



**VENTURE
NORTH**

PRESS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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PANDEMIC RESILIENCE: MORE THAN A RESTAURANT, IT'S A CAREER

PETOSKEY, MICHIGAN – Julienne Tomatoes, 421 Howard Street, Petoskey, is normally a dine-in, casual deli café located in an 1897 building open for breakfast and lunch and known by everyone as “*Makers of Good Food.*”

The restaurant is grounded in the belief of owner Julie Adams that the path to success is great food, fresh baked goods, house made soups and consistently superb service. They offer all fresh options like ham & brie sandwiches, locally grown beef, asiago cheese, and roasted red pepper all on grilled multi-grain bread and JT’s bountiful lasagna.

But COVID spares no one.

“We’re fighting tooth and nail for survival,” said Adams. “On March 17, I told our crew we’d only be open for pick up because of COVID. We then opened on June 2, cutting our capacity as directed to fifty percent. Then, at the end of August, I had to tell everyone we were shutting down. I was not going to expose our customers or employees to becoming sick. We have many elderly customers. For them, COVID could have been devastating.”

Adams says her grandparents taught her how to tough things out in hard times. “It’s all about making decisions from the heart,” she says. “And knowing your customers, purveyors and community.” Adams’ philanthropy usually includes the Red Cross, Rotary, Orchestra, Women’s Resource Center, Tip of the Mitt Watershed Council and others.

“There’s more to a job than a paycheck,” Adams said. The reality is that it’s been a very long time since Adams has paid herself, deferring to support her six full-time and two part-time employees.

“It means so much to have signs that people care,” she said. “The Regional Resiliency Program grant meant everything to us. In addition to much needed funds, it gave us life, support and help. It reminded us that there are people out there who care. Encouragement means so much to all of us.”

In May 2020, Venture North Funding and Development began the Regional Resiliency Program with a \$200,000 award from the Consumers Energy Foundation. Since then, Venture North has made grants of up to \$5,000 to about 200 small northwest Michigan businesses with \$600,000 raised through charitable giving and grants, including a recent \$60,000 grant from the Petoskey-Harbor Springs Area Community Foundation.

“We need to continue to seek funding and make these life line grants to sustain businesses until we hit a period of recovery,” said Venture North Executive Director Laura Galbraith. “As we mentioned to Julie, we’re here to help however we can, including connecting the dots if needed in the event the Federal stimulus becomes a reality.”

“It’s mentally draining to be shut off from our customers,” says Adams with the restaurant continuing to offer take out or delivered meals “We just offered a family dinner special and sold out. Homemade corn bread, coleslaw, pulled pork and peanut butter pie on a stick – everything from scratch.”

“We remain passionate about getting through this, to emerge and thrive,” Adams says. “We long for the hugs of our customers and seeing them back in their usual chair. The simple fact is that I need \$7,000 a month to walk through our doors. We’ve cut costs to a minimum. We’re hoping and praying we get back to where we were. We take pride in our great food and service and providing meaningful career opportunities. We may need more help weathering the storm but we are dedicated to fight and claw our way to the finish line.”

You can contact Julienne Tomatoes at 231-439-9230 or info@juliennetomatoes.com. Visit their web site to see all that they offer at <https://juliennetomatoes.com>.

Venture North Funding and Development is a 501(c) 3 nonprofit certified Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI) that specializes in supporting economic growth and jobs by making capital available to small businesses.

Organizations and individuals can donate to the Regional Resiliency Fund online at <https://www.venturenorthfunding.org/regional-resiliency-fund> or by contacting Laura Galbraith at 231-357-6776 or laura@venturenorthfunding.org.