

BUSINESS

Hot dog here !!!



by **Jeff Hirsh**
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New Devil Dawgs restaurant downtown.

If life is like a hot dog, it should be enjoyed with relish.

But in Chicago, not with ketchup. At least not on the classic “Chicago Dog.”

And a new restaurant specializing in Chicago dogs, as well as burgers, fries, chicken and milk shakes, is now serving at Church Street Plaza downtown near the Metra station.

Devil Dawgs, a Chicago-based chain, opened its fifth location on Monday, after a soft opening over the weekend.



The Evanston outpost is Dawgs' first venture into suburbia. The other four restaurants are in Chicago.



Company president Dena Bachenheimer, at the new Evanston location.

“We knew we wanted to expand. We did want to come to the suburbs. Evanston seemed like a great opportunity,” company President Dena Bachenheimer told Evanston Now.

The original Devil Dawgs opened in 2010 near DePaul University, a small take-out stand that caught on to the point, Bachenhemer said, that “people were lining up outside the door.”

Devil Dawgs is the latest addition to Church Street Plaza, which just a few years ago seemed on life support. The movie theater had closed, along with another large tenant, Urban Outfitters.

Developer GW Properties purchased the plaza in 2021, and now, with a reopened theater and other new tenants, the site is closed to 100% leased.

It’s so close to full that GW sold part of the plaza, on the south side of Church Street, to another firm, and has the rest of the location on the market.

Nothing is perfect, of course, as Cycle Bar on the south side of Church has closed.

But for the most part, Church Street plaza has come back.

Bachenheimer said the key for Devil Dawgs in Evanston is foot traffic. The movie theater next door should help, along with nearby Metra, CTA, and bus stations. Another new plaza tenant, Sky Zone trampoline and indoor recreation center, should also be a source of hungry families looking for a dog (sorry, a dawg) and a shake.



The Chicago Dog at Devil Dawgs is topped with mustard, onions, pickles, relish, tomato, peppers and celery salt.

There is also a Big Chicago with the same condiments but on top of a spicy sausage. “A Chicago dog with a kick,” is how Bachenheimer described it.

Not only is the Evanston Devil Dawgs the company’s first restaurant in the suburbs, it’s also the first to sell alcohol, with local beers and seltzer/wine drinks. No cocktails. It’s not a bar.

And just in case you do want ketchup, to make a “not-so-Chicago-dog,” Bachenheimer said “we will try to accommodate you.”