



LEFT OF CENTER

BY JOSHUA MALONI

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Fiores celebrate 10 years at Village Bake Shoppe



The Village Bake Shoppe prides itself on being Western New York's premier from-scratch bakery. It backs that claim up with a wall filled with myriad accolades and customer awards; partnerships with Hibbard's "Original" Frozen Custard and Dees Dairy; and by being the go-to cake and pastry maker for many a wedding party (this writer has enjoyed sweet treats at two such events in just the past three months).

Mike Fiore and his wife, Lindsay, officially took over The Village Bake Shoppe in November 2011. At that time, he presented a trio of goals: to be the hometown bakery – while also becoming a destination for tourists – and to make customers happy.

As evidenced by the smiling faces filling tables, and overhearing the happy comments customers offer while in line, it's safe to say check, check and check.

Fiore reminisced about the first decade in business while looking forward to the next 10 years in this Q&A.

LOC: You studied marketing and you have a banking background. Of all the things in the world you could do, why a bakery?

Mike Fiore: Working for Wegmans in high school and college, I always told myself whatever I do for my real-world job, I don't want it to be in the food service business. I also learned in life humility comes with time. As much as I loved marketing at NU, there were not too many marketing jobs in this area. I was able to land an entry-level position at HSBC Bank. Banking was fine, and I was able to work up the ladder and build a name for myself, but I knew there was something more out there for me. After a few years in corporate America, I soon realized that any chance you can work for yourself – take it! I'm just thankful that my opportunity came with something that everyone loves: dessert.

LOC: And it wasn't just any bakery – but one well-known for its unique, from-scratch offerings. What gave you confidence this would work?

Mike Fiore: When you know, you know. There was nothing tangible that I could pick out, but I just knew that this place, although extremely wonderful as is, could be taken to the next level and be a company that I could support a family on, and continue to build upon and turn it into something more special.

LOC: How has The Village Bake Shoppe grown over the course of a decade?

Mike Fiore: We have been blessed beyond measure. Thank

the good Lord we have seen this business double its output with a continuous trend upward for 2022. We've learned enough for two lifetimes. Not only has the business grown, but it has helped shape me into the man I am today. That's been the most valuable part for me.

LOC: So many delicious offerings – plus hot drinks and breakfast items. What desserts have become your signature standouts?

Mike Fiore: "Mile High Apple Pie," cheesecakes, "Cake in a Cup," cookie trays, wedding and occasion cakes.

LOC: What does it mean to mark 10 years in Lewiston? Unfortunately, a lot of businesses don't see a fifth year, let alone a 10th.

Mike Fiore: It's an incredible feeling. I couldn't do it without the support of my wife, my incredible staff, and the wonderful people of Lewiston. Knowing the plan that God has for my life, and having his hand in this business give us the courage, strength and capabilities that allow us to do what we do. Without God, I have nothing.

LOC: Your store has won awards; it's been featured in numerous articles and publications. Of course, that's mainly due to your vision and the talent of your staff; but it's also because of your loyal fan base. Tell me about the relationship you've formed with customers, and what they've meant to The Village Bake Shoppe's success.

Mike Fiore: They are like family. Every day I get to see so many amazing people. From the coffee regulars to brides ordering their wedding cake, we have the best customers in Western NY and all over the country. When we get to be a part of someone's celebration, that means the world to us. When our phone rings or the door chime goes off, we feel so grateful that people choose us for their dessert needs. We love our customers and can't thank them enough for their continued business and support.

LOC: I'm sure you've thought about the next 10 years. What's next – and what do you hope to accomplish?

Mike Fiore: If these past 18 months have taught me anything, it's to take life one day at a time and trust God every step of the way. With baby No. 2 on the way, my family and I hope to focus on the important things of life and continue to be the dessert destination that we are today. No matter what happens tomorrow, it's all good.

The Village Bake Shoppe is located at 417 Center St., and online at www.villagebakeshoppe.com.



Mike, Lindsay (with baby No. 2) and Jeana Fiore celebrate their first decade at The Village Bake Shoppe in Lewiston.



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