

The Good Samaritan

St. Matthews Mayor Rick Tonini serves to honor his daughter



Tonini serves lunch at the Open Hand Kitchen most every Sunday.

Tragedy led St. Matthews Mayor Rick Tonini to St. Vincent de Paul Louisville twenty years ago.

On Sept. 7, 2003, Tonini's daughter, Lauren, who was studying to be a veterinarian at Auburn University, died in a single car crash at the age of 21 while returning to campus.

"It's the most devastating thing that can happen to you in life. People have no idea unless it's happened to them," Tonini said. "It was a real dread to us that here comes this holiday, which she's usually a part of, and she's not going to be here. So I said, 'Why don't we go and work at a soup kitchen on Thanksgiving ... to help take our minds off of it?'"

After a not so good experience serving at Thanksgiving, they tried volunteering at the Open Hand Kitchen (OHK) for lunch on Christmas Day. It was the one bright spot on a most difficult Christmas for him, his wife, and daughter.

"It was a great experience for me," Tonini added. "I just enjoyed the interaction with the clients and I knew several volunteers who were there. It did create a nice diversion ... and I liked it. So I started going every Sunday."

Two decades later, Tonini hasn't looked back.

"There's no question I do this in honor of my daughter. That's how I got started and why I'm doing it now," he said. "I guess I'll do it until my body gives out."

Tonini, who is a member of Our Lady of Lourdes Catholic Church, is known as Mayor Rick whenever he steps foot in the Open Hand Kitchen. But for him, he's just there to serve and interact with those who need a meal.

"It's very rewarding for me to do that because I can take an hour or so and I can do things for people and have them appreciate it," Tonini said. "The Open Hand Kitchen provides a terrific meal for our clients and those people come in, stand in line, pick up a pre-prepared tray, and get a terrific meal."

Though we feed roughly 150 to 200 people every lunch, that's not what's significant about serving.

"People want to know that they're not just a number going through, that the volunteers and staff care about them," Tonini added.

Tonini, amidst a jam-packed mayoral schedule during the week, doesn't just put his feet up on the weekends, but rearranges his schedule to make sure he's there.

"Every Sunday afternoon and every holiday meal you can always see Rick Tonini behind the serving line offering a welcoming smile to the OHK's guests," said Donna Young, SVDP's Director of Conference Affairs & Volunteer Services. "Rick is a perfect example of a

volunteer giving of his time to help those in need."

Every Sunday morning, Tonini plays a round of golf with the same group of guys. However, on days when there's less sunlight in the morning and the tee time starts later, that doesn't stop him from leaving without finishing 18 holes and still showing up to serve.

"Even though I love golf, working with the Open Hand Kitchen is my primary thing that I do on Sunday mornings," Tonini added. "When it rains that morning, I can't play golf, but I can go down to St. Vincent de Paul. So it's good."

Tonini served as city councilman for 30 years before taking office as mayor in 2015. He is also the co-owner of a family business, Tonini Church Supply Company. The store first opened in downtown Louisville in the mid-1880s.



Lauren Tonini died on Sept. 7, 2003, at the age of 21. She attended Sacred Heart Academy and played field hockey. She wore #13, and a plaque was made in her honor.



ST. VINCENT
de PAUL

LOUISVILLE

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The monthly newsletter of
St. Vincent de Paul Louisville

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Our Mission

We house, feed, and support those in
need with compassion and dignity.

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St. Vincent de Paul Louisville

St. Vincent de Paul Louisville celebrates 170 years

On December 11, we officially celebrate 170 years since the founding of St. Vincent de Paul, Louisville. Our mission to house, feed, and support those in need with compassion and dignity has been built brick by brick and made meal by meal through your heart of service and financial generosity since 1853. Today, we are still seeing lives changed one client and volunteer at a time. Here are a few snapshots from 2023:



"This is a game changer—being able to have a place like this to come in the daytime."

—Montrell, client from Ozanam Inn Men's Emergency Shelter



"This is very helpful because I don't have enough income to support the both of us. We're much safer and have more space."

—Yifan and her daughter, Link, clients from DePaul Apartments



"I liked the enrichments that came here and also the 'thinkLaw's.' It has questions in it and you raise your hand to answer."

—Ricky, elementary student at the Family Success Center



"I enjoyed engaging the kids and building a small relationship with them. They're sweet and can be intense at times."

—Kela, Evolve502 reading tutor at the Family Success Center



"I feel safe and calm here and I encourage others to seek shelter right away if they're in a domestic violence situation."

—Rachel, client in our Domestic Violence Transitional Housing Program



"Thanks to a small, but devoted group of volunteers, Knights of Columbus, St. James, and St. Brigid have been serving every month for many years."

—Leslie Fowler, volunteer coordinator



"I never had anything like this. I come from poverty. These are nice shoes. I love basketball."

—Sam, client from Ozanam Inn Men's Emergency Shelter



"To know that you don't have to worry, even though there might not be anything in my refrigerator, if we are hungry, I know we can come for lunch or supper."

—Tiffany, client from DePaul Apartments



"I get to know some of the clients a little bit better, check up on their family, and hear some of their stories, the good and bad, going on in their lives."

—JoAnn, longtime Food Pantry volunteer



"St. Vincent de Paul is the best shelter in Louisville. I love this place because there are really good people."

—Chico, client at Ozanam Inn Men's Emergency Shelter and OHK volunteer



"It's a matter of helping out people who need help. I just care. That's all. I don't serve for any specific reasons. I just do it because it needs to be done."

—Paul, longtime volunteer

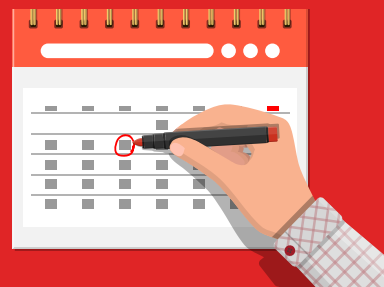


"Take a tour around their campus. They are doing amazing work behind the scenes, including housing for Veterans."

—Chris and his daughter, Phoebe, members of Holy Trinity parish

Save the Date

UPCOMING EVENTS AT
ST. VINCENT DE PAUL LOUISVILLE



Come Join Us!

Santa Shop

Sunday, December 10

Christmas

Monday, December 25

For event information, please contact
Donna Young at (502) 301-8688 or
dyoung@svdplou.org.

Our thanks to
Louisville Metro
Government for
their support



"I really enjoy the residents and staff. I truly feel so lucky and grateful to be with everyone here creating art."

—Kristina, Artist in Residence for the Domestic Violence Transitional Program



1853

2023

VS



US President Franklin Pierce buys land from Mexico that is now known as southern Arizona and New Mexico. There were a total of 31 states.



George Crum invented the potato chip at the Moon Lake Lodge resort in Saratoga Springs, NY. One day a customer complained the fries were too thick, so Crum thinned them into chips.



Harriet Tubman started the Underground Railroad, helping slaves escape. It was used to obtain freedom in the 30 years before the Civil War.



The state song of Kentucky, Stephen Foster's sentimental ballad "My Old Kentucky Home, Good-Night!" is published.



\$1 in 1853 is equivalent to \$40 today. There are no gas prices to compare because the car wasn't invented until more than 30 years later.



The most popular product on the market are Apple AirPods Pro for \$200. Inventions include an AI-powered bird feeder with a camera capturing photos and videos and a self-driving stroller.



The top grossing movie in North America is Barbie at over \$630 million. It starred Margot Robbie as Barbie and Ryan Gosling as Ken.



"Last Night" by American country singer Morgan Wallen is the year's longest-running number-one song on the Billboard Hot 100 list.