

Project Profile



Location:

129 Jefferson Court
West Newton, PA
brightmorning.net

County:

Westmoreland

Description:

Expanded twice

Total Project Cost:

\$282,000



Bright Morning Bed & Breakfast



People:

When Mary Lou Rendulic bought an old house by the Youghiogheny River in 2001, she just intended to teach piano. But, there was room for guests, so by year's end, a Bed & Breakfast was born. A decade of growing traffic along the Great Allegheny Passage, right outside her front door, filled the Bright Morning's guest book with the names of travelers from across the globe. "We've had people stay with us who even walked the whole 150 mile trail," says Mary Lou. But not everything was bright; Next door sat two homes in disrepair, one vacant for over a decade.

Progress:

Mary Lou pondered expanding the B&B and sought a bank loan to buy one of the two eyesore properties. "I had to fill out all the papers and had all the hope, and then got the feeling that, 'We're not going to finance you. You're just a little lady,'" she says. Then serendipity came knocking...Staff of The Progress Fund knew from surveys that there weren't enough hotel rooms along the trail. They also knew Mary Lou and her great, but small

B&B. They offered her a special \$100,000 loan if she'd buy one of the houses to expand her B&B. And she did in 2013. Those extra rooms filled up "overnight." Mary Lou expanded again by buying the second house in 2014 with another loan from The Progress Fund for her second expansion in 2 years. The second loan was for \$140,000.

Impact:

Mary Lou and her husband Rob now have three beautiful houses with restored woodwork, pocket doors and vintage light fixtures. "The new rooms are larger, and each room has a bathroom, shower, tub," says Mary Lou. The ground floor of one of the houses is now a dining room and gathering place, allowing Rob, a professional chef, to offer delicacies like seafood lasagna. It's not what you'd expect in a little town. Mary Lou says, "I think the whole atmosphere where we live is changing." The truth is Mary Lou and Rob are changing it.

This project was financed [in part] using Pennsylvania Small Business Credit Initiative (PSBCI) funds from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, Department of Community and Economic Development.

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