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'You've got to find the good': North Texas Muslim families celebrate Eid — at a distance

Drive-thru goody bag pickups were just one of the ways they made the holiday special in a year when everything changed due to the coronavirus pandemic



The Usmani family drives by Abdul Hayee and Qudisia Nadeem Eid celebration on Sunday in Plano. (Juan Figueroa / Staff Photographer)





By [Jesus Jimenez](#)

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PLANO — A little rain and a pandemic didn't stop Muslim families across North Texas from celebrating Eid al-Fitr.

But the holiday that marks the end of Ramadan, Islam's holy month of fasting, was different this year.

The Khan family would have normally started its Eid celebrations at a local masjid for morning prayer. But as many places of worship remain closed to prevent the spread of COVID-19, the Khan family prayed from home on prayer mats in a space on the second floor of their home.

"It's nice to have home as a place of worship," Hafsah Khansaid.

With the help of her boys — Mustafaa, 6, Taha, 4, and Musa, 10 months — Hafsah spent much of the morning decorating their home with signs, confetti-filled balloons, and other green, red and yellow balloons that said "HAPPY EID!"



In a normal year, up to 50 people would have joined the Khans at their home to celebrate Eid. But because the Khans were limiting the holiday to just close family, the decorations were largely for the kids, but also to have a sense of normalcy in unprecedented times.

“As parents, it’s our job to be as optimistic as we can,” Hafsah Khan said. “It’s sad, but at the same time, we’re trying to make the most of it.”

After their morning prayer, the Khan family headed across town to the home of her uncle, Abdul Hayee, and his wife, Qudsia Nadeem. To make the holiday special for kids in the community and to share in the gift of giving, the Hayee family was one of the hundreds of Muslim families in North Texas participating in drive-thru goody bag pickups.



Goody bags were passed out at Abdul Hayee and Qudsia Nadeem’s drive-thru Eid at their home Sunday in Plano. (Juan Figueroa / Staff Photographer)

The Hayee family hosted one of the drive-thrus, where children were treated to goody bags with Hershey’s chocolate bars, Skittles, Ferrero Rocher chocolates, Nerds, Lemonheads and other sweets.



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While the families waited for cars to drive through, the children took turns on a swing; Abdul-Rahman Hayee, 12, rode a hoverboard — one of his Eid gifts — through the driveway; and Taha chased his brother Mustafaa, who rode a red and black Hauck pedal go-kart. Meanwhile, the parents answered calls and video chatted with friends and family, wishing them a happy holiday.



Yasmin Nadeem, (left to right) Nadeem Aziz and daughter Qudsia Nadeem celebrated Eid in Plano on Sunday by video chatting with relatives in Pakistan and Florida. (Juan Figueroa / Staff Photographer)

During the month of Ramadan, good deeds are believed by Muslims to be rewarded greatly, which is why Hafsah and her husband, Samad, have tried to teach their children by example.

Samad Khan, a physician with a private practice in Frisco, has partnered his business with Everyone Eatz, a charitable movement aimed to help those in need during the COVID-19 crisis. The movement has already distributed more than 60,000 meals at

person gatherings this Ramadan, Samad Khan said one silver lining for him has been spending more time with his family.

“It’s really easy to lose faith during this time,” he said. “You’ve got to find the good in this because if you don’t, you’ll lose your mind.”



Family members celebrate Eid at Abdul Hayee and Qudsia Nadeem’s home on May 24 in Plano. (Juan Figueroa / Staff Photographer)

Like the Khans, the Hayee family is used to hosting large groups for Eid. Some years up to 250 people visit their home throughout the day, Qudsia Hayee said.

But this year, the celebration was limited to just close family — in masks and at a distance. Chairs set up in the Hayee's back patio were spaced 6-feet apart.

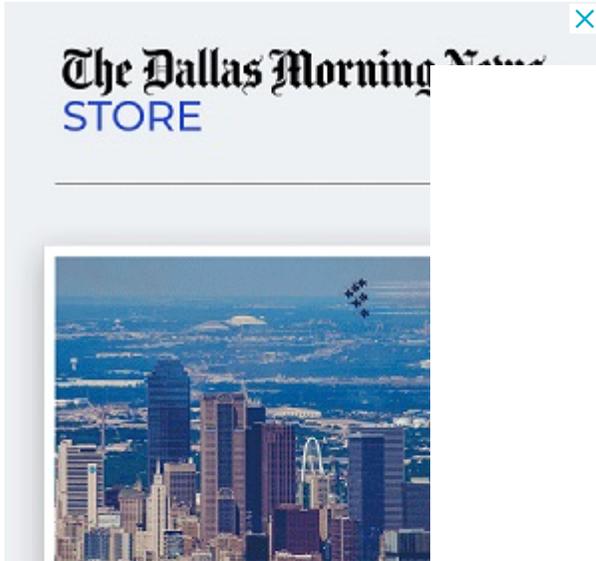
And while the group was smaller this year, the feast was bountiful, including chicken tikka, fruit kebabs, pastries, Philly cheesesteaks, and Abdul Hayee's special brisket, which cooked for more than 15 hours.

“Back home we do goat, but — you know — we're Texan,” Abdul Hayee said.

Abdul Hayee prepares to serve brisket he made for the family's Eid celebration on Sunday in Plano. (Juan Figueroa / Staff Photographer)

previous events. In addition to providing free meals, his practice has also provided free COVID-19 tests at the events, regardless of symptoms.

Everyone EatZ will host an interfaith event on Monday at Royal Lane Baptist Church in North Dallas, where more than 10,000 meals will be distributed and coronavirus testing will also be available.



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Samad Khan said one day when his family looks back on this pandemic, he's certain his kids will ask, "What did you do?"

"That's my job — to show my children," he said.

Ramadan is usually a time of building community — by breaking fasts with friends and family and gathering for prayer at the masjid. But while there's been fewer in-



[Jesus Jimenez](#), Staff Writer. Jesus Jimenez began working for The Dallas Morning News in 2018. He currently covers weather and how climate affects Dallas-Fort Worth. He is a graduate of the University of Texas at Dallas.

 [@jesus_jimz](#)

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