

LAWRENCE BUSINESS MAGAZINE

2024 Q2



GROWING INNOVATION

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LAWRENCE BUSINESS MAGAZINE

FOUNDATION
AWARDS

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Master of Ceremonies
Bart Littlejohn
and Heidi Simon

Keynote Speaker Travis Goff,
KU Athletic Director

A Celebration of Local Businesses

11th Annual Lawrence Business Magazine Foundation Awards

by Bob Luder, photos by Jeff Burkhead and Matt Poole

If there was one takeaway from the 2024 Foundation Awards, it was this – the “foundation” of Lawrence business is thriving and growing at an impressive rate.

A record number of 22 local businesses – creating 247 jobs in 2023 – were honored with Foundation Awards, having met the criteria of being locally owned, being in business at least three years and having grown their work forces by at least 20 percent or 20 employees. More companies were recognized for being outstanding women-owned and minority-owned businesses along with being good stewards of the community. Owners and employees of most of these companies packed inside a sold-out room at Maceli’s Banquet Hall & Catering the evening of April 24 to enjoy each other’s company, some food and drink, be recognized and receive their awards.

“We are thrilled to have such a great turnout again this year, selling out for the second year in a row,” said Ann Frame Hertzog, Lawrence Business Magazine’s editor-in-chief and co-publisher with husband, Steven Hertzog. “It was amazing to see such a wonderful, diverse group of business owners and community leaders support and cheer on one another. These businesses are truly making a positive impact on our community.”

Heidi Simon, associate director of the University of Kansas Office of Admissions and one of the program’s two masters of ceremony along with Lawrence Mayor Bart Littlejohn, spoke to the gathering of how Lawrence, and the strength and cohesiveness of its business community, was a major selling point when recruiting students to KU, and the Foundation Awards certainly were indicative of the strong bonds the business community shares.

Before awards were presented, the crowd was treated to an inspirational address by featured speaker, KU Athletics Director Travis Goff, a Kansas native and KU graduate. Goff spoke about growing up in Dodge City in a family of teachers, coaches and small business owners. He spoke of working at his grandfather’s car dealership and learning what the concept of small business means.

“I look back on those roots, and they resonate in different ways,” he said. His fondest memories, he recalled, were family trips across the state to Lawrence for basketball games in Allen Field House or football games at Memorial Stadium.

“I just remember thinking, what a remarkable place,” Goff said. “At the heart of that were local businesses and business owners.”

Goff continued to speak about the importance of honoring this area’s history, heritage and value systems. He said when he assumed his role of athletic director in 2021, he “came here to double down on some of those values. Those values are a spectacular thing.”

However, Goff also stressed that what made Lawrence a special place, especially for businesses, was the area’s ability to evolve and adapt with changing times and a changing business climate.

“That’s where the excellence comes from,” he said. “That’s the intersection of where we are in Lawrence, Kansas. We all have a lot more in common than not.”

Goff concluded by giving the audience an update on the Gateway District project that will transform the northern entrance to campus and renovate Memorial Stadium.

“I can tell you this version of KU has never been more committed to this community,” he said. “I think when this project is finished, it’ll be something everyone can be excited about and proud of.”

Beth Easter, market president at INTRUST, the presenting sponsor of the event, presented each of the 22 companies Foundation Awards, including awarding Good Energy Solutions for an unprecedented sixth time. It was joined by 1900 Barker Bakery and Café, Bates Company, Body Specific, Bracker’s Good Earth Clays, JEO Consulting Group, Kessler Contractors, La Estrella Mexicana, Pine Landscape Center, SERC Physical Therapy, Sound Speech Therapy and Uplift Coffee Shop as multiple Foundation Award winners.

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Presenting Sponsor Intrust Bank's Beth Easter with Bart Littlejohn and Heidi Simon

There were 11 women-owned businesses nominated for the Women-Owned Business Foundation Impact Award, many of which also received Foundation Awards. In the end, Pine Landscape Center, owned by Kathy Pine, took home the award.

"We had the opportunity to go through certification as a women's entity with the state," Pine said. "That gave us more opportunities to help contact more women-owned and minority businesses. We've been able to grow our opportunities with locally-grown businesses. The more we expand our line of products, we have become a go-to for local businesses. It's been awesome, for sure."

There were 10 minority-owned businesses nominated for the Minority-Owned Business Foundation Impact Award. That went to Leeway Franks & Butcher, owned by Lee Meisel.

"It feels amazing to be recognized in this way by the community," Meisel said. "We care about our customers a lot."

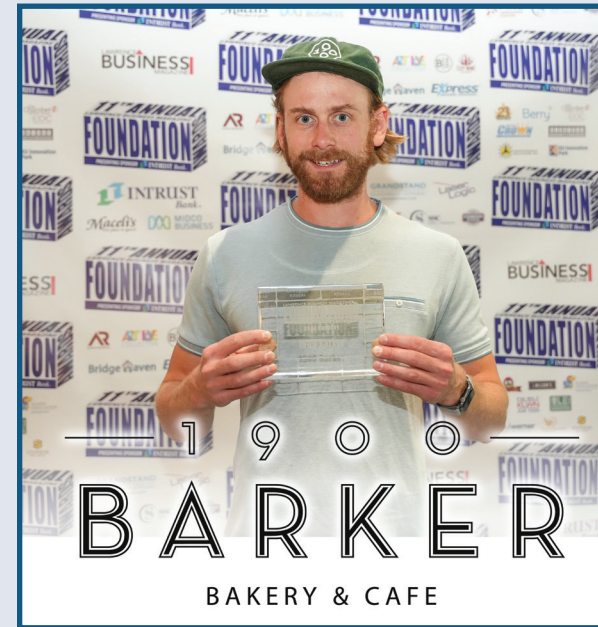
"There are so many businesses that have a lot more employees than we do. To be on the same page as them is incredible. It was a great time seeing all these people."

The final award of the evening was the Footprint Impact Award, bestowed on the company that reaches out and contributes back to the Lawrence business community through relationships with other civic entities. That honor this year fell upon Bert Nash Community Mental Health Center for the time and talent its team members give back to other community organizations, be it through board membership or collaboration at events.

"Being able to partner with so many other great businesses and our success in what we do ... it means a lot," said Patrick Schmitz, chief executive officer.

"I think it's just a great night. It's inspiring to see the growth of these companies and the jobs they're bringing in. It's a neat opportunity to learn about that. It makes me very hopeful for our community."

The 2024 Foundation Award Recipients



1900 BARKER BAKERY AND CAFÉ (two-time honoree)

1900 Barker is a neighborhood bakery and café in East Lawrence serving handmade artisan bread and French style pastries. What began in 2015 as two brothers, Taylor and Reagan Petrehn has since grown to a team of 48 individuals doing its part to make Lawrence and the world a better place to live. Now serving two locations, at 1900 Barker Avenue and 816 Mass Street.

1900 Barker added 17 jobs, increasing to 48 employees.



ATMA Clinic

Atma is a multi-faceted, patient-centered healthcare clinic with the goal of optimizing the health of patients by drawing on the newest and most effective medical science methods, including biochemistry, genetics and advanced nutrition. It provides both stand-alone care and treatments coordinated with other providers allowing patients to live their fullest, happiest and most vibrant lives.

Atma added five employees, increasing its workforce to 16.



BATES COMPANY (2-time honoree & 2019 Footprint Impact Award Winner)

Founded by Simon and Codi Bates, Bates Co. began in 2009 as a single fast-casual restaurant. Since then, it has grown into six dynamic brands with a love of food, drink and community all enjoyed in fun, casual and unconventional settings. Bates Co. operates The Cider Gallery, BonBon, The Burger Stand at the Casbah, Taco Zone and Parallel Sauce Co. and is the property owner and caretaker of two historic commercial buildings in the Warehouse Arts District.

Bates Company added 25 jobs, increasing its workforce to 95 employees.

BERT NASH COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH CENTER

The Bert Nash Center is the designated community mental health center and the certified community behavioral health clinic for Douglas County. Its mission is to advance the health of the community through comprehensive behavioral health services responsive to evolving needs and changing environments. Compassion, integrity, equity, on a foundation of hope in all it does serving those in need is what Bert Nash is all about.

Bert Nash added 91 jobs, increasing its total workforce to 371 employees.



BIODATA SOLUTIONS, LLC

BioData Solutions specializes in providing a full spectrum of preclinical to post-market approval bioanalytical consulting services and automation software offerings to sponsors, Contract Research Organizations, and biotechnology organizations for small molecules, biologics, and cell and gene therapy products.

BioData Solutions added two jobs, bringing its total workforce to 12 employees.



BODY SPECIFIC (two-time honoree)

Body Specific enables clients to achieve and maintain a whole health lifestyle by incorporating many health focused modalities. By combining the benefits of massage therapy, chiropractic care and acupuncture, as well as skin care and nutrition, Body Specific strives to create a harmonious balance that supports the body, mind and spirit on the journey to optimal health and well-being.

Body Specific created six new jobs, increasing its workforce to 32.



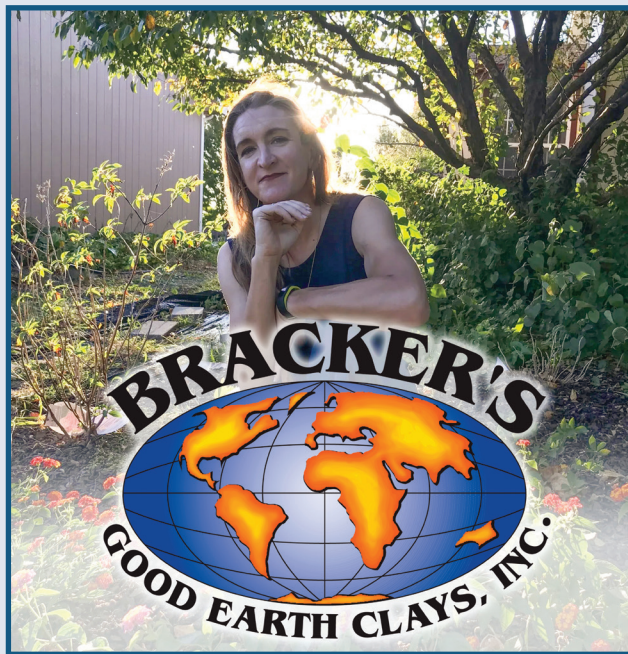
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BRACKER'S GOOD EARTH CLAYS, INC. (two-time honoree)

Bracker's Good Earth Clays is a family-owned and operated ceramic supply business, now run by the second generation. It supplies potters, arts centers, schools, universities and ceramic enthusiasts with every they need for their creative endeavors across seven states and many points nationwide. Through its sister company, it even produces clay here in Douglas County.

Bracker's Good Earth Clays added 3 new employees, bringing its workforce to 12.



eXplore LAWRENCE

eXplore Lawrence represents the travel and tourism industry for Lawrence and Douglas County. It is dedicated to creating economic development by attracting visitors, conventions, and events to our city. eXplore Lawrence prides itself on hospitality – to visitors and residents alike, ensuring that all people feel welcome in our community. It celebrates the community's authenticity and believes diverse perspectives make the community stronger and more attractive to all.

eXplore Lawrence added two full-time and one part-time employee, bringing its workforce to seven full-time and 2 part-time employees.



GASKINS PHOTOGRAPHY COLLECTION

Gaskins Photography Collection is a studio that captures maternity moments, corporate headshots and food photography. The mission of Gaskins Photography Collection is to help others find the beauty within themselves. From a person who went through anxiety and depression, his mission is to provide service for others to find their beauty within.

Gaskins Photography Collection added one employee doubling its workforce.



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GOOD ENERGY SOLUTIONS (six-time honoree & 2020 Footprint Impact Award Winner)

Good Energy Solutions is a full-service energy partner that is able to provide comprehensive consulting and services in electrical, renewable energy and energy management in the central U.S., including Missouri and Kansas. The company is dedicated to customer satisfaction through quality design and installations and backs its promises with long warranties. The company also works with non-profit organizations helping them to lower their utility costs to enable them to use their resources to help others.

Good Energy Solutions added six jobs to its workforce – making them the first six-time recipient.



HEARTLAND COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

Heartland Community Health Center is an integrated primary care practice that exists to serve all community members regardless of income or insurance status in Douglas County and the surrounding area. Heartland is recognized as a patient-centered medical home for both acute and chronic health conditions and offers onsite primary care, mental/behavioral health, oral health services and pharmacy services. As the safety net provider for the area, Heartland is the trusted provider of high quality, integrated care serving more than 20,000 patients annually.

Heartland added 30 new jobs, bringing its workforce to 185 employees. Over the past five years, Heartland has grown its staffing by 159 percent to meet the growing need for care in the community.



HOLMAN NEEDLE & INK

Holman Needle & Ink has been providing custom screen printing and embroidery to the Lawrence and Douglas County area for the last nine years. It prides itself on quality garments, superior workmanship and uplifting the community. With service areas in Lawrence, Ottawa, Topeka, Tonganoxie, Eudora and Baldwin City, Holman proudly lives local, works local, supports local and spends local.

Holman Needle & Ink added two jobs, doubling its workforce from two to four employees.



JEO CONSULTING GROUP (two-time honoree)

Founded in 1937 in Wahoo, Nebraska, JEO provides excellence in engineering, architecture, surveying, planning, community engagement, environmental sciences and funding services to municipalities and state agencies across the Midwest. Its Midwestern roots influences its work every day. Each solution is a product of relationships with clients. This localized approach creates meaningful infrastructure that solves today's problems while establishing a foundation for the future.

JEO added three jobs, increasing its local workforce to 12 employees.



KESSLER CONTRACTORS (two-time honoree)

Kessler Contractors provides quality residential and commercial facility maintenance to local businesses and homeowners. That includes, but is not limited to, plumbing, electrical, HVAC, remodel and general construction. It has had the pleasure of working with the O'Connell Childrens Shelter, Lawrence Memorial Hospital, property management companies, doctors offices and many wonderful homeowners over the last five years and looks forward to continuing those relationships while making new ones.

Kessler Contractors added one employee, increasing its workforce to five.



LA ESTRELLA MEXICANA (two-time honoree)

For 22 years, La Estrella Mexicana, a minority-owned business, has been a one-stop shop for foods and supplies for Lawrence's Hispanic community. Owners Raul and Adany Perez offer everything from tortillas to marineras to summertime snow cones in traditional Mexican flavors, La Estrella is the place to shop for those seeking authentic Hispanic products.

La Estrella added five jobs, bringing its workforce to 17.



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LAWRENCE FARMERS MARKET

Lawrence Farmers Market is a non-profit farmers market, with a mission to provide children and adults in the Lawrence area with locally grown foods and farm products from within 50 miles of the city. It is the oldest farmers market in Kansas and has been a pilot market for many food assistance programs like the Double Up Food Bucks program for SNAP users. LFM is an essential community gathering place for the Lawrence area.

Lawrence Farmers Market added one employee.

PINE LANDSCAPE CENTER (two-time honoree)

The mission at Pine Landscape Center is to help customers sculpt raw ideas into real accomplishments. The business primarily revolves around four product categories – rock, sod, soil and mulch – the building blocks for great outdoor spaces. However, Pine has expanded its offerings to help customers achieve their dream space. With the options of self pick-up and delivery, Pine's customer base reaches as far east as Overland Park and as far west as Topeka.

Pine Landscape added two jobs, increasing its workforce to 10 employees.

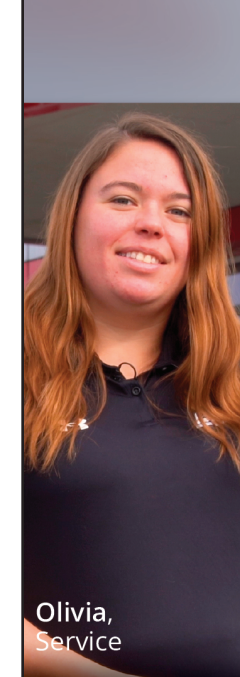
RUESCHHOFF SECURITY

Rueschhoff Security is a locally owned security company founded in 1976. It sells and installs residential and commercial security, access control, fire and cameras systems as well as other products. It also owns and operates its own Central Monitoring Station. Rueschhoff Security's sister company, Rueschhoff Communications, offers answering services for health providers, contractors and many other businesses that need after hours or overflow answering services.

Rueschhoff Security added 11 jobs, increasing its workforce to 32.



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SERC PHYSICAL THERAPY (two-time honoree)

SERC Physical Therapy's mission is to serve patients by treating them promptly with integrity, honesty and compassion. SERC is part of the Upstream Rehabilitation family of clinical care, a network of industry-leading brands providing world-class physical and occupational therapy across the U.S. In addition to in-clinic treatment, SERC offers tele-health PT services by video conferencing with a licensed therapist from the comfort of your home.

SERC added two jobs, increasing its workforce to six employees.



SIGLER PHARMACY

Sigler Pharmacy is an independent, locally owned company providing pharmacy services and compounding. Its goal is to provide the best patient care through building a strong working relationship with patients to help manage their health. It offers free delivery, compliance packing, immunizations, yearly Medicare Part D plan reviews, compression stockings and compounding. Sigler also offers immunization clinics at nursing homes, independent living facilities and places of business.

Sigler Pharmacy added a new downtown location in addition to eight jobs, increasing its workforce to 38 employees.



SOUND SPEECH THERAPY (two-time honoree)

Sound Speech Therapy is a women-owned, pediatric speech-language, occupational and feeding clinic committed to providing quality service to patients and families using a collaborative approach. In addition, SST offers myofunctional therapy to both children and adults. This company's dedication and commitment to core fundamental values truly sets the company apart – the commitment to collaboration and building strong relationships built on trust, not only with patients but with their families.

SOUND SPEECH THERAPY experienced a 63 percent growth in its workforce, increasing to eight employees and five contractors.



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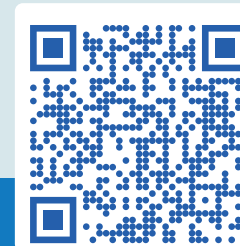
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UPLIFT COFFEE SHOP – (two-time honoree)

Uplift Coffee Shop has two brick and mortar shops in Lawrence and a mobile unit. This past year, it added 133 Coffee in Baldwin City. The company also added catering opportunities for customers. Uplift's owners feel they have the right space for everyone among their various locations. Second Street serves commuters in the mornings commuting outside of Lawrence, while Sixth Street has a group of regulars that include downtown workers and college athletes. When the weather is nice, the patio becomes a fantastic destination for people of all ages. Uplift is a fantastic spot to relax and build friendships.

Uplift Coffee Shop added 18 jobs, increasing its workforce to 38 employees.



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2024 Woman-Owned Business Foundation Impact Award & Nominees



2024 Woman-Owned Business Foundation Impact Award Winner Pine Landscape Center, owner Kathy Pine,*

donates time annually to Veritas Christian School and LHBA. It also makes donations to non-for-profit organizations such as Douglas County Community Foundation, Insight Women's Center, Family Promise of Lawrence, Lawrence Humane Society, Ballard Center, Just Food and Douglas County Fair. Pine strives to source products locally and work with local businesses whenever possible.

Bates Co., owner Codi Bates,*

seeks out opportunities for staff to get involved with various organizations while on the job, primarily through hosting events with non-profits or at one of its establishments. Bates Co. prioritizes locally-owned businesses whenever possible to source responsibly and donates time and money to a wide array of local causes.

BioData Solutions, LLC, owner Stephanie Pisas-Farmer,

offers internships to local university students and makes it a priority to support local businesses such as hiring locally for company events, using catering from local establishments, local photographers for company headshots, and local equipment rentals. Whenever there's an opportunity to hire a local vendor, BioData Solutions strives to make that connection.

Bracker's Good Earth Clays, owner Cindy Bracker,*

has provided in-kind support to the Lawrence Public Schools, donating clay and services to elementary schools, middle schools and high schools over the past two years as budgets have tightened. Bracker's has volunteered time for Friends of Raintree, the Lawrence Arts Center, Kansas Cycling Association, among others, as well as promoted the area community within the national ceramics scene, focusing on Lawrence as a destination for events.

GPW and Associates, LLC, owner Gina Pacumbaba-Watson,^

is a nationally-certified, woman-owned, minority-owned engineering consulting firm, founded in 1998, which practices and is licensed in 48 states. Key clients include Walmart, Sam's Club, AT&T, Kroger (Dillon's in Kansas) and Target, and GPW works with these clients on a national level. Key services provided are mechanical, electrical, plumbing, lighting, fire protection and refrigeration engineering consulting. It's diversity of clients and projects keeps the company nimble as demands in the marketplace fluctuate to meet consumer and business goals.

K.N. Rials Therapy and Consulting, owner Nicole Rials,^

is a woman-owned, minority-owned business. Rials serves as a volunteer chaplain with the First Responder Chaplain Association, a non-profit organization that responds to the needs and care of Douglas County law enforcement, fire, medical, dispatch and emergency management and members of the community following an emergency or crisis.

Kessler Contractors, LLC, owner Dynelle Kessler,*^

is a woman-owned, minority-owned business. Kessler donates regularly to the O'Connell Children's Shelter. It uses local contractors for electrical, plumbing, HVAC, roofing repairs, landscaping, remodel/drywall repairs, painting and more. They strive to hire locally as much as possible.

Lawrence Pet Friends, owner Sheree Miller,

and her team have been fostering animals in their own homes and tabling at Lawrence Humane Society functions to highlight its partnership. The business also become Fur Ball Supporters and raised more than \$5,000 for the Humane Society through the Betty White movement on her birthday.

Reign Basketball Ministries Foundation, owner Rebekah Vann,^

is a woman-owned, minority-owned business. Reign uses its camps, clinics, special events, and competitive teams to provide mentorship, teamwork and inspiration while empowering local young people who are at-risk and facing adversity. It's partnered with Body Boutique, Total Body Nutrition and T-Town Nutrition for Christmas Toy Drives and Back-to-School Drives.

Sound Speech Therapy, owner Kimberly Williams,*

offers local and surrounding schools professional development opportunities to help educators understand developmental norms, how to use practical strategies in the classroom, determine when more support might be needed, how to talk to parents, and what community resources to refer to. It offers free screenings to families and provided two full days of screenings at two different community sites last year.

Uplift Coffee Shop, owner Kelli Huslig,*

has donated coffee to local events such as runs. The company donates to numerous entities including the fire department, police departments, schools, etc. It constantly is providing donations of coffee for raffles, drawings, whatever it can do to help the local community. If Uplift can source locally, it always does so.

- * A 2024 Foundation Award Recipient
- ^ Also nominated as a Minority-Owned Business Foundation Impact Award

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2024 Minority-Owned Business Foundation Impact Award & Nominees



2024 Minority-Owned Business Foundation Impact Award Winner

Leeway Franks & Butcher,
owner **Lee Meisel,**

is a counter-service eatery focused on serving high quality comfort foods made with local ingredients. In 2018 they expanded adding Leeway Butcher to provide high quality locally sourced meats to the community. With the mission to give back to the community, Leeway is involved with many local charities.

Artists Helping the Homeless (AHH), owner Kar Woo,

provide peer support at the Douglas County Jail and participate in numerous committees focused on solutions to individual and systemic challenges related to homelessness. AHH works with local businesses to fill employment needs.

Bridge Haven MD Memory Care, owner Chaitanya Musham, MD,

runs internal contests for residents and employees to donate time to local non-profits. It has donated time and/or money to Lawrence Community Shelter, Visiting Nurses, the Shelter, Inc. and Lied Center. More than 90 percent of residents are from Douglas County and pay attention to what happens locally. They are actively involved in the Warm Their Hearts and Toes internal project to benefit the Lawrence Community Shelter and the Shelter, Inc.

Holman Needle & Ink, owner Richard Holman,*

regularly donates time to Ad Astra Sports running events. Holman serves on the D.A.I.S.Y. Studios board. In addition to D.A.I.S.Y. Studios, the company donates to Bert Nash, Heartland Health, LMH Health and USD 497. The mission is always to work with local businesses.

IdentiFight LLC, owner Caleb Stephens,

donates at least two therapy sessions per week and has worked as a community organizer for 10 years in Lawrence. The company has donated to Just Foods, Goodwill and the Ballard Center and sources work from several various local companies.

La Estrella Mexicana, owners Raul and Adany Perez.*

For 22 years, La Estrella Mexicana, a minority-owned business, has been a one-stop shop for foods and supplies for Lawrence's Hispanic community. La Estrella offers everything from tortillas to marineras to summertime snow cones in traditional Mexican flavors, La Estrella is the place to shop for those seeking authentic Hispanic products. ▲

* A 2024 Foundation Award Recipient



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