

Ashley Mason, owner of Charlotte's Cafe in Berkeley Springs, WV, is a prime example of the youth and leadership we want to see return to, and contribute to, a thriving economy in the State of West Virginia. Her roots in WV are deep and strong, and her perseverance through hardship kept her focused on her nearly singular life goal: to own a restaurant. Inspired by her grandmother Charlotte's cooking skills, she learned in childhood that serving wholesome food to others is a gift of love. She left her hometown to pursue her culinary degree but returned within a decade.

Soon after opening Charlotte's Cafe the world was brought to a standstill by the Covid-19 pandemic. With her restaurant shuttered, she set about to figure out how to keep her dream alive. She realized she could add family-style meals and delivery service. Announcements went out on social media, and ordering was added to the website. Ashley became even more rooted in the community, and her employees learned Charlotte's is a safe and caring work environment.

Ashley contributes to the success of local farmers, breweries, and value-added producers by utilizing local produce and products to her menu and retail shop. This includes fresh vegetables, preserves, sauces, and beverages. Understanding that the health of her community is necessary for the health of her business, she contributes resources to local nonprofits and is an awarded civic leader.

She recently added lodging and catering options, and supplies local bed & breakfast (B&B) establishments with early morning fresh baked goods. A nearby historic home was purchased to provide her own B&B style lodging. Ashley has begun sharing ideas for her next creative expansion, with the health of her family, staff, and community always at the forefront in her business decisions.