



Jon Hanning, a popular business owner, cook, husband and mentor, spent the last six years helping his wife create a café that was a hit with Sutter Creek locals and visitors alike.

PHOTO COURTESY OF BACKROADS CAFÉ

that they could make things work.

Goncalves noticed many people in Sutter Creek weren't just going out of their way to spend money at the café, but also at other food businesses on the street.

"I'd see somebody would come by here, and grab like a coffee and sandwich, and then they'd would go next door to get something different for dinner," she said. "I feel like the community was doing really well at supporting the places they cared about."

Until July 13, the relatively low number of COVID-19 cases in Amador County allowed its restaurants to continue to offer dine-in services. "Businesswise,

it's almost back to normal now," Israel said last week.

Three years ago, Jon and Sina had supported Israel during his own family tragedy, when his brother, Mike—who'd also worked at Backroads—was killed overseas while volunteering to fight ISIS in a Kurdish militia. Israel appreciates and values the family-like environment the Hannings created at the café.

"It was about sticking together," he said of weathering the last few months. "We stuck with Sina. We're all that close. We're not going to leave each other for dead."

Newsom's order to roll back

reopenings was a blow to businesses owners across the Mother Lode, where most counties continue to have relatively low COVID-19 caseloads, according to the state's official coronavirus dashboard. But Sina says she doesn't plan on letting the reversal keep her business or her employees down.

"I think I just have to keep an open mind and know that things might not go back to the way they were," she said. "When I look back at everything that's happened, what it's taught me is to never give up." □

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