

Heart of House Star- Essay Submission board moves most forward to judges unless irrelevant and not qualified, due by November 1st

This award honors a back of house member whose dedication, reliability, and work ethic help drive the success of operations. Often unseen by guests but vital to the smooth running of the kitchen or service areas, this individual may work as a dishwasher, steward, prep cook, or in another support role that keeps the operation moving. Nominees for this award are those who consistently go above and beyond, whether through their attention to detail, willingness to help others, positive attitude, or their role in maintaining a clean, organized, and efficient back of house environment. They are the quiet force that ensures service starts strong and ends stronger.

Essay Prompt for Submission:

Please describe why this individual deserves to be recognized as the Back of House Support Star of the Year. Share how their work ethic, reliability, teamwork, and attitude have made a lasting impact on your team and operation. Examples of what to include:

- *Times they went above and beyond their role*
- *How they support both BOH and FOH teams*
- *Their consistency, attention to safety and cleanliness*
- *How they demonstrate pride in their work and support team morale*
- *Any challenges they've helped overcome or solved*

If this individual were to receive this award, what message would you want to share about them and why they deserve it?

Beyond the Plate Award- Essay Submission vote board moves most forward to judges unless irrelevant and not qualified, due by November 1st

This award celebrates a food and beverage operation or program in West Michigan that makes a meaningful and lasting impact outside of the traditional realms of restaurants, bars, or catering services. These are the community anchors who bring hospitality, nourishment, and excellence to spaces where food service is often taken for granted. Whether serving students in campus dining halls, patients in healthcare facilities, seniors in residential communities, employees in corporate cafeterias, or the broader public through nonprofit meal programs or public institutions, these foodservice professionals demonstrate how impactful hospitality can be in every corner of daily life.

Eligible nominees may include but are not limited to:

- University and school dining programs
- Hospital or senior living kitchens
- Corporate or industrial dining services
- Food halls or multi-concept culinary collectives
- Nonprofit organizations or community kitchens
- Mobile food pantries and outreach food programs
- Correctional or institutional foodservice

- Pop-up culinary initiatives or collaborative food experiences
- Museums, theaters, stadiums, or cultural venues offering innovative food programs

This award recognizes programs that exemplify:

- High quality and thoughtful food offerings
- A guest first approach rooted in dignity, service, and empathy
- Operational excellence, safety, and adaptability
- Creative solutions for diverse dietary needs or unique service challenges
- A demonstrated impact on the community or population served
- Innovation in program design, presentation, or service delivery

Lifetime Achievement Award- *Essay Submission board moves most forward to judges unless irrelevant and not qualified, due by November 1st*

The Lifetime Achievement Award recognizes an individual whose lifelong dedication, leadership, and passion have left a legacy on the food and beverage community of West Michigan.

This honoree is more than a culinary or hospitality professional, they are a mentor, innovator, educator, and advocate who has shaped the industry through the years of service. Whether through teaching the next generation, building beloved institutions, supporting local producers, elevating West Michigan's food culture, or championing collaboration and community, they have poured their heart and soul into making this region a better place to eat, drink, work, and grow.

A Legacy Award in the field of Food and Beverage is a prestigious recognition bestowed upon individuals, organizations, or establishments that have made enduring and significant contributions to the culinary world. This award acknowledges their remarkable impact on the industry and their dedication to shaping its future.

- **Criteria for Eligibility**
- Legacy Award Nominees must have dedicated a substantial portion of their professional life to the food and beverage industry, consistently demonstrating excellence in their work.
- **Key Attributes Considered for the Award**
- **Innovation:** Recipients have introduced groundbreaking concepts, culinary techniques, or products that have reshaped the industry.
- **Cultural Preservation:** They have preserved and promoted culinary traditions, heritage, and local flavors, ensuring they continue to thrive.
- **Educational Leadership:** Award recipients have contributed significantly to culinary education, mentoring the next generation of chefs and culinary professionals.
- **Community Impact:** Their work has positively influenced their local communities and the broader food and beverage landscape.

- Sustainability: They have demonstrated a commitment to sustainable practices, contributing to the long-term health of the food ecosystem.
- Influence: Recipients have served as role models and sources of inspiration for others in the industry.
- The Tip Jar Foundation Food and Beverage Legacy Award embodies the spirit of culinary excellence, innovation, and dedication. It stands as a testament to the enduring impact of those who have left an indelible mark on the world of food and beverage, ensuring their legacy lives on for years to come.