

Pittsburgh Post-Gazette®

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 8, 2024



Beaver County Foundation

Joseph Bauman, front left, with Sandy Bauman and siblings Kris Kusanovich and Jeff Bauman at Bauman Office Equipment in Beaver Falls.

Family-owned businesses receive awards, give \$500 to charities

By Karen Kadilak
For the Post-Gazette

Family-owned businesses Bauman Office Equipment in Beaver Falls and Biba restaurant in Beaver were recently recognized as recipients of Benjamin Franklin Entrepreneurship Awards from the Beaver County Foundation.

Each business was asked to select a charity to receive a \$500 grant at the Nov. 21

luncheon at Seven Oaks Country Club in Brighton.

Established with a bequest of \$25,000 in 1992, for 30 years now the foundation has handed out the awards to businesses who best exemplify the Founding Father's pioneering spirit and desire to do good.

Over its more than 70-year history, Bauman Office Equipment has moved away from business machines to office furniture and

good grants

supplies. Today, it occupies three storefronts and represents a longtime fixture on Seventh Avenue in Beaver Falls.

"My family and I are honored to have our business recognized," said Jeff Bauman, 55, of Beaver Falls. "My grandfather (founder Joseph Bauman Jr.) would be proud to know his thoughts on entrepreneurship, business values and belief in putting customers first has served three generations of his family so well."

"My family and I are proud that small-town values, interpersonal relationships and upholding promises still matter."

For their designated charity, Bauman chose CARE Outreach Ministries of Christian Assembly in Beaver Falls to receive the \$500 award to put toward its annual community Christmas dinner.

Biba opened in 2010 and offers fine dining using fresh local ingredients.

"The restaurant business is so fragile," said owner Jason Benegasi, 51, of Chippewa. "We've become so strong thanks to our amazing staff, loyal followers and place in the community."

"It's nice to be recognized for our 14 years of hard work."

Biba chose Bags & Blessings, a faith-based nonprofit that distributes gift bags to people undergoing cancer



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Jason Benegasi of Biba restaurant chose Bags & Blessings to receive a \$500 grant.

treatments, and Rebuild Better Together, which provides support to people with spinal cord injuries, to share its award.

Bags & Blessings founder Robin Redfern said the donation came at a good time as holiday gift bags are being readied for distribution at treatment centers in Beaver and Allegheny counties.

Theresa Laderer, executive director of the Beaver County Foundation, said both businesses go the extra mile.

"They have served the community during good times and bad," she said.



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Jason Benegasi opened Biba restaurant in Beaver 14 years ago.