

# 'Bologna Alley' marker to recognize cathedral's homeless lunch program

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(Photo: Matt Stone/CJ)

Thousands of hogs have given their lives since the Great Depression to support the worthy cause.

They have benefited the hundred or more mostly homeless people who line up every day at the Cathedral of the Assumption at 433 S. Fifth St. downtown to get a free lunch. The staple is always a simple bologna sandwich.

The ritual has been repeated daily, seven days a week, since sometime during the Great Depression in 1930s. Over the decades, the Cathedral has probably distributed more than 2 million free lunches.

In recognition of the charitable undertaking, the Louisville Metro Council plans to pass a resolution providing for the installation of a historic marker designating the area where people line up at the cathedral as "Bologna Alley."

"The Cathedral has a long history of feeding the homeless," said Metro Councilwoman Barbara Sexton Smith, the sponsor of the resolution. "I drive by all the time and see a hundred people there, waiting to get a bologna sandwich. They (the Cathedral) have kept it very simple."

Sexton Smith said that long ago, she volunteered to help make the sandwiches. She said representatives of the cathedral recently approached her about recognition of the program.

Molly Chesney, the volunteer coordinator of the lunch giveaway effort, said that an average of 140 people a day — more or less, depending on the season -- line up for lunches. Some of the food is donated. The meals sometimes include an offer of soup, a fruit and something sweet for dessert — and always a bologna sandwich.

Chesney said that more than 300 volunteers a month -- perhaps 8 to 12 most days -- help make and help distribute the lunches.

Sexton Smith said that she intends to spend about \$140 out of her discretionary account to pay for the marker, which is expected to be erected later this year if the council passes the resolution. It is scheduled to get a first reading on Thursday, after which it will be referred to a committee and then forwarded back to the full council for a final vote in a few weeks.



**People wait in Cathedral Alley for the free lunch provided daily by the Cathedral of the Assumption on Tuesday afternoon. The city of Louisville plans to recognize the free meals of bologna sandwiches with a marker. (Photo: Matt Stone/CJ)**

Sexton Smith said the area where people line up to get the lunches will not officially be designated as Bologna Alley, since that would take a more complicated process that is required to name, or to change the name, of a public right-of-way. The designation will be strictly an honorary recognition.

The draft of the resolution says the measure is intended to honor the cathedral's mission "to serve the less fortunate" by dedicating the area near the corner of Muhammad Ali Boulevard and Cathedral Way as Bologna Alley.

It notes that the Cathedral opened in 1852 and "has been serving not only the needs of its parishioners but also the spiritual and social needs of the downtown Louisville community since the 1930s, when the Great Depression and later the Great Flood in Louisville devastated the community."

It adds that the cathedral served more than 39,000 lunches last year. Each one included a bologna sandwich.

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