

Catholic Charities

319 Mahantongo St,

Pottsville, PA 17901

RE: St Patrick's Soup Kitchen Pottsville

Ms. Neagle,

I am writing on behalf of the St Patrick's soup kitchen in Pottsville. It has come to my attention that Catholic Charities is considering closing the soup kitchen and replacing it with a food truck. I have been volunteering at this soup kitchen for over 25 years. Over the 25+ years, I have helped serve thousands of people and have seen the gratitude people have for a warm\cool\dry place to have a hot meal. I have also experienced such gratitude from the patrons because they appreciate how all the volunteers are there to help and support them. The thoughts of having the soup kitchen close, especially in the current climate where people are struggling to make ends meet just does not make sense to me. This may be the only place they receive a hot meal 4 times a week.

Over the years my family and I have helped not only serve in the evening, but Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas Eve as well. The past few years the Soup Kitchen has helped serve hundreds of people on Christmas Eve and in conjunction with Dustin's Adventureland supplied gifts for many children in the county who may have not had any gifts to open on Christmas morning.

The company I work for volunteers twice a month and has organized clothing drives as well as other fundraisers to help support the soup kitchen. We helped supply Hygiene products to all the adults and children. We also purchased rain ponchos, thermal blankets, hand warmers, socks, gloves and hats for children. We also help supply and food or supplies that are needed to make sure people are getting a hot meal.

As you can see, this Soup Kitchen is a vital part of helping people in Pottsville and closing it would have such a negative impact on the community. I am hoping that you realize how important the soup kitchen is and reconsider your decision.

Sincerely,



David Resnick

Volunteer

Catholic Charities of Allentown

To whom it may concern,

I'm writing to you to try and figure out a way to right a wrong that is coming to the Homeless and less fortunate of the city of Pottsville.

My name is Cheryl Burdess, and I live in St. Clair. I'm a widow with a full-time job, and a home to maintain. But twice a month (and more if needed), I volunteer at the St. Pats, Pottsville Soup Kitchen.

Yesterday we received the news that you (Catholic Charities) wants to start running a food truck in the surrounding areas. Including Frackville, Mahanoy City and Shenendoah. I think that is wonderful to be able to help more people that can't make it to the soup kitchen in Pottsville. However, with that, you are planning to completely shut down the soup kitchen, and turn your backs on all that we have served there for over 40 years.

Granted, sometimes the crowd is smaller, between 60 and 80 patrons, but we have had nights where we have served over 100 meals to both individuals and families with small children. I have also personally done collections for these clients, including, blankets, coats, hats, gloves, toiletries, rain poncho's and canned goods. The company that I work for (Hydro-Cressona) has allowed me to do these drives, and has also contributed to all drives that we sponsor.

It would be a darn shame to have to tell these people whom we have worked so hard to help, that their ability to get a hot meal, warm up when it's cold, and cool off when it's hot is now coming to an end. I know that they can still get one meal a week from the Salvation Army, and one from the food truck, but could you live on two meals a week?

My personal belief is that everyone has something going on in their lives, and I don't pass judgement. I consider myself blessed that I can take care of myself, but there is no guarantee in life, and it makes me sad that anyone has to go without, when there are people who care, and can possibly help.

I am willing and able to help in any way I can to keep the Pottsville Soup kitchen open and serving all who have come to a point in their life that they need some help and understanding. If that means I volunteer more, than I can do that. I can also canvas for donations if that is what it takes.

Please reconsider closing the only place in Pottsville that feeds those less fortunate 4 hot meals a week.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Cheryl E. Burdess". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a dark ink on a white background.

Cheryl E. Burdess

Saint Clair, Pa

June 5, 2024

Catholic Charities,

I work at Hydro in Cressona, PA and I have been volunteering at the Pottsville Soup kitchen since 2018. It has been such a rewarding experience and got to meet some wonderful people and help in the community.

In addition to serving Hot meals, Our Hydro team has held drives/collections for Coats, socks, hats, gloves, and Hygiene bags over the years for the Pottsville Soup Kitchen.

In this day in age where people are already struggling, I don't understand why how this would be a good idea. Most of the people that come to soup kitchen in Pottsville walk and with a food truck would only be able to get one (1) meal a week. How would they get to the other Food Truck locations for a Hot meal?

I hope you are open to discussions to keep the Soup kitchen running. We really need this to stay here in Pottsville.

Thank You,


Carol Renninger

/cr

Catholic Charities

Allentown, Pennsylvania

June 5, 2024

To Whom It May Concern,

I was stunned to hear of the plan to close the doors of the *St. Patrick's Pottsville Area Soup Kitchen*. I work for Hydro and many of us volunteer there on the first Tuesday and third Wednesday of every month. I look forward to my time there to help, meet people in the community, get to know my co-worker's better and especially to share my smile.

For over thirty-five years this kitchen has served a hot meal Monday through Thursday and is the only place in the area that does this. We normally serve more than one hundred meals to elderly, veterans, disabled and families/people in need. On top of the hot meal served, there are donations of clothing, food, personal hygiene items, diapers, pet food and much more. Also, most of the people know each other and the volunteers and look forward to seeing each other. There are gatherings of people on the porch, in the yard at the picnic table and the tables set up inside the building. You hear great conversations, support for each other and smiles. This is a place to provide warmth in the wintry weather and coolness during the warm weather.

In these very trying times, I do not know what these people will do.

I appeal to you to reconsider the plan of closing this very needed soup kitchen for our community.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, starting with a large, stylized initial 'C' and extending as a long, slightly wavy line across the page.

Charisse Caravan