



## Award Winner

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### Regina Wins International Downtown Achievement Award of Excellence

**Regina Downtown Business Improvement District (RDBID)** and **Regina's Warehouse Business Improvement District (RWBID)** will be recognized with the ***Downtown Achievement Award of Excellence*** today in Tampa, Florida at the International Downtown Association (IDA) 67th Annual Conference & Marketplace.

The purpose of the Award of Excellence is to acknowledge an outstanding response to an urban challenge. Choosing Regina Downtown and Regina's Warehouse District for this award reflects their resourceful approaches to improving the wellbeing of members in the restaurant industry during the pandemic. The project **Staff Supper** with the ***Heart & Soul Cookbook*** is entered in the category "Leadership Development" which focuses on leadership skills, strategic planning, board leadership and external relationship building.

"We were happy to contribute positively to our local businesses and their employees during a very difficult time. To be honoured with an award from an organization as prestigious as the International Downtown Association is a thrill and a great vote of encouragement," Judith Veresuk, Executive Director of RDBID said.

Staff Supper was a response to the financial hardship and isolation that restaurant workers experienced when COVID-19 caused sudden lay-offs and limited social connection last year. RDBID and RWBID subsidized the meals so, for just five dollars, workers could order a special meal from a selected restaurant for delivery or pick-up. This provided restaurants a revenue source and an opportunity to enter the takeout environment early in the shutdown. Participants gathered virtually to share their meals and their feelings about the pandemic. The RDBID and RWBID executive directors worked closely with the restaurants to ensure all orders were filled.

Leasa Gibbons, Executive Director of RWBID explained: "We found ourselves doing many things outside of our normal tasks like packaging and delivering meals and hosting Zoom chats. The partnership between our two organizations served many purposes - including providing support to our local restaurants and their employees - but the impact of this partnership goes beyond a simple economic recovery initiative."

"Staff Supper ended after the restaurant industry reopened, but we missed each other and we missed the food. So, we decided to celebrate the project by putting together a cookbook that would showcase the businesses that supported it. *Heart & Soul Recipes and Reflections from Staff Supper* was the result." Judith Veresuk said.

The cookbook is free to download on the Regina Food Bank's website but people are encouraged to donate to the food bank at <https://reginafoodbank.ca/campaigns/heart-soul-free-downloadable-cookbook/>

Both RDBID and the RWBID are gratified that their initiatives continue to help their community and are delighted that their efforts are being recognized with the IDA Downtown Achievement Award of Excellence.

More information is available at:

Regina Downtown Business Improvement District - <https://reginadowntown.ca/>

Regina's Warehouse Business Improvement District - <https://www.warehousedistrict.ca/>

International Downtown Association - <https://downtown.org/>

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