

Chaffee's Got Heart Community Spotlight: Little Red Hen Bakery

The Chaffee's Got Heart Committee is extremely proud of local businesses and individuals that have gone above and beyond by doing extraordinary things during these uncertain times.

From innovating ways to thrive despite trying circumstances to showering struggling members of our community with generosity to prioritizing the health and safety of our most vulnerable, these businesses and individuals, who have been nominated for this honor by fellow community members, have shown what it really means when we say: **Chaffee's Got HEART.**

Today, we sat down with **owner and baker Emily Walker of the Little Red Hen Bakery in Salida** to learn how COVID changed things just a year after she and husband, Andrew (owner of Salida's 7000 Feet Running Company) took over the reins.

How did COVID cause you to innovate?

The biggest change we made was putting our line outside. We never would have considered this if not for COVID, but we tried to pick something early on that would go above and beyond no matter what rules came into effect so we could get back into a rhythm that would allow us to focus on outstanding customer service and creating a delicious product. Plus, we gave people a place they could socialize safely from a distance.



Why did you decide to go above & beyond to keep our community safe?

I take my commitment to employing members of our community very seriously. Our employees and customers depend on us to be here for them so I wanted to make sure we could stay open. To do that, we needed to design a system that would provide peace of mind – for the 20 people on my team and for the customers – no matter what might happen. And it paid off. When we had an employee COVID scare back in October, it was really comforting to know that our customers had nothing to worry about because of the distance we placed between us and them.

Out of an abundance of caution we closed for a few days until we all tested. As a small business, it was terrifying, but we knew it was the right thing to do and the feedback we got from the community was a hundred percent positive. It made people trust us even more and they came back in full force when we reopened.

Where do you see examples of the idea that “Chaffee’s Got Heart”?

From the very beginning of the pandemic, what blew us away was that our customers weren’t just coming to us for food, they were coming to us for comfort and that was super powerful. They sent such a strong message: you need to stay open because we need you, we rely on you and at the same time, they made it clear that they were going to be here for us, a definite sign of our community’s heart.

We used to be so much friendlier and welcoming than we are now, giving samples, having kids play inside, chatting with customers – and it’s been scary to let go of that to be safe. We weren’t sure how people would react, but they’ve been amazing. We can’t wait until we can welcome people back into the store, but we know that the Little Red Hen will be ok until it’s safe.

What’s your biggest takeaway from 2020?

I learned what we mean to this community. This was a scary year for a new business owner like me, but feeling this supported made me realize I want to do this for the rest of my life – run this bakery, here in Salida. We matter here, which is a lot of responsibility, but it’s also gotten me through the tough bits of 2020 and it made our team so much stronger.

Cool Tidbits:

Quarantined or staying extra safe? LRH offers free delivery after 4 PM within Salida. Call (719) 539-2401 to schedule your delivery.

If you’ve taken the [Chaffee’s Got Heart Pledge](#) and received [a free Discovery Pass](#) as a result, LRH offers unlimited coffee!

Through their Community Account the LRH accepts donations for the Salida Grainery. Stop by the Little Red Hen at 302 G Street in Salida to donate.

For the latest menu and hours: <https://www.facebook.com/littleredhensalida/>

Stories of Chaffee County individuals and businesses rising to the challenge abound.

We will be shining a light on those doing extraordinary things for the community throughout the upcoming months. Visit our websites ([Chaffee’s Got Heart](#) or [CCPH](#)) or follow us on [Facebook \(@COVID19ChaffeeCounty\)](#) to see more.

Know a potential candidate, or are you one yourself? Send nomination ideas to: health@chaffeecounty.org.