the past 78 years would be difficult to count. In the past year alone, Papa Joe’s has supported dozens of local charities with needs as small as a few pans of delicious lasagna, or as large as taking over the entire restaurant for a charity fundraiser. Their support impacts every corner of our community: churches, schools, sports teams, health care, and culture. And whether the beneficiary is the sick seven-year old daughter of a Papa Joe’s employee or our city’s world-class art museum, the Papa Joe’s family is there. It’s the Iacomini family’s small way of paying forward the support the community has shown through four generations.

nominated by

Akron Art Museum