



Restaurant Neighbor Award

Iron Barley Eating Establishment - Tom and Gen Coghill

Iron Barley opened for business in May 2003 at 5510 Virginia in South St. Louis city and quickly earned a reputation as one of the finest restaurants in the metro area. Tom and Gen Coghill appreciate the opportunity Iron Barley provided to work with their sons, Thomas, Charlie and Patrick. They are also thankful the restaurant has allowed them to help the less fortunate in the community. Service to others is something they take very seriously.

For the past eleven years, Tom & Gen have held Tomato Fest to support the mission of Lift for Life Gym. LFLG exists to offer at-risk St. Louis city children a safe, enriching environment in which to strengthen their bodies, enrich their minds, develop healthy social relationships, and learn to make positive life choices. From its beginnings as a simple weightlifting program in 1988, LFLG has grown into a full service youth activity center offering services designed to alleviate the burden of poverty and build a sense of resiliency that will help them achieve success personally, academically, and professionally.

Tomato Fest is held each summer when locally-grown tomatoes ripen. At the event, food that features tomatoes as a prominent ingredient is sold to raise money for the Gym. Additional funds are raised through a farmers market featuring local produce, a crafts fair, and live auctions and raffles. The event is held on the street in front of the restaurant. All Iron Barley employees participate, as do the staff and members of LFLG.

One year Tom and Gen decided to establish a world record for the largest BLT sandwich. The sandwich measured over 224 feet in length and was 17 inches wide. The bread weighed 440 pounds. The bread was covered with 110 pounds of butter and toasted with a roofing torch. Other ingredients included 600 pounds of bacon, 550 pounds of tomatoes, 220 heads of lettuce, and 60 gallons of mayonnaise.

The completed sandwich weighed just 20 pounds shy of a ton. It was divided into sections and sold. Each segment consisted of 4 pounds of bread, 5 pounds each of bacon and tomatoes, 2 heads of lettuce, and a 1/2 gallon of mayo. Unsold portions were donated to Carondelet Food Pantry.

Tom & Gen also feed the patrons in the VIP tent at the Micro Fest (a micro beer festival) in Forest Park, and conduct a rib competition known as Rib Off each Memorial Day. These events also raise funds to support Lift for Life Gym.