



It all started with a bet. Now Taste of Sewickley is set to surpass \$1 million raised for KidsVoice

The 10th annual party on Sept. 6 will mark a major milestone



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In 2015, Chuck Moser and Greg Kaminski walked out of a board meeting for [KidsVoice](#) — a Pittsburgh nonprofit that provides children in the foster care system with legal and social assistance — and began talking over a new idea.

Moser, newly appointed, turned to Kaminski and asked: What if the two Sewickley locals hosted a dinner party to raise money for the program? Kaminski, a skilled amateur chef, could cook. Moser would handle the checkbook. They'd charge \$250 a plate.

“That'll never work. No chance. No one's gonna pay that,” Moser remembers Kaminski saying.

The two friends made a bet. Moser was convinced that the plan would work. They pulled in their spouses, Barbara Moser and Susan Kaminski.

That first year, 70 tickets sold out in a number of days, and the party raised \$25,000. This fall, on Sept. 6, [Taste of Sewickley](#), as the dinner party was christened, is poised to surpass \$1 million generated for KidsVoice since its inception.

The party has hopped venues from Kaminski's Sewickley home to kitchens and foyers around the neighborhood. Curated by a rotating posse of hosts and volunteer chefs, each iteration of Taste of Sewickley takes on a cultural cuisine as its theme.

This year, Kaminski will resurrect favorite dishes from past events for a “best of” menu — including tacos, Thai curry soup, passion fruit sorbet and tres leches cake topped with local peaches.

“What's so special about the taste of Sewickley is that we now have a whole community that believes in our work,” said [KidsVoice](#) executive director Scott Hollander. “It really does make us a charity of choice for many people in that community that we never would have reached. It's really been an organic and beautiful thing.”

KidsVoice is contracted by Allegheny County to provide legal services for abused and neglected children in the county's care, but that funding covers only a portion of the organization's operations.

Each child is assigned both a lawyer and a social worker — a system KidsVoice pioneered in the 1980s that is now standard practice nationwide, said Hollander.

Serving roughly 2,600 current and former foster youth with 70 staff members, the organization stays with many of its clients well beyond their time in foster care — in some cases, until they turn 25 or even 30. That long-term support can include help finding housing, managing credit, accessing health insurance and avoiding eviction.

For those with disabilities, KidsVoice works to transition them into supported housing. And if former clients go on to have children of their

own, the team helps meet their needs, too.

Funding from Taste of Sewickley acts as a cushion in times when other sources of support are uncertain, such as during the COVID-19 pandemic, said Hollander.

“If we have a problem, we can use those dollars to fill a gap,” he said.

“Other times, when we are doing OK, this becomes an innovation fund.”

KidsVoice’s staff gets “energized” by the opportunity to pilot new initiatives, Hollander said. After small-scale implementation to test efficacy, KidsVoice can look into funding from other foundations to scale up those new initiatives.

“We go in with a track record that Taste of Sewickley helped us create,” said Hollander.

Kaminski, Moser and their friends will spend the next month prepping for the evening — which is currently sold out. But hopeful attendees can look forward to next September, said Kaminski.

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