Interview with Brenda S. at Celebrate Recovery – Sept 1, 2017

What do love about the city of Meadville?

I love the small town feel, the older homes and the sense of community. I feel like people here are the kind that would really pull together to help one another in times of emergency.

What matters most to you about living here?

My family is all here. That’s important to me.

What is your favorite memory of living in Meadville?

I have a lot – I’ve lived here all my life – wow, I could go way back. Ok, I will go way back. I loved shopping with my mom as a child and I remember going into, I think it was Crawford’s on Chestnut St, and riding on the elevator! It was so cool – I suppose it only went up one floor, but it was a big deal.

I also loved going to the Market house. My dad showed some of his art upstairs in the art gallery – it just is a special place for me.

Why do you stay in Meadville?

My family is here, and it feels like home. I like the smaller town feel. It’s just been my home forever. I lived near Pgh for a couple years, and it was nice to be close to be able to get stuff and go places nearby, but it just wasn’t the same. The people were different, they were friendly, but not the same as here – I can’t really explain it.

What would make staying here easier?

I wish there were more clothing stores. I like that we have a couple new café type places, but any business in Meadville is a plus. You used to be able to find anything and everything here shopping-wise.

What things capture the spirit of our town?

People are beginning to reach out and connect with one another – I’m guessing it has to do with the youth I see who seem to be doing things and making things happen – like I hear about this Second Saturday, and concerts, and lots of stuff going on. Teens don’t seem to know how to socialize and do things together – they are being consumed with their devices – I hope there are more things for them to do where they have to look people in the eye and talk!

What kind of things do you remember doing as a teen in Meadville?

Well, in the winter we went sledding a lot. And the Playland park had weekly dances out there. They were great – lots of kids went and it was fun. They even had school busses that took us out there. Sometimes they had dance contests – it was just really fun. There was also a roller rink – I think it was out Baldwin St extension somewhere.

What would you miss in Meadvill,e if it wasn’t here?

The Market House for sure.

What about Meadville is important to continue into the future?

The sense of community.

Many people have such negative things to say about Meadville – like on FB – they talk about moving away to some great place – well, Ok, but some of them end up coming back. The economy is hard here. It’s really hard to find a job that will support a family. I went through a really hard time for a few years where I simply couldn’t find work. I needed to get unemployment, but kept applying places. It was a really scary time for me. One thing that really affected me was when Career Link moved away. They were so helpful to me – they made it so easy to get unemployment and helped me try to find a job - and when they moved, I tried to connect with them in Oil City, but unless I drove there, which was very impractical, I could never get ahold of anyone by phone, and I ended up missing my unemployment checks because I couldn’t connect with anyone for so long. That was a big loss for a lot of people. There are a lot of folks who are struggling to find good jobs. I suppose the economy is hard in lots of places, but it is hard here.

What would your one wish for Meadville be?

That people would value what’s here and continue to pull together as a community and bring new things to Meadville It would be great to get back to having people shopping in Meadville and hanging out here in town.