



Elmore, Ohio

**SUCCESS STORY**

# Christy's Corner Cafe

## Ohio | Small Business Development Centers

### SBDC GUIDES BUSINESS OWNER DURING PANDEMIC

"The SBDC was huge for us when we were doing those care packages," Kathy said. "I remember calling them for direction, and they had webinars for COVID and tons of other resources. They keep checking in with us and are a huge part of our success."

Kathy hopes to bring back employees gradually and make her storefront available six days a week. She has plans with a local church to start growing own fruits and vegetables, and she wants to cater events and make packages for larger corporations.

To learn more about Christy's Corner Café, visit [christyscornercafe.com](http://christyscornercafe.com).

Shopping local means giving more than just your money at a local store. At Christy's Corner Café, customers help support the mission of giving those with special needs employment opportunities and possibilities about what they can do in their life.

In September 2018, Kathy Barbee created the Engagement Opportunities Foundation, a nonprofit organization dedicated to helping improve the lives and careers of those with special needs.

After years of encouraging her family to live life to the fullest, including her own sister with special needs, Christy, Kathy started looking for a location for a café that could run under her foundation. She found one, and along with donors and community support, one particular man – now her husband – had so much faith and passion for her mission that he purchased the building.

He told Kathy that for the café to be successful, she needed to have a business plan. He put her in touch with a local Small Business Development Center (SBDC), where she ended up working with Bill Auxter, SBDC director at Terra State Community College in Fremont.

"I went to a class that Bill put on, and he helped us with our business plan," Kathy said. "He was a key component that made all the difference for us in getting our grants. It let them know that we were serious and going down the right path."

Bill worked with Kathy to complete the business plan and present it to a lender, where the loan request was approved soon after. With new connections formed around town and a strong business plan, Christy's Corner Café was ready to take on rural Elmore, Ohio.

When COVID-19 hit in March, Kathy knew she had to shut down the café, but she used the perishable food left in her kitchen at the café to prep food for the community. With loads of soups and salads, she and her staff performed wellness checks on their elder customers around town and raised \$5,000 to feed firefighters, people nursing homes, and people at homeless shelters.

Everything Kathy does for the foundation and the café comes back to her sister, Christy. Christy was able to live her life to the fullest, becoming a basketball manager at the local high school and even ended up in the Toledo Area Athletic Conference Hall of Fame. Kathy hopes to do the same with her employees, allowing the café to serve as a "vehicle to give special needs people opportunities and help them achieve their goals in life."



**Christy Bosch**

11/29/1976–9/18/2011

## Ohio | Development Services Agency

Mike DeWine, Governor  
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Lydia L. Mihalik, Director



To learn more about the Ohio Small Business Development Centers, visit [sbdc.development.ohio.gov](http://sbdc.development.ohio.gov).