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Ram Mehta, owner of In-Fretta pizza in Plano, holds a "Love Takes Action Award" he received in 2020 from the New York Life Foundation for his charitable work. (Ram Mehta)



By [Teri Webster](#)

11:18 AM on Jan 13, 2021 CST



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In-Fretta restaurant owner Ram Mehta has spent most of the pandemic helping North Texas families who have experienced the greatest hardships. Early on, he used his own savings to **provide meals and medical supplies**, then later formed the nonprofit **EveryoneEatz** to expand his outreach.

Mehta has continued his work through the nonprofit even though he has also felt the impact of the economic downturn caused by the pandemic.



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On Oct. 23, he was locked out of his Irving In-Fretta restaurant after the rent was late. In the process, Mehta lost \$100,000 in restaurant equipment that he has not been able to recover, he said.

The Irving location of the pizza and wings restaurant had opened a year earlier in a popular strip mall. But when the pandemic shuttered most of the nearby business offices, people stopped coming in for lunch and to pick up dinner on the way home, Mehta said.

Mehta estimated that he lost about \$500,000 trying to keep the Irving location afloat.

“It’s sad, but that’s business,” Mehta said. “It’s not easy.”

His In-Fretta restaurant in Plano is also struggling, he said. Mehta opened that location in November of 2018, after leaving a high-paying job in the IT industry.

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BY TERI WEBSTER

Despite the struggles, he is continuing with the work being done through EveryoneEatz.

This focus on other people's wellbeing is nothing new. Mehta's policy has always been to provide a free hot meal — a slice of pizza or a bowl of pasta — to anyone in need, with no questions or judgment, he said. Mehta learned that philosophy from his late mother, Lata Mehta, a woman who could have lived a lavish lifestyle but chose to spend her time and money helping others, he has said.

Shortly after the pandemic hit, it became clear how many people were in dire need, Mehta said.

“One of our customers came in — a regular customer — who worked at the nearby mall,” he said. “They all got laid off. His card got declined and he started crying. Him and his wife were both furloughed. That's really how EveryoneEatz was born.”

Since then, EveryoneEatz and the nonprofit's supporters have served more than 416,000 meals to struggling families during the pandemic. To date, Mehta has given away two cars, thousands medical masks, free COVID-19 testing and sneakers and toys for children in need. Mehta has also paid rent for families who were about to get kicked out of their extended-stay hotel rooms.



NEWS



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BY TERI WEBSTER

“It has changed me and it touched me in a way that is good,” Mehta said.

Two days before Christmas, Mehta received “at least 700 phone calls” from people seeking help to buy toys and clothing for their children, he said, adding that he helped as many people as he could.

Like other business owners, Mehta never imagined that North Texas, the state, the nation and the world would experience a pandemic with such dire consequences. The past year has been especially difficult for restaurants and has led to higher than normal closures, as *The Dallas Morning News* has **reported**.

Despite all of the losses he has seen and experienced over the past year, Mehta remains optimistic.

“This is a message of hope,” he said. “You can’t give up.”

People must continue reinventing themselves and move on to the next thing, he said.

“It’s OK if I lose everything. I’ll get it back. The good news is we are going to continue to

do God’s work by helping others,” said Mehta, who practices the Sikh religion.



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BY WIRE SERVICES AND TOM STEELE





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[Teri Webster](#), Special Contributor. Teri Webster is a freelancer covering Plano for The Dallas Morning News. She has worked as a staff writer and freelancer for several area news outlets and is a regular contributor to Fort Worth Weekly. Email story tips to writerteriw@gmail.com.

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