



Rural Intelligence

Love In A Truck: Philmont's Communal Curbside Café

By Jamie Larson

You may recall that rare, contented feeling you get when noticing a group of people working towards an altruistic goal, individuals who not only mean what they say but are actually capable and talented enough to succeed at it. True, this happens often enough in our region, but the sensation remains indelible; for a moment you breathe a little easier and recognize that the dark unknowable weight of the universe is not on your shoulders alone.

In Philmont, NY, you can get that feeling from a breakfast sandwich, served out the side of a vintage, grass-green trailer.



The **Philmont Market and Café Co-op**, at 116 Main Street, is still under construction and in need of support, but the Co-op's **Curbside Café**, launched at the end of the summer, is already putting the organization's mission where your mouth is. The sandwiches, made by café managers Matt Greene and Kimberly DeLanghe, are as local, sustainable, and responsible as they can possibly be. Simply crafted out of the best local eggs, breads, meats, and cheeses, the sandwiches are knee-weakeningly delicious, as are the crepes, slung by mysterious European crepe master Georg Freese.

president and owner of the **Main Street Public House**, Elizabeth Angello, "but our whole purpose here is to enhance all the businesses on Main Street. So it's been nice having it simple with just sandwiches and coffee, so we can focus on the ingredients and getting the message out about the Co-op and what we're trying to do."



Like so many little towns in the region that lie just off the beaten path, Philmont has suffered economically for a long time. There isn't a grocery store, and when the Stewart's convenience store left town it was a much bigger blow to the community than an outsider might at first believe. People used to buy a few groceries there, get a sandwich, and catch up with their neighbors. When the company decided to abandon the town, it was a blow.

Over the past few years, however, something's changed. The people of Philmont decided they weren't going to give up on the town. The nonprofit 501c3, **Philmont Beautification, Inc.**, has been at the forefront of the revitalization efforts, running the farmers market, helping businesses with

funding and grants, and partnering with the forthcoming Co-op, which will be located in (where else?) the old Stewart's. There's a satisfying symmetry to that.

This dedicated, ongoing effort has turned the sleepy town into a sort of model of how a community can reclaim its legacy through a sincere commitment to thinking local and living the farm-to-table lifestyle. The restaurant across the street from the Curbside Café, the highly praised **Local 111**, also has become one of the town's biggest draws for foodies from around the region.

Inside the warmth of the truck on a brisk autumn morning, Greene is cooking away. He says he still can't believe how all the pieces have fallen into place, from happening upon the job after meeting Angello by chance at the farmers market, to literally leaning over the back fence of his neighbors at **Lineage Farm** to order the mustard greens for their sandwiches. Heck, the incredible **Oliva** kale and walnut pesto you can add on to your sandwich is made by the micro-company in Angello's kitchen.



The deliciousness of the sandwich itself is a symbol of the quality of the local artisans that will benefit from the Co-op. Made with fresh **Feather Ridge Farm** eggs, **Diamond Hills Farm** sausage or **North Country Smokehouse** bacon and **Cabot** cheddar, between bread from **Our Daily Bread**, the combinations surpass the sum of their parts. In addition, the coffee is from **Tierra Farm**, the teas are from **Harney & Sons**, and the apples and cider are from **Threshold**

Farm. It's all hyper-local, of supreme quality, and handled in the trailer with love and reverence. When you eat it you just feel better, both inside and about the community you're supporting.



Co-op Board President Elizabeth Angello, Cafe Managers Matt Greene and Kimberly DeLanghe, and Crepe Master Georg Freese

"It feels like it's all coming together," Greene says. "It's truly a cooperative."

Coop Curbside Cafe 116 Main St Philmont, NY
12565

(518) 672-7673

Hours: Mon-Fri 7 a.m. - 1 p.m. Sat-Sun 8 a.m. - 2 p.m.

