

January 21, 2022

M. Catherine Mellen
201 S Pitt St Apt 15
Carlisle, PA 17013

Carlisle Borough Council
53 West South Street
Carlisle, PA 17013

Dear Mayor Shultz, Deputy Mayor Landis, and Council Members Crampsie, Hicks, Perry & Stuby,

Please consider me as a qualified applicant for the vacant position on the Carlisle Borough Council. I was born, raised, and educated in the Borough of Carlisle, both in the public school system and as a proud graduate of Dickinson College. I returned to Carlisle fifteen years ago and have spent most of that time working in the non-profit sector, first at Bosler Memorial Library and most recently as the Development Director for the Carlisle Family YMCA for the past ten years.

I have been active in progressive organizing for several years. In November 2016, I co-founded, with eight other like-minded individuals, Cumberland Valley Rising, a 501(c)4 non-profit, non-partisan grassroots organization that believes in freedom and equal rights for all and whose motto is "Think Critically, Show Up." The immediate goal of the organization was to encourage greater participation in local politics and to provide members with the resources they needed to engage with elected officials on a variety of issues. I view serving in public office to be a logical extension of my passion for civic engagement. I would be honored to be given the opportunity to join the Council in its important work moving forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "M. Catherine Mellen". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

M. Catherine Mellen

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201 S Pitt St Apt 15

Carlisle, PA 17013

(717) 448-9111

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Professional Experience

Development Director & Board Liaison, Carlisle Family YMCA, Carlisle, PA. January 2015 – present.

Board Liaison & Fundraising Coordinator, Carlisle Family YMCA, Carlisle, PA. July 2012 – December 2014.

Coordinator of Adult Programming and Community Relations, Bosler Memorial Library, Carlisle, PA. July 2011 – December 2014.

Circulation Assistant, Bosler Memorial Library, Carlisle, PA. February 2009 – September 2013.

Data Entry Clerk, HP, Camp Hill, PA. March 2009 – June 2011.

Adjunct Professor of History, Dickinson College, Carlisle, PA. September 2007 – May 2008.

First-Year Writing Seminar Instructor, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. September 2004 – December 2005, September 2006 - December 2006.

Instructor, Accent International in Florence, Italy for Santa Barbara City College. January 2004 – May 2004.

Instructor, Accent International in Florence, Italy for the University of Colorado at Denver. September 2002 – May 2003.

Teaching Assistant, Cornell University, Ithaca, NY. September 1999 – December 2001.

Lecturer, All-School Field Trip Program, Syracuse University Center, Florence, Italy. September 1997 – May 1998, September 2003 – May 2004.

Teaching Assistant, Syracuse University Center, Florence, Italy. September 1996 – May 1998, September 2003 – May 2004.

Education

Graduate Study in History: Master of Arts awarded January 2002, ABD. Cornell University, Ithaca, NY.
Dissertation topic: *Women and Wealth in Late Renaissance Florence: A Study of the Decima Granducale, 1534-1618.*

Master of Arts in Art History: Awarded August 2003. Syracuse University Center, Florence, Italy.
Thesis: *Women's Wills and Bequests in Sixteenth-Century Italy: The Case of Caterina Ridolfi and Pontormo's Capponi Madonna and Child.*

Bachelor of Arts in History and Fine Arts: 1994. Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. Magna cum laude.
Areas of Concentration: Art History (Departmental Honors) & History
Thesis: *Sacred Women in Renaissance Italy: Images of the Virgin and Female Saints and their Role in Secular Society.*

Professional Development:

Certificate in Fundraising Management, The Fund Raising School of the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN, earned November 2020.

- *Developing Annual Sustainability*, The Fund Raising School of the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN, October 2020.
- *Planned Giving: Getting the Proper Start*, The Fund Raising School of the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN, June 2019.
- *Executive Fundraising*, The Fund Raising School of the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN, October 2018.
- *Developing Major Gifts*, The Fund Raising School of the Lilly Family School of Philanthropy, Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN, August 2018.

Team Leader Certification, YMCA of the USA, Chicago, IL, earned June 2021.

2020 Leadership Fellow, Leadership Cumberland, Camp Hill, PA, August 2019 – June 2020.

Volunteer Service:

Co-Founder and Vice President, Cumberland Valley Rising*, Carlisle, PA.

*Grassroots 501(c)4 founded in November of 2016 following the Indivisible model.

Events Chair, Cumberland County Executive Committee, January 2018 – present.

Cumberland County Commission for Women, Carlisle, PA, January 2013 – December 2015

References

Marcia Drozdowski
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322 South West Street
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Why do you want to serve on the Carlisle Borough Council?

As a native of Carlisle who has seen the community go through many transformations over the past several decades, I have been excited to see the progress made by the Carlisle Borough Council over the past several years towards fostering a more inclusive and resilient community. From the Anti-Discrimination Ordinance of 2016 and the establishment of the Human Relations Commission, to the more recent Truth and Reconciliation Commission to address racial inequity and the newly approved Climate Action Plan, the Council is enacting positive change for all of its citizens. When we founded Cumberland Valley Rising in 2016, one of our stated goals was to “defend and promote the core American values of diversity, inclusivity, freedom from bigotry and oppression and access to education.” Unfortunately, in many communities even in south central Pennsylvania, the defense and promotion of these values remains an uphill battle, so it is wonderful to see a forward-thinking local government positioned at the forefront of this effort. I think it is important that our local government be representative of our local community, and I would like to see greater diversity than currently exists on the Council.

What prior experience can you bring to Borough Council that will benefit the Carlisle community?

Professionally, I have spent the past 13 years working in the non-profit sector in Carlisle, first at the Bosler Memorial Library and now at the Carlisle Family YMCA, and as such have a strong knowledge of the needs in our community that non-profit agencies struggle to address daily with limited resources. My work has provided me with a wide network of contacts not only in the non-profit community but also the local business sector, and I enjoy working creatively and collaboratively to tackle tough problems. I am a graduate of the 2020 class of Leadership Cumberland, which is a program that focuses not just on the development of individual leadership skills but also in fostering the importance of volunteer leadership in the community.

Additionally, as a co-founder and former Vice-President of Cumberland Valley Rising, I have experience in harnessing the collective energy of large groups of people to bring about positive change. With the late Robin Scaer of the YWCA Carlisle, I organized an anti-racism rally on the Carlisle Square in August 2017 in the wake of the devastating events in Charlottesville. Speakers

from the U.S. Army War College, Dickinson College, local congregations and state and local government spoke to a crowd of hundreds who sought lasting social change. As the Voting and Elections Chair of Cumberland Valley Rising, I encouraged a number of individuals to run for local offices throughout the greater Carlisle area including for school board director, council member and township supervisor, inspector of elections and even the state legislature, and though not all of those candidacies were successful, they nonetheless served by example to inspire others around them to take a greater interest in local elections and local issues.

What objectives and projects do you envision Carlisle pursuing in the next five years?

Affordable rental housing has been and remains a serious problem within the borough, and with rising rents over the past few years seems to be an even more urgent issue to address. Wages have not kept up with increased housing costs, and creative solutions are needed in order to address homelessness and housing shortages for struggling families.

I applaud the efforts made over the past decade to make Carlisle a more walkable city that is bicycle-friendly, but I hear constantly from residents who do not feel safe cycling on some streets, and would encourage more work on this issue. Additionally, I would like to see greater opportunities for public transit if we are to address long-term traffic and parking issues and make car-free living in our downtown truly possible. Relatedly, I would like to see an investment in the infrastructure needed to sustain widespread adoption of electric cars to help make Carlisle a “hub for vehicle electrification” as outlined in the recently adopted Climate Action Plan.

I also believe that the newly formed Truth and Reconciliation Commission will help to identify a number of concrete steps that the Council can take to address towards correcting racial disparities in local housing, employment, criminal justice and more, and that this work should be held as a priority to be urgently addressed.