

LOCAL BUSINESS

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Get to know ... Pop's Frank Radochonski

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Palos Park resident Frank Radochonski is the owner of Pop's Italian Beef & Sausage, which has locations in Palos Heights, Orland Park, Mokena, Lockport, Homewood, Chicago and Dyer, Ind. A new store is planned for Crown Point, Ind. He recently took some time to answer some questions from Triblocal.com about what it takes to be successful in business.

Q — Congratulations on 28 years in business. What is your secret to having a successful business?

A — The number one thing in fast food is that it has to be fast food. I hate waiting. I give the best customer service along with the fact we cook and slice Italian

beef every day. It was sliced fresh that morning. We make our own sweet pepper and hot jardiniere and along with customer service, it works. There is no rocket science involved.

Q — Is Pop's a franchise?

A — The stores are individually owned through a licensing agreement. Everyone involved with Pops has been involved for 10 years.

When I opened the Palos Heights store, I thought it would be the only one. The second store opened less than two years after the first store opened. My uncle Joe ran the second store in Chicago for 13 years.

Q — Why did you open a restaurant?

A — In high school I took a job working in a similar place. My parents pushed for college and I didn't



Frank Radochonski, the owner of Pop's Italian Beef and Sausage. Triblocal.com photo by Kelli Murray

want to go. I love to work. I thought I would try (opening a restaurant). I was 23 and it kept getting busier, then I got married and had four

kids.

If you have a desire to be good at whatever you want, you'll succeed. I always try to do good at whatever I do.

Q — How did you manage to open a restaurant at 23?

A — My mom started with me. She and I were the crew. [Betty] still works there today. She works Saturdays and Sundays, breading chicken and is as energetic as you can believe. She was constantly giving me the negative side of owning a business, lots of 'what if' scenarios.

Q — How did you come up with the name?

A — My mom packed my lunch in 5th grade every day. I had Fritos every day. The name Pop's is a play on the Spanish word 'fritas' which is fried potatoes, but the name is

from 5th graders teasing me by calling me Pops.

Q — What is your favorite part of owning a restaurant?

A — I really enjoy talking to customers who were there 28 years ago and are still coming in. I like seeing all the other stores being somewhat successful.

Q — Is your family involved in the business?

A — My wife, Kelley, does payroll and bookkeeping. My kids are not interested. Three are in college and I have an 8th grader.

Q — What is your dream job?

A — From the time I was a kid, I wanted to be a pilot. I've had a pilot's license since the mid-90s.

Q — Here's the big question: Cubs or White Sox?

A — I'm a die-hard White Sox fan.