

## Cullens Ice Cream

Take a walk or ride your bike to Cullens Ice Cream shop on Hanson Boulevard, and you'll find a retro-style ice cream parlor featuring a variety of sweet treats to tame any craving. The shop features 32 flavors of hand scooped ice cream, malts, shakes, sundaes, soda floats, an array of vintage specialty candy, glass-bottle soda pop and homemade gourmet popcorn. Co-owner Chad Cullen says, "It's very rare to see an unhappy child during their visit."

Back when Cullens Ice Cream was merely an idea in Chad's imagination, he repeatedly brought up the suggestion of opening an ice cream parlor to his wife, Lisa Cullen. Lisa says after he was so persistent for two years, she said, "Let's go for it!" They launched their first Cullens Ice Cream location in Champlin in 2014.

Lisa says, "Being a part of that community was rewarding. Customers send photos of their experience at the parlor and we hang them up on the wall. Many young kids in the photos are now learning to drive and going off to college, they come back and visit to get a photo taken next to their memory hanging on our wall." With many loyal customers visiting the Champlin location from Coon Rapids, the Cullens thought it made complete sense to open a second store in Coon Rapids on Hanson Boulevard and 121st Avenue in 2017. "We saw the location and the nearby neighborhoods and we thought this would be a perfect spot for an ice cream parlor," Chad says.

The staff serve an important role at Cullens Ice Cream - they happily greet each guest as they walk through the door. The Cullens intentionally hire high school-aged staff members so they can mentor them; to be responsible, have good customer service skills as well as develop other traits that will help them later in life. "One of our employees thanked us for teaching her how to clean properly," Lisa says. Behind the scenes at Cullens Ice Cream, Chad makes the infamous gourmet popcorn that flies off the shelves. "If we happen to be out of a certain flavor of popcorn, we have customers that drive to the other store to get it," Lisa says. "Chad makes everything good, he never goes cheap on the ingredients so it's full of flavor!" Both Chad and Lisa spend time at both locations working and getting to know their customers.

The Cullens would like the community to know they are a seasonal business, opening the beginning of March and closing for winter at the end of October. They take time in the off-season to clean, paint and repair the stores from corner to corner for a fresh, polished opening in the spring. Their business has also recently evolved to a third, mobile location - a food truck, showing up at special events, school functions, weddings, graduations and more. The Cullens Ice Cream food truck features Ice Cream Nachos, a platter filled with homemade waffle cone chips, ice cream and a variety of toppings.



### Quick Facts:

- » Address: 12085 Hanson Blvd. NW
- » Most popular ice cream flavor – Superman (blue raspberry, vanilla and cherry)
- » You won't find any ice cream in the Cullen's freezer at home - according to Lisa, "It's a healthier choice to eat ice cream at the parlor for portion control."