

Chaffee's Got Heart Community Spotlight: Loni Walton at YOLO

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 Loni Walton, owner of YOLO, to find out how the pandemic changed operations at her shop. She highlights how special the Chaffee County community is through her drive to keep customers and staff safe while still maintaining a mission to add to the vibrancy of downtown Salida.

How did COVID cause you to innovate the way you do business?

Early on, the pandemic pushed us to do more online sales and private appointments. In addition to extra sanitizing, we also keep our doors open and have limited the number of customers allowed in the shop at once.

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

We care about our staff and customers. We felt like we wanted to keep everyone safe- this is very important to us. It has been important to do everything that we could to stay open and be viable business, while taking care of everyone in the same process. For instance, we went down to 25% capacity when we were allowed 50%. Everyone's sense of 6 ft is different so we wanted to make sure everyone was safe. This was hard for business and some people were mad about the 25% capacity limit. However, we wanted to keep everyone safe. It has only been recently that we have allowed 50% capacity into our shop. Additionally, we take masking up and cleaning surfaces very seriously.



Where do you see examples of the idea that 'Chaffee's Got Heart'?

The locals have been so great. From vaccine clinics to contact tracing, our community has been on it. I am so proud of the Chaffee community. We did not feel like we were getting a push back during the height of the pandemic, so this made it easier for us to stay open and do our part in keeping the community safe. This made us feel good when things were scary.

Additionally, I have heard people say, "I'm going to spend the stimulus check downtown". I have been a member of community for 33 years now, and WOW this is a great community. Even out of town customers have been our cheerleaders. They have called YOLO to see how we are doing throughout the pandemic.

What's your biggest takeaway from the past year?

I live in an amazing community and I am grateful to be here. I really just want to say that we feel blessed to be healthy and lovingly supported by our community.

Cool Tidbits: What else do you want people to know about you, your business, your contributions to the community, how they can get involved or support you?

This is our 15th year so we have seen a lot of change in the community. I am proud to be in heart of downtown Salida because it feels so vibrant. The reason we have made it for 15 years is because of locals shopping year around. They are so kind and supportive.