

Chaffee's Got HEART Community Spotlight: Neighbor to Neighbor/Chaffee Shuttle

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 (or change the way you run your organization)?

Our organization worked closely with the Colorado Department of Transportation as well as with Colorado Association of Transit Agencies for guidance in managing our operations through the pandemic. When the Covid-19 restrictions were first announced there were certain state



& local requirements for us to follow which included the use of quarantine for personnel that traveled out of state, thorough cleaning of all shuttles w/ the use of disinfectant, use of masks by all personnel for the safety of our passengers, and requiring our patrons to wear masks and safely social distance our riders on the shuttle. We also purchased an Electrostatic Sprayer gun to thoroughly disinfect the shuttles after each shift.

We also worked closely with the Chaffee County Community Foundation in creating the Senior Shuttle's Shopper Program where our drivers' conducted shopping of household essentials for patrons under lockdown.

In addition, we agree to work closely with Chaffee County Public Health in providing transit services to clients needing to get to vaccination appointments.

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

The Chaffee Shuttle felt it was vital to our community to continue operating utilizing safe practices to meet the needs of the community. Although our ridership was drastically reduced, we thought of creative ways to assist the county through the lockdown.

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

The easiest example is the outpouring of generosity from the residents and the businesses of Chaffee County. “Chaffee’s Got Heart” exemplifies the small-town attitude of being there to meet the various needs of the community during crucial times like the pandemic. The Chaffee Shuttle recognized that the majority of our patrons were in the high-risk category of contracting the Covid-19 virus and felt the need to step up to continue operating for the purpose of giving back to our community.

What’s your biggest takeaway from the past year?

The past year has had its share of challenges and for The Chaffee Shuttle it involved constantly re-evaluating and re-assessing the needs of our community and seeking solutions to meet those needs

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?

The Chaffee Shuttle is a non-profit organization funded through donations and grants – operating under both private and state and federal funds. It provides transportation for the general public – everyone in our community, including the elderly and mobility challenged individuals. The shuttle works in the cooperation with other non-profit organizations and our local government agencies to meet current and future needs in our county.