



Café brings hope to homeless through money, food

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The people behind a café set amidst the storefronts of Hanover's York Street want to help the homeless through their business.

Café Hope, owned by Sherri and James Hartwell, opened earlier this month at 38 York St., selling pastries, soups, coffee, breakfast and lunch items and drinks. The Hartwells plan to donate a portion of the proceeds from the café to charities benefiting the homeless. They also want to give some of the café's food to soup kitchens or homeless shelters.

Sherri Hartwell said she and her husband are active in their church, the Am Yeshua Church in Reisterstown, Md., and have a desire to help others.

"We both feel like there's a reason why we're here," Hartwell said. "We're not here to do the daily grind. . . There's another purpose for us to be here, and it's to give back in the community some way."

The Hartwells live in Maryland, just over the border from Littlestown, and have tried to help homeless people in other ways with little success. Sherri Hartwell, who was born in Hanover and grew up in the area, said she and her husband had targeted large companies with an idea of coming up with a program in which homeless people would be given jobs and a place to live as a way of bringing them in off the streets.

Instead of a paycheck, the money the people earned would be put into an account for them so they

could save money to put toward a down payment on a place to live, Hartwell said.

"They pretty much give up because you can't get a job without an address (and) you can't get an address without a job," Hartwell said.

But no one from the businesses wanted to "do the legwork," instead seeking other people to organize the program and then let them know how it turned out, Hartwell said. Having companies "buy into" an idea like the Hartwells had is difficult, Hartwell said.

"A lot of times they're pretty reluctant to put finances into something," she said. "There was no initiative to really do something and put the effort into it."

But the Hartwells always wanted to open a coffee shop, Hartwell said, and started Café Hope as a result.

They have contacted church organizations about soup kitchens the groups run, and plan to work with the Helping Up Mission in Baltimore.

The Hartwells also encourage their children to help others, according to Hartwell.

"It's just like a reality check for kids," she said. "And I think when you grow up knowing you have gazillions more than most people in the world, you kind of respect things more and take care of what you have."

The café's name itself is a message to the people the Hartwells are trying to help.

"There are people out there that want to help and ... there is hope," Hartwell said.

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IF YOU GO

Café Hope, 38 York St. in Hanover, is open from 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. The menu includes breakfast, lunch, soup and desserts and well as smoothies, coffee and tea. Contact Café Hope at 634-2261.

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