

**!!Calling All Book People!!**

# **Save Seven Stories Bookshop!**

**Why Support THIS Big Ask?**

**3 Reasons:**

**1) Community Investment:** For as long as I can remember my mom has repeated a Muhammad Ali quote to me. In fact, it is written next to our front door so I see it daily: “*Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth.*” I began with my community bookmobile. I rolled that into a 501c3 which gives out thousands of dollars annually to local animal shelter and literacy groups. And I literally give back every chance I can, including last year at 52+ outdoor events when I handed out almost 1,200 books. If you invest in me and my store, I don't just promise... but *I have demonstrated through my actions* that I will turn that investment around and make good on it. I am not standing here saying that “one day I will help people in my neighborhood”. I am literally doing that *now*, and I can do it with greater efficiency and to greater capacity IF my store is able to continue.

**2) Gender Equity:** While it has been an interesting journey being named “the youngest” in a particular category of business, none of the stories about me have adequately featured the severe challenges that I face. Think about it for a minute. On paper I am too young to sign a contract or to secure a loan. I still attend school which means there are very few afternoon business events I can attend. And while when we think of names like Steve Jobs and Bill Gates, we often think about how they began their businesses as teens on shoestring budgets... There are very few, if any, teen *female* entrepreneurs that turned into successful corporate CEOs. Can you name ONE without using Google? I am walking Robert Frost's literal “Road Less Traveled”! Your support of me not only tells ME that I am on the right path, but that you generally believe that young women LIKE ME are capable of being the kind of powerhouses we already nod and know that young men are capable of also being. Gender equity begins HERE, even if it seems like an unexpected space.

**3) Innovation Starts With Me:** I am frequently scoffed at when I say that I sell books. Some people cringe because they feel books are obsolete now that we can read them on devices. Other people wave off bookstores because they feel Amazon has that space captured. Actually, Amazon and Barnes & Noble fail miserably when it comes to one important factor that matters to people my age... Sustainability! While people continue to stand around and talk about how cheaply they can find books on Amazon, I will continue reminding them that cheap coffee and cheap tattoos continue to be bad investments. When you buy a cheap book, someone is being undercut somewhere. And when we produce and ship cardboard boxes by the millions everyday while simultaneously battling climate crisis realities, well... Amazon has some explaining to do! My customers know that they can get “a cheaper book” somewhere else. They also know they can make their coffee at home with a coffee pot for mere pennies, and yet there they are in the line at Starbucks or their locally owned coffee shop. Innovation in the bookselling industry is

THE SAME. It begins with small stores that make small and impactful changes in our neighborhoods. We are community partners. Amazon can never be that. And Barnes & Noble has gorgeous warehouses of books all across the country but have you ever looked at their electric bill? Do you have any idea what their overhead for staff looks like? My model is sustainable in staffing, in overhead, AND in usage. In the history of my store, I have returned exactly 3 books. Yes, THREE. That is unheard of! Most small indie bookstores like me still return a box of books now and then. How do I do it? I only order what I know I can sell and if I truly cannot sell it, I roll it into the bookmobile. Over time I have developed a circular business model that supports and seeds itself. This is my model and I need help to continue it.

I won't worry you with more about the loss of my real estate agreement, but the fact remains that this is a crisis that could have occurred to *any* business and not an indicator of whether or not our sales or our customers are supporting the store strongly enough. If you would like to read more about my bookshop beginnings or my bookmobile, links are below. In the meantime...

### **How You Can Help:**

1. **Donate:** EVERY dollar counts!
2. **Share:** Share my story!
3. **Shop:** Stop in the store and shop, and give us some words of encouragement (running a bookshop is hard. Especially with roadblocks and lane closures such as our need to relocate)!

❤ Halley

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