

2024 Small Business of the Year Finalists

THE GOOD CO. - This business, initially a small vendor stall, has grown significantly within the region, eventually expanding to one of the largest spaces and adding a separate brick-and-mortar location in Downtown New Castle. The business features original artwork, vintage and vintage-inspired items, and products from local makers, fostering a community of artisans. It also collaborates with other local businesses to host community events.

The owner is a published artist whose work is sold in major retail stores and is deeply committed to community involvement. She actively supports local optimist clubs, school fundraisers, and private fundraising events, demonstrating a strong dedication to giving back.

KY'S AMERICAN BISTRO – A local culinary venture began in 2018 with a small endeavor, quickly expanding due to a recognized community need. In 2022, they opened a brick-and-mortar location and eventually expanded to a full-service business just down the street. The owners' mission centers on creating a welcoming and inclusive experience that celebrates diversity and fosters community. Their dedication to service has driven their steady growth over the years, fueled by strong community support. They believe that food has the power to bring people together, and they work hard to create a welcoming environment. Their goal is to unite people in a warm and inviting atmosphere, believing that bringing people together at the table builds a community where everyone feels valued. With decades of combined experience in the industry, the owners have successfully merged their passion for food and people, always prioritizing inclusivity and community in their operations. They are also committed to giving back to the community, supporting local students, donating food to shelters, partnering with non-profit organizations for fundraising, and encouraging their staff to volunteer with paid time off. They foster a great work environment for all employees. They show empathy and compassion for people.

L&K PRODUCE – During the challenging times of the 2020 pandemic, this local business initiated a program to support fellow small businesses. They invited other businesses at no cost to open an outdoor market, aiming to mutually benefit and weather the difficult period. This initiative has continued beyond 2020, with the business growing alongside the businesses they've supported. Their assistance has taken various forms, including offering free setup and event space, which notably saved at least one vendor's business. They also provided opportunities for vendors to showcase their products, leading to significant growth for some, including one who now has a brick-and-mortar store and another whose products are now sold nationwide. The meat vendor experienced unprecedented sales after partnering with the produce business. The business provides many different services for each season. Decorating for Fall, Christmas, Halloween etc. using the products from their farm.

Beyond supporting other businesses, the company actively engages with the community. Their products are featured in several area restaurants, demonstrating their commitment to local sourcing. They are known for exceptional customer service, including standing behind their products, providing prompt delivery to restaurants, and offering flexible hours to accommodate customers. They also utilize social media to promote other small businesses and support various organizations, including the New Castle Wrestling Club, and Shenandoah FFA, among others.

THE RINK, NEW CASTLE SKATE CENTER - This entertainment business has been part of the community for many years but changed ownership in its recent history. Two families have put lots of hard work, sweat, and tears into a business that continues to touch the lives of several families in Henry County. This business consists of giving the youth of our area a place to spend time with family and friends. The owners are proud of the tradition that they have continued and expanded for more rink rats to take part in.

Not only does this company provide a fun and safe environment for all ages, they also treat customers like family and build personal relationships with lots of customers. They also employ lots of teens, and for many of these teens, it is their first job. The rink supports local schools with fundraising skate nights, providing sponsorships, and more. They participate in parades and fundraisers with their skaters.