



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Andrew Gounardes

Senator Gounardes Awards Outstanding Small Businesses with NYS Senate Empire Awards

ANDREW GOUNARDES November 19, 2020

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Brooklyn, NY - Senator Gounardes today announced the winners of Senate District 22's New York State Senate Empire Awards for outstanding small businesses. Small businesses are nominated for this award by the community and it is granted to small businesses that have been a leader in their industry, given back to their community, and inspired other businesses to invest in their communities.

Small businesses have been struggling during the COVID crisis, making it especially noteworthy that this year's winners have gone above and beyond on behalf of their community. Senator Gounardes has been working to help small businesses stay afloat, introducing legislation to force insurance companies to pay business interruption insurance claims and to slash the cost of PPE; fighting to extend the commercial eviction moratorium; supporting legislation to incentivize landlords to offer recovery leases; advocating for federal aid; and more.

The following businesses in Senator Gounardes' district are the winners of this year's Empire Awards:

- Beach Deli
- Gotcha Cafe
- Leo's Casa Calamari
- Lombardo's of Bay Ridge
- Marine Park Hardware
- Nick's Lobster House
- The Dance Force Academy
- Yemen Café Restaurant

"I am extremely proud of the small businesses in our neighborhoods who have not only worked hard to stay afloat, but banded together to take care of the greater community during this COVID-19 crisis," said **State Senator Andrew Gouardes**. "With their outstanding leadership and generosity, the businesses being awarded with Empire Awards this year deserve to be celebrated and honored for their contributions to our neighborhoods, our communities and our lives. Congratulations to the winners of the 2020 Empire Awards!"

"Dance Force Academy is proud to announce that we will be presented with this year's New York State Senate Empire Award for Small Businesses. Through the pandemic we have strived to make our studio a safe environment for our students, providing classes on ZOOM when we were not allowed in the studio, going above and beyond with all the necessary protocols so that we could reopen safely. We are proud to be recognized for our efforts and proud to serve the community of Bensonhurst," said **Daniel Ferrante and Philip Stambaugh of Dance Force Academy**.

“We’re beyond ecstatic for the recognition of contributing to our very own community that we grew up in,” said **Wynee Pan, Gotcha Cafe.**

Marine Park Hardware is honored to have been chosen to receive the Empire business award. Giving back to our community has been a part of our business for over 25 years. We are very grateful to have loyal customers who support and patronize our store,” said **Greg Borruso, owner of Marine Park Hardware.**

“Yemen Cafe would like to thank our customers and supporters for helping us during these tough times to help feed our first responders and also would like to thank our Senator Andrew Gounardes for his support and help distributing food to people in need.”

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