

This Sunoco in York is helping to change the community, one sandwich at a time

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The Sunoco Uppy's in York County offers free food to those who can't afford to purchase it. (WYDaily/Google Maps)

Everyday, Willy Saleem makes sure that his gas station is not only making fresh food for customers but providing that food for those who can't afford it.

“So often these big chains are making fresh food and throwing it out at night, but instead of wasting it we thought we should give it to actual hungry humans,” Saleem said.

Saleem owns two Sunoco Uppy's locations in York and Chesterfield and both offer food to anyone without the means to pay for it.

The practice began at the Chesterfield location about two years ago. When Saleem saw the benefits from the first location, he decided to start the same in York.

But with one difference: In York, the store placed a sign on the door to let guests know the service is offered.

Saleem said he decided to place that sign because he felt the community might need to be aware of the services more since the store is near low-income housing areas.

“There should nobody who goes to sleep hungry and I think that happens a lot in this area,” he said. “If we can afford it, why not?”

In the past nine months, multiple people a day come into the store to receive free chicken sandwiches, corn dogs and other menu items.

But Saleem doesn't keep close track.

“This is just between me and God,” he said.

Part of that is because he believes giving the free food is worth the offsets in cost. He said that on average, that only causes the store to lose about \$200 a month in sales value.

And for him, that's a small price to help fill rumbling bellies.

There are no requirements or proof necessary to receive the free food, either.

"It takes a lot of strength to ask for free food," he said. "It's not easy so we figured if someone is in that position to have to ask, then we aren't going to deny them."

But the store only gives out one food item at a time to help manage demand and supply.

Saleem said there are many familiar customers that come in often and if they can't afford a meal on occasion, he feels it is important as a local business owner to help.

"It's simple, a hungry stomach will lead to many criminals that didn't need to be. If you're helping feed people, you're doing more than just handing out sandwiches."

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