

## Assigned story: Buddy's Café Closing, February 2024

**NORTHFIELD** — For 28 years, Buddy's Cafe has been the unofficial town hall of Northfield, a place where morning coffee comes with a side of conversation and residents hash out everything from school board elections to the weather.

Now, that staple of local life is facing a crisis.

Last week, Buddy Williams, 64, who has owned the cafe on Tilton Road since 1995, announced that rising supply costs and a sudden, necessary repair to the building's plumbing system have forced him to consider closing his doors for good.

"It breaks my heart," said Williams, wiping down a worn wooden table. "I've seen kids who used to come in for ice cream come back with their own kids. But I can't keep up with the expenses. A new plumbing is more than I make in three months."

When news of the potential closure spread through the town of 8,400 people, residents didn't just sit back. A group of local teenagers launched a donation drive, and after only four days, it had already raised over \$5,000.

"Buddy's is where we all go after football games," said Sophie Wright, a high school senior who helped organize the fundraiser. "You can't just let a place like this vanish."

Beyond the event effort, residents have begun organizing a "Boost Buddy" weekend, encouraging everyone in town to eat lunch at the cafe on Saturday.

For residents, this isn't just about food; it's about community identity.

"If we lose the cafe, we lose a piece of ourselves," said Angela Carmine, a lifelong Northfield resident. "This is where I learned to listen to folks I didn't agree with. It's where we help our neighbors."

Williams said he is overwhelmed by the community response and is pausing his plans to close. "I'm going to give it a fighting chance," he said.

The "Boost Buddy" weekend runs Friday through Sunday at 1410 Tilton Road.

---

### Why this is a Community Journalism Story:

- **Hyper-local focus:** It focuses on one person (Buddy Williams) and one business in one small town (Buddy's Café).
- **Human-interest angle:** It highlights the emotional connection people have to a local institution.

- **Solutions Journalism:** It highlights a problem (closing business) but focuses on the community's response (solution).
- **Authentic voices:** It uses quotes from actual community members (a resident, a student).
- **Impact:** It covers an issue that directly affects the daily lives of local citizens.