KL009

Kathy Lee

Tina Hoepfl

What do you love about the city of Meadville?

I love that they have so many different unique shops in this area that they offer to Meadville. Different stores, that other areas don't have - that are very inviting to individuals, and I love the fact that they open the doors to individuals with disabilities, which is important because I work for an organization that serves individuals with disabilities, so I like the fact that they do invite them in - I do like that they offer a variety of different entertainment in this area - variety of movie theaters that are local - you have shops and restaurants in the area that are drawing in people from very rural areas - I live in a rural area that is a smaller town than Meadville, so I like the fact that if you want to go out to eat they have a variety of restaurants here and the movies are nearby so you can go to see a movie if you want to - or if I need to pick up some groceries, you have a variety of grocery stores - I like that and if I want to go to a downtown plaza, I can do that too.

What matters to you most about working here?

I think in this area is that you serve individuals with disabilities - I like that - I like that the area has quite a bit of variety, and you have a lot of businesses that are open to serving our individuals in the area. I like the fact that it is very community oriented.

What is your favorite memory of Meadville?

Here where I work - I love the coworkers that I work with, its a very family atmosphere, I love that I can get fresh ideas and I'm very valued as an employee and I love the fact that I can interact with individuals with disabilities, listen to their thoughts and their choices and decisions and help them to reach their goals and successes and help them be very independent community members too.

How did you come to your job in Meadville?

I have a son who has a disability - and there were so many doors that were always closing for him, and I have always been very passionate about wanting to open those doors and I would get very frustrated with the system constantly closing the doors for him - so I saw this line of work and wanted to go into the social services, um, Meadville has a lot to offer to individuals with disabilities, so that drew me in also - I think more so than your average community in other counties, honestly. I like this organization and that drew me in - I also knew others who worked for this organization so that was a plus - and encouraged me to apply. Also, it was an area that I was used to and had worked in before - and then my husband also works in this area.

Is there anything that would make it easier to continue to be here?

Well, if I lived in this area - if I wasn't already drawn into a mortgage elsewhere that I'm already in and if my son wasn't already so far along in his schooling, that would be another factor to draw me into Meadville. Another thing is the heavy traffic in this area - if they could do something I would like to see that change. It's very congested - Conneaut Lake Rd, I refer to it as the Indy 500 - I would like to see that traffic slowed down a little bit because there are so many accidents that are a concern - and I would like to see that change. A little bit of a concern too is at times, the crime, - and not that I'm not concerned about it in the area where I live too, but I do worry that at least for the teens growing up and the younger adults that there is so much of the drug issues going on and I would like to see more active police work on that you know or some more organizations to help on that. And I know that is a concern across areas, but that would be something that would be nice to change in Meadville.

What do you think - what things capture the spirit of Meadville?

I have to say that I am really impressed with the athletics in this area - the sports that are offered and the organizations for teens in this area - the entertainment here, like you have local theaters that are a draw. And because I work here, I hear about all the organizations doing events in the evening time and on the weekends, which is an interest too.

What would you miss in Meadville ifit wasn't here?

My job (laughing). I would miss that. I would honestly miss - it is such a big area to be honest I would miss all of the stores and shops that they have. I commute about 45 minutes to an hour, and I don't really mind because the drive is nice, I do love this area, I love working in this area um, and often even when I'm not working, for a Saturday or Sunday drive, my husband and I, we do find ourselves coming to this area just to check out the areas to eat or the new places to go to or little shops that it has to offer.

What about Meadville is important to continue into the future?

More entertainment - they do offer a lot of it now, but entertainment that reaches more the teens and young adults - getting them out, so they are not finding their way into leading down a wrong path - getting them involved, whether it be volunteering, getting them jobs, staying local, so that they don't have to travel for schooling outside even for college, getting jobs that keep them in house, you know keeping them here. I would also like to see more help for the elderly, transportation is a huge issue that I"m finding, especially since they changed all the CATA system.

In what way would you like to see that changed?

Uh, the time period, the wait time for them and for appointments - door to door service more - vans with lift service, especially for those medical fragile individuals getting out also, uh for more elderly involvement in the community - I think bringing back and valuing your old roots, bringing them and matching them up with your younger generation, I think that's missing, especially when you talk about work ethics with the younger generation, I mean growing up it was always - the 'early bird gets the worm' and you know you see a big turnover with employment, so what do we need to keep job stability in this area?

What would you change to make Meadville even better?

Keeping businesses local so they don't close - finding out what is maybe the problems for businesses that may be on the verge of closing and what can we do to help them stay open - tying more businesses together so there is no overlapping of services, but how can we work together as organizations, so we can partner - or what does your agency do and our agency do and how can we help each other.

If you could have one wish for Meadville, what would it be?

To really get to know community members and welcome them - know what all the organizations are doing as a whole, what is your organization, what do you offer?

Do you have a memory of Meadville that you would like to share?

When I think of Meadville, I have to say - I was originally from a bigger city life, and when I think of Meadville, it brings me back to my roots as a kid of living in a bigger city - when I think of a bigger city life, I think of Meadville.

Thank you for sharing your time today.