



News Release

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Congressman Dan Meuser Joins Panel Discussion on the Role of Community Partnerships in Fighting the Opioid Crisis

TAMAQUA, Pa., August 26, 2019 – Congressman Dan Meuser (Pa.-9) was a special guest at a panel discussion addressing the resources and community partnerships needed to effectively combat addiction and the opioid epidemic in Pennsylvania. Hope & Coffee, a coffee shop in Tamaqua, Pennsylvania that offers people recovering from opioid addiction a fresh start through employment and meeting space, was the site of the panel discussion.

The event was hosted by Hope & Coffee to share the insights and successes that the organization has achieved in normalizing recovery through its selection of vendors, suppliers and contractors and hiring of staff. In addition, Hope & Coffee provides safe and easily accessible meeting space to recovery organizations.

“Hope & Coffee serves as an inspiring example of the difference that effective community partnerships can make in the fight against addiction in our neighborhoods,” said Congressman Meuser. “Our conversations today highlighted the innovative solutions that arise from the partnerships that exist between businesses like Hope & Coffee and FHLBank Pittsburgh and its member financial institutions.”

In addition to Congressman Meuser, attendees of the panel discussion included Micah Gursky, Executive Director, Tamaqua Area Community Partnership; Lisa Scheller, Founder and Chief Benefactor, Hope & Coffee; Marie Beaver, Executive Director, Rea of Hope, Inc.; Winthrop Watson, President and CEO, FHLBank Pittsburgh; and Patrick Reilly, President and CEO, Mauch Chunk Trust Company.

Hope & Coffee was founded by Lisa Scheller, with support from FHLBank Pittsburgh's Community Lending Program. FHLBank's Community Lending Program provides discounted funding through member institutions to support financing for small businesses, infrastructure, community buildings and community development projects located in moderate- and low-income census tracts. Funding to Hope & Coffee was provided through Mauch Chunk Trust Company.

“At the heart of the mission of FHLBank Pittsburgh is a commitment to help ensure that the communities our member institutions serve are healthy and thriving,” said Watson. “We seek to

achieve this through assuring the flow of funds to support housing finance, community lending, affordable housing and neighborhood revitalization. All of these efforts play an important role in supporting the community partnerships that are crucial to addressing the pervasive issue of addiction.”

Speaking at the panel discussion, Lisa Scheller and Marie Beaver shared their personal stories of addiction and recovery. In addition to founding Hope & Coffee, Scheller is the President and Chairman of a manufacturing firm and global supplier of metallic pigments. She has been sober for more than 35 years.

“Hope & Coffee is a place where we can remember those we’ve loved and lost to their addictions, and a place where we can celebrate the recovery of those who embrace it,” said Scheller. “I am personally grateful to the many individuals, businesses and organizations who made Hope & Coffee possible and who continue to support its mission today.”

Marie Beaver is also a recovered addict who leads Rea of Hope, Inc. in Charleston, West Virginia. Rea of Hope provides safe, affordable housing that fosters recovery from alcohol and drug addiction, while promoting self-sufficiency in a positive, homelike environment. Rea of Hope used Affordable Housing Program funds from FHLBank Pittsburgh and its member Summit Community Bank to finance additional housing for those in recovery.

“Today’s discussion was really about hope,” said Beaver. “There are far too many people suffering with addiction in our communities. The organizations represented here today provide those who are hurting with hope that tomorrow can be better. The partnerships we nurture throughout our communities are the building blocks of the path to recovery for those most in need.”

Last month, Congressman Meuser welcomed the executive director for the White House Opportunity and Revitalization Council to Tamaqua. Economic revitalization and the Opportunity Zones program were the topics of discussion with local Tamaqua leaders, investors and developers. Today’s panel discussion on the opioid crisis and issues of addiction is a collective effort to continue to build partnerships and strengthen the health and well-being of the community.

About FHLBank Pittsburgh

FHLBank Pittsburgh is a congressionally chartered cooperative of local financial institutions operating across Delaware, Pennsylvania and West Virginia. The Bank uses private money, not taxpayer funds, to ensure the flow of credit and services to local lenders and assists them in serving the affordable housing and economic development needs of the communities in which they operate. Each year, FHLBank Pittsburgh sets aside 10 percent of its net income for Affordable Housing Program grants, which are awarded to project sponsors on a competitive basis.

About Mauch Chunk Trust Company

Mauch Chunk Trust Company was incorporated August 25, 1902, as the successor institution to the Second National Bank of Mauch Chunk, established in 1864. We remain a locally owned and managed independent community bank. While many banks of our type have merged or simply disappeared, our focus on the needs of our community and our customers has allowed us to grow and prosper for over 116 years.

We have seven community banking offices and one Trust/Investment office located in Carbon and Schuylkill Counties, Pennsylvania, in the following communities: Jim Thorpe, Albrightsville, Lehighton,

Nesquehoning and Tamaqua (Hometown, West Penn). We are the "Neighbors you know, bankers you trust."

About Hope & Coffee

Hope & Coffee was created to be a social gathering place where people can safely connect with others and get together with friends to socialize. It's a place where folks can be certain there's not going to be any drugs or alcohol. Hope & Coffee is for everybody. For those in recovery, those under twenty-one, and for families with kids who just want to get out and have a good time.

About Rea of Hope, Inc.

The Mission of Rea of Hope is to provide safe affordable housing for West Virginia women in a positive homelike environment that fosters recovery from alcohol and/or drug addiction and promotes self-sufficiency. The name "Rea of Hope" comes from an AA member, Betsy Rea. Betsy Fletcher Rea was born in Dunbar, West Virginia in 1930 and at the age of eight was stricken with polio. The years that followed would involve times of sacrifice and courage for the entire family. She would endure numerous surgeries, hospital stays and separation from her loved ones and would never be mobile again without the aid of crutches, braces, or a wheelchair.

Betsy encountered numerous situations that shaped her unique life, never relinquishing the strong determination that served her so well through both the disease of polio and then later the disease of alcoholism. She would find recovery from alcoholism in the spring of 1981. Her 18 years of recovery can best be described as a "place" everyone wanted to be. Her life was a life of circles that called you in. That life ended February 13, 1999.

Rea of Hope, Inc. is a tribute to her perseverance and love she had for others.

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