



AVALON, PA

JUDY MCAULEY

CONCERNS



ODORS



QUALITY
OF LIFE



EFFECT ON
CHILDREN



BUSINESS

I live in Avalon and I actually own a business in the neighboring community of Bellevue. Avalon is about a ten minute drive slightly north of downtown Pittsburgh and we are located up on a hill across from Neville Island. We have lived in Avalon for about ten years, and two and a half years before that we rented an apartment in Bellevue.

We chose to live in Avalon because of the community. It's pretty walkable and convenient. It has a decent amount of trees. It doesn't feel like you're living in the city, but has the convenience and many of the amenities of the city. I get to walk my son to elementary school every morning rather than just putting him on a bus and waving goodbye every morning. We have a lot of fun conversations on that walk.

When Shenango was open the air quality was definitely lower. There were often odors that we could smell at our house in Avalon, and certainly when you're on Route 65 at certain times of the year or certain times of the day you could smell them as well. It absolutely limited our activities. We've never planted a garden at our house. I was worried that the poor air quality would translate to residue in the

rainfall and contaminate the dirt. Since my mother lived farther north than us, we would just plant vegetables at her house instead because it felt safer. And I sometimes would limit my kids' going out to play if it was an especially stinky day.

I think for anyone who lives in Allegheny County, air pollution is an issue to some extent no matter where you are. But, as somebody who bought a house just before I was getting married, and didn't have kids planned on the immediate horizon at that point, it wasn't anything that I thought about when I was house shopping. **I might have chosen to live in a different area, which would mean that we would have our store in a different area and our lives would be completely different.**

The biggest problem with the plant was the smell. Being that my store is in Bellevue, people might come in and ask, "What's that smell out there?" I'd have to explain that it was our air quality. I could show them the air quality meter that we had in the store, and that our air inside was good. We carry the Speck monitor at our store, which is another neat side effect of getting involved in the fight. When people knew we were involved in it, I think that made them a little more prone to talk to us about it. Anytime there are petitions going around related to local environmental issues, we always keep one in the store on the counter and talk to people about it.

I think we are in a unique position to do that because we are a "natural parenting store." A majority of our customer base is concerned with the environment. If they're seeking products that are natural and organic, obviously they want the air and water that their kids are breathing and drinking to be non-toxic and organic too. So, I never felt like it was potentially detrimental to our business in any way to be open in support of that. I used to call, I'm not sure if it was the Health Department or the plant, on any day that I could smell the plant. We actually called Shenango directly sometimes. I would say, "Hey, I just wanted to report that we're up here in Avalon and I can smell your stinky plant. You guys should do something about that." I was impressed that a few times they called back and gave feedback on the call. It was more than I expected from them, given the fact that they seemed to be this terrible entity down there that doesn't follow any regulations.

I learned about Shenango closing from one of the other activists I know who comes into the store. I think relief was my first reaction. It came out of nowhere. And my immediate response: "Yay, they're

But, if they could come up with something that could actually benefit the environment that would be wonderful. We obviously need as much renewable energy as we can get before we run out of fossil fuels. It caused so much harm, it would be nice if in its next life it would be doing good things for the environment instead.

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closing, but I feel really horrible for all the people who work there." But still, terribly relieved for our community in general, for the clean air that we can breathe now, absolutely.

The air just feels cleaner now that they're not around. It's easier to breathe outside. There aren't stinky days anymore. It just smells like outside. I would imagine that this high humidity wave that we've had the past two weeks here probably would have been a time where the air quality would have been really horrible and stinky as a result.

Now that Shenango is closed, the air quality problems are improved but not solved. I think there's still a lot of work to be done in Allegheny County for sure. We still have another plant up the river that could be dealt with, and there's a place in Lawrenceville I know is a big deal. I still think that there's probably a decent impact on the air quality from all of the fracking that goes on too. There are many other areas that we could address. It's definitely not solved, but in our immediate neighborhood it's vastly improved.

It'd be nice if they replaced the plant with something green and eco friendly, maybe turn it into a solar plant or something like that. I certainly don't want to see some other toxic polluting thing go in there.