



Rachid Houggati
Barbara Houggati
Proud to Serve Mini Mart & Deli
20 W Willow Street
Carlisle, PA
Cumberland County

“Don’t take on something too big. You can’t pretend to do it right, you have to do it right”
- Barbara Houggati

Industry: Convenience Stores
Year Founded: July 2013
SBDC Assistance: Business Plan, Financial Projections



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Proud to Serve YOU!

Talk about chance. Barbara and her husband Rachid, had patronized this convenience store when it was previously NS Deli. They had always thought about how great it would be to buy the business and run it themselves. In 2012, due to unlawful acts by the previous owner, the building was seized. Shortly after that, Barbara and Rachid saw the opportunity to purchase the building and take on the challenge of revamping the image of the store under their ownership.

Although neither Barbara nor Rachid had ever run a convenience store, Barbara owns her own antique business and Rachid had twenty-five years of experience in the food industry. They were advised to contact the SBDC to get advice and help on what steps to take next. They needed a loan from the bank which would require them to write a business plan. Unfortunately, they were unsure of how to go about this. Robin Burtner at the SBDC was able to help Barbara with the business plan. The bank noted that it was the best business plan they had seen in years. With Barbara and Rachid’s combined skills and help from the SBDC, they were able to open Proud to Serve Mini Mart & Deli officially on July 4th, 2013.

Proud to Serve Mini Mart & Deli offers a variety of your basic convenience store products such as the lottery, snacks, drinks, and tobacco products. One thing that sets this convenience store apart from others is its freshly made food. Proud to Serve offers a variety of different foods such as sandwiches, wings, chicken, quesadillas, and even breakfast.

One of the biggest challenges Barbara has had to face is overcoming the previous reputation. She wants people to know that this business has been completely revitalized. Being a military veteran, Barbara found it only logical to honor service veterans by displaying their photos inside of the store. It’s a sight you’ll have to see for yourself. Another challenge Barbara has faced is assuring she has sufficient funds to support the business during the early days. Although she did get a loan, it was only enough to purchase the building. There was still the cost of renovations and inventory. Even though this has been a challenge, Barbara believes they will get through it and be successful in the long term.

Barbara hopes, and works, for the continued success of Proud to Serve. Since opening, they have doubled their projected sales. She would also like to hire another employee at some point. Some advice to future business owners, “Find someone like Robin. Don’t take on something too big. You can’t pretend to do it right, you have to do it right.”