



Downtown Albany BID celebrates grand re-opening of Jillian's

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Jillian's of Albany, located on 59 North Pearl St., held a grand re-opening event on February 28 in partnership with the Downtown Albany Business Improvement District (BID). "A Celebration with Heart" commemorated American Heart Month and raised funds for the American Heart Association (AHA) while spotlighting significant changes and upgrades to Jillian's following one year under new ownership.

February was American Heart month, which kicked off with the Go Red for Women campaign's National Wear Red Day. The day is designed to raise awareness and dollars to fight heart disease and stroke in women, which are the #1 and #3 killers of women over the age of 25. Throughout this month, Jillian's and other downtown businesses have been featuring special red-themed window displays and selling paper hearts and Go Red for Women red dresses to raise additional funds and show community support for the AHA.

Representatives from the Downtown Albany BID and Jillian's of Albany will joined mayor Jerry Jennings for a brief program concluded with the presentation of funds to the AHA from companies who collected significant donations on National Wear Red Day

In early 2007, Ralph Spillenger (owner of the Bayou Caf  ), Mike Diraddo (former regional director of Jillian's) and business partner John Botti purchased Jillian's from the chain's corporate headquarters and arranged to maintain the business' brand identity. In the year since the change in ownership, the trio has changed the menu, updated entertainment technology and redirected the company's marketing to target families and businesses.

"While people definitely know Jillian's as a location for dining and nightlife, it is important to us that people understand the amenities we provide for family gatherings and parties," said Diraddo. "Since we are located in the heart of downtown Albany's central business district, it was also essential to provide space for corporate meetings and receptions."

Jillian's also added a new meeting room with a capacity of up to 175. Decorated with images of city history, the room is fully wired, complete with digital video and projection capabilities and separate A/V and lighting controls.

"The arrival of Jillian's in 1999 was the catalyst for explosive growth along downtown Albany's Pearl St. entertainment corridor and played a major role in making downtown a premier destination for great dining, performances and events," said Pamela Tobin, executive director of the Downtown Albany BID. "Jillian's is now realizing its potential as a full-service facility that also actively addresses the needs of area residents and downtown Albany's 40,000 workers."

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