



Meet Julie Chevalier, Executive Director of Community Progress, Inc. and the Village of Elmira Heights Urban Renewal Agency...

1. Describe Your Business:

CPI is a multifaceted, local, not-for-profit agency that has been in Corning for over 48 years helping lower income families with funding for necessary home repairs and providing economic development assistance to businesses throughout Chemung, Schuyler and Steuben Counties.

The Elmira Heights URA provides rental assistance to low-income persons and economic development support to the village and local business owners by securing local, state and federal funding.

2. Tell us your story:

I've been employed with CPI for over 26 years writing grants, administering programs and overseeing millions of dollars of necessary renovations that have kept thousands of families in safe and healthy homes. I've seen it all... you don't have to leave our country to see families in need. It's right here in our backyards.

3. What has helped you succeed and gain experience?

Working with other housing practitioners has helped me to succeed in the housing industry. I've learned a great deal from my mentors. Getting my hands dirty and crafting projects that we've never done before has brought me experience. Some of my most memorable experiences was working with Developer, Bruce Nelson in developing the Montour Housing into 10 market-rate apartments and then moving over to Broadway School to turn the school into apartments. I've written grants to renovate the former Watkins Glen firehouse into the now tasty Nickel's Pit BBQ, renovated the Watkins Glen Theaters, House of Hong, Jerlando's and Famous Brands.

4. What inspires you?

Helping people in the communities that I eat, sleep and work in truly inspires me. Knowing that I'm putting people in homes with running water, safe electric, without lead and mold truly helps me sleep at night. It's about keeping people in their homes and allowing elderly adult homeowners to age safely in their homes with mobility access. It's about making sure children are safe from home hazards and communities are developed in a way to meet the local needs of the population.

5. What keeps you up at night? What are your challenges?

As a not-for-profit, it's always a battle to secure sufficient funding for operational support, in addition to securing sufficient material funding for homeowners most in need. It's a constant battle. Also, the need for qualified contractors. There is a massive need for trained contractors in our area. We have multiple projects going on, especially in the summer months, and homeowners put on hold for their work because we don't have enough trained contractors.

6. What is your favorite local activity?

It's impossible to have a favorite! There are so many . . . I enjoy dining at locally-owned restaurants and drinking local craft beer – especially on the lakes, road rallies in our Miata, attending local festivals, farmers markets and having access to all of the beautiful parks in our area.

7. Is there anything else we should know about you?

I'm the proud owner of a beautiful blended family, with five very successful strong, young women. I run an Essential Oils business on the side, specializing in homemade, chemical-free lotions and soaps. And, I'm a notary.

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