



After almost 90 years of serving the Bloomfield community, Donatelli's Italian Food Center is looking for the next generation to serve Pittsburgh

Pittsburgh, November 9, 2021 — In 1932, Frank Donatelli and George Rosato opened an Italian grocery store in Bloomfield, Pittsburgh's Little Italy, to serve the community that was mostly comprised of new Italian immigrants who arrived in the area at the turn of the 20th century.

Chances are, if you emigrated from Italy and settled in Pittsburgh, one way or another, Bloomfield was an important place for you to start your American journey. Bloomfield became a hub for Italian immigrants to find jobs, homes, and be part of an Italian community away from their motherland.

Donatelli and Rosato sought to provide those immigrants with some of the comforts of home by bringing them the smells and tastes from Italy. In addition to making their famous sausage, Donatelli and Rosato, both from the Abruzzo region of Italy, imported goods that the residents remembered eating in Italy and filled their shelves with only the best products they could find.

Donatelli and Rosato not only provided a way for the Bloomfield Italian immigrants to purchase their favorite food from their home country, but also provided much needed financial support to purchase these items on credit while their customers found work in the area. A system was put in place that tracked daily purchases of bread, meats, cheeses, and other groceries and a detailed accounting was kept in "Il libro", the book. This credit system kept many Bloomfield families fed while they looked for employment to repay their debt, which they all did. This is something generations of Bloomfielders, still today, have not forgotten.

In 1960, Frank Donatelli bought out his partner George and brought in a new partner, his son, Paul Donatelli, and his family to help him operate the business. During his partnership with his son, the business doubled in size and started making homemade products including pastas, raviolis, meatballs, sauces and soups and other products from recipes passed down from generation to generation.

Frank Donatelli retired in 1975, which opened the door for Paul to partner with his two sons, Paul Jr. and Russell, to continue the Donatelli name and serve the people of Bloomfield. With this new generation, the business added many homemade items to eat for lunch, or re-heat at home, as well as homemade baked goods like pizzelle and biscotti. In addition, the Donatellis continued to develop the business by providing homemade products for several Pittsburgh-area restaurants.

"I'm very proud of what my family has accomplished over the years," said Russell Donatelli, the last remaining family member to operate the business his grandfather founded. "Three generations have seen our small Italian grocery store grow into an Italian specialty store known throughout the Pittsburgh area. We truly appreciate our customers and families who've contributed to this growth," he added.

"After the passing of my father, Paul Sr. in 2015 and the untimely death of my brother, Paul Jr. the following year, it's been up to me to keep the Donatelli name going in operating the

business.” Donatelli continued. “Unfortunately, there is no fourth generation in our family to continue the business, so I am looking for that next person to continue on the Italian recipes and traditions passed on to me and my family before the end of this year.”

Without that person or group, Donatelli’s will close early next year, and those recipes and traditions will no longer be enjoyed by the Pittsburgh community.

“Ever since the death of my brother Paul, I have been thinking about what the next ownership of this business will look like,” he said. Donatelli has been exploring these possibilities with people he thought would be a great fit for the Bloomfield community and his employees. “Sometimes, the best people to take over a business are ones you have never thought of. We’re searching for someone who might have that same drive and desire to serve the community that my grandfather did almost 90 years ago. Someone who says Donatelli’s has a lot of great things going for it, I can take it to the next level, I can be that next generation.” Russell Donatelli said. “I’d welcome that mindset as opposed to permanently closing my family business in the coming months.”

Interested parties can contact Russell Donatelli by calling Donatelli’s Italian Food Center at (412) 682-1406.

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