

Staffing shortage plagues Tahoe-Truckee kitchens



Finding restaurant staff in Tahoe-Truckee is getting difficult. Photo Copyright 2017 Carolyn E. Wright

By Ally Gravina, Moonshine Ink

At the bottom of its beer and wine list, Pianeta, a 19-year-old Italian restaurant in downtown Truckee, presents diners with the option to buy a six-pack as a gratuity for the kitchen staff. When customers place the order, a ticket not only prints at the bar for accounting purposes, but also prints in the kitchen; to which the kitchen staff then responds by banging pots and pans so loudly that the purchasing patron (and the entire restaurant) hears the acknowledgement.

Tom Beckering, managing partner and owner, says the celebration creates a snowball effect as more and more customers purchase rounds for the hard-working staff.

Creative incentives like this come from the heart of Truckee/Tahoe restaurant owners, but these sorts of programs are being put into place as solutions to the severe lack of kitchen staff in the area.

Local restaurant owners, managers, and chefs say the dwindling pool of back of the house staff is a crisis. "It's gone from never having been a problem to always being a problem," said Bill Arnoff, who has been a chef at Pianeta for 17 years.

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