



Finding Purpose and Pivoting

IN A WORLDWIDE PANDEMIC

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We turned to three local businesses in Barrington to understand how they were affected by the pandemic and to find out what they learned. Ali Pallone started a business as a franchisee. Nick Jaros and his staff found new ways to deliver their pizzas. Katie Kuempel strengthened her sales online and divided her brick and mortar business, creating two unique stores in town. All three share their thoughts with a heartfelt reminder that shopping and dining locally makes all the difference in the world.

Ali Pallone

**OWNER/FRANCHISEE
CARD MY YARD BARRINGTON**





I'VE LIVED IN BARRINGTON for 14 years, and this is my first business, started on June 10, 2020. My son was turning 17 last April right in the beginning stages of the pandemic. We were having a drive-by parade. The Barrington Hills Police and Fire Department were coming along with friends and family. I had seen these signs prior in different areas and tried to get one out our way and couldn't. So in the last minute, I decided to craft one up with supplies from the dollar store. I used floppy poster boards and stir sticks from the local paint store. It was a complete disaster. It rained and they were getting wet and falling off the sticks and then blowing away. Since I couldn't get one for him, I definitely wanted one for my other three kids when it was their birthdays. I inquired about it with the Card My Yard company and had several interviews with them.

I decided to go for it and signed all the documents and sent them back. My husband came back from a golf outing. He said to me, "Why are you looking at me like that?" I said, "I bought a franchise!" I don't think he was so sure about it then. Now he's blown away at how well we have done and grown. I'm glad I went with my intuition and took the chance. Best decision!

I love the idea of being a JOY bringer throughout my hometown and the surrounding areas. There were so many people struggling, unknowns, and negatives in the world. I wanted to spread happiness and help people feel better and know there is good in the world. I liked the idea of having my own business and being my own boss! I have four kids who look up to me. Three of them little girls. It's important to show the possibilities. I love them watching me run a business as a woman. They watched me start this from the ground up and turn it into a success.

We appreciate all our customers, friends, and family who have helped keep our small and local business booming. We couldn't have done it without all of you. We are honored to be a part of the community and love helping you all spread joy! We are truly blessed. Thank you!

To reach me for a Card My Yard request, text to 847-922-1380 or email me at barrington@cardmyyard.com.



Life is all about taking risks. If you never take risks, then you will never know what you're capable of. I am not a risk taker—so this was totally out of my comfort zone. But, I didn't want to look back one day and "wish" I tried it. I wanted to be glad and "wowed" that I did. Looking back from a year ago, I'm so glad I did this!



Nick Jaros

**MANAGING PARTNER
NEOTECA**



I HAVE BEEN WORKING at Neoteca since the development and construction phase (early 2016). I have worked with primary owner Guy Sorrentino since June of 2011 at his previous restaurants.

Initially, the pandemic came as quite a shock. I was never particularly concerned with solely the restaurant industry, but rather the all-encompassing risk of the pandemic. Our primary concern as a business was the maintained health, safety, and financial stability of our staff. We wanted to show our staff that we would do everything within our power to keep them sustained and safe.

With the restaurant closed, our carryout orders skyrocketed. Our business model was never geared towards carryout, but rather dine-in guests in an upscale and modern environment. Like all successful businesses, we realized we needed to pivot and adapt to sustain ourselves. We knew our guests had been cooped up in their homes and were looking for things to keep themselves and their families occupied. Making pizzas at home would fit the need for cooking at home and creating an immersive restaurant-grade dinner for everyone. Pizza kits and frozen wood fired pizzas were a great success.

All of us at Neoteca are eternally grateful for all the support you've shown us throughout the past year and a half. I am glad we are finally starting to see all of your smiling faces in the restaurant and it truly would not have been possible without all your support.

We are open Tuesday through Sunday, and we always welcome guests in our doors. Our address is 130 S. Hough St. in Barrington. Call us at 847-382-1330.



The biggest takeaway from everything we went through the past year is that you always need to be prepared to adapt. Passionate staff and supportive community are among the most important reasons we are still here today.




Katie Kuempel
OWNER
ANGELINA and
SOCIAL DESIGN CLUB



I BOUGHT ANGELINA in January 2010. I knew that we needed to develop our online presence, but the pandemic drove us to execute this. Due to the pandemic, we were forced to close our brick-and-mortar store, which reiterated the need to create a user-friendly experience online. We researched point-of-sale systems that easily integrated with an online store and used the time being closed to focus on executing it. The idea for our sister store, Social Design Club, (in the old Angelina space) had always been something I wanted to do, but the pandemic reiterated the need to celebrate life's little moments, even if you were just celebrating with your "quarantine crew". I knew that the pandemic wouldn't last forever, and that when it was over people would want to party and celebrate even more than previous years.

We had grown out of our old space pre-pandemic, but waited to see how the economy and trends changed. Through the pandemic our online business took off, creating a need for more space for fulfilling and shipping online orders, as well as needing more space to create content for social media. We also knew the pandemic wasn't going to last forever and wanted to be able to create a space that allowed for more interaction with the community of Barrington. We knew we wanted to find a location that would allow us to have more office/workspace, as well as be able to host small, intimate social gatherings and workshops. It made sense for us to move Angelina into a bigger space, but to also separate the business into two and open our sister store, Social Design Club.

I learned how loyal the Barrington community is. Many of our customers reached out asking how they could support us. The community kept us going during a very uncertain time. Customer service is our #1 priority. Making it easy for the customer is so important, especially in this day of instant gratification. And consistency, whether that be store hours, or how often you're posting on social media—is key and delivers results over time.

Thank you for supporting our little business for almost 20 years! We love being a part of this community and are grateful for all the support we've seen pre- and post-pandemic. Angelina is located at 200 S. Cook in Barrington; Social Design Club is a few doors down on the corner. Shop online at shopangelina.com 



The pandemic taught us that life can change in an instant, so everything we do is a risk because no one can predict the future. We had outgrown our space pre-pandemic, and the support we saw during the pandemic gave me confidence that our customers wanted more Angelina!



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