

**TAP** into Summit

Letters  
to the  
Editor

**THANK YOU SUMMIT**

January 2022

More than 2 decades years ago, we started our little foundation and chose the iconic Summit Diner for our world headquarters.

Why?

Summit is a little city with a huge heart. The Summit Diner has been a Summit landmark since 1929. Through its doors walk a wide variety of people who speak numerous languages, practice a myriad of faiths, have many different skin colors, have all sorts of income levels. In short, these folks set aside all their differences and come to the Diner because of the great comfort food, Jersey friendliness and the intimacy of the place.

Everyone is special in the Diner. Everyone is treated the same and always with respect. We have seen US Senators wait in line for their takeout coffee behind garbagemen.

Sinatra's song, That's Life, has a very human reference that sums things up for us. The song suggests ... "You're riding high in April; shot down in May." All of us have good days and bad. Most of us have more good days than tough ones. In our humble opinion it's not how high you fly that counts, it's how high you bounce after a tough day. If you are living paycheck to paycheck, and have little or no savings, you are one accident away from having a financial disaster on your hands if your car breaks down or a pipe bursts in your home. This is why we exist. Our mission is simple: We exist to help New Jersey families in distress. Distress comes in many forms: You lose your job, your mother passes away and you don't have the money to bury her, your child tests positive for a rare disease and your insurance won't cover a variety of expensive treatments, your house burns down and you have no place to go, you find yourself behind on your rent and at risk of being evicted, your homeless or you simply don't have enough money for even a modest Christmas for your kids. We address all these forms of distress every year. Additionally, we have raised millions of dollars for some of Summit's non-profits and assist several food banks each year, too. In many respects, we act as Summit's "safety net."

How do we learn of these community challenges? Over the years, we have established a community radar network. We have strategic outposts in town including the Mayor, school principals, the police and fire departments, houses of worship plus an army of folks who look out for the Other Fellow. When we learn of a problem, if our balance sheet can help solve it, we quietly get to work. If the problem is larger than our balance sheet can handle, we work very closely with Greg Elliott at TAP and invite the Summit community to join with us by promoting a Go Fund Me effort.

Over the last two challenging years, when Summit families found themselves in trouble, we learned the most important dollar of relief is ALWAYS the first dollar to arrive. Navy Seal teams are small, very effective and almost always invisible. We like their model and try to emulate it. We don't have an endowment. Every year, around Thanksgiving, we send out an appeal letter. The harvest from this effort sustains us until the next appeal letter. We are only as effective as the city of Summit makes us. In this sense, our small foundation is a mirror reflecting the generosity of our community.

2021 was our best year ever and we would like to take this opportunity to T H A N K all of our recent donors!

In closing, as a Board, we would all like to take this opportunity to remind every Summit resident how lucky they are to be living in Summit. Ghandi suggested: "the true measure of any society can be found in how it treats its most vulnerable members." When he made this famous remark, he must have been thinking about all of you.

Thank you and Happy New Year!

The Other Fellow First Foundation Board