

Catering company adapts to new normal by making meals for families

"We are flying the plane as we build it," says Food in Motion owner

As a catering company, Food in Motion has made its mark on the community providing top level service to social gatherings large and small.

But, at a time when social gatherings are on pause, the Vata Court-based business has had to "completely adapt overnight" to a new normal while finding ways to keep their business going, their staff employed while, at the same time, giving back to the community.

"I am flying this plane as I build it here," says Food in Motion co-owner John Cosentino. "This is all brand new for me and I am learning every day. Because Food in Motion is a catering company and our business model is based around social gatherings, social distancing has kind of dismantled our business."

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic the company has shifted gears from a catering business to a restaurant focused on food deliveries and curbside menus. Developing a completely new menu that was based on a family restaurant concept the Cosentino family developed when he was just seven years old, they're preparing popular Italian-Canadian dishes like chicken parmigiana, veal scallopini, lasagna and other family-friendly fare.

"We have condensed our menu so it is very manageable as a two-person operation and we're doing all the administrative work, all the deliveries," he says, noting that he is seeing a particular uptake from couples, empty-nesters, and small families isolating together.

"Through this, I have had the chance to meet a lot of new people, which is awesome for whenever Food in Motion does return, whatever that is going to look like, whenever that is going to be," says Mr. Cosentino.

"People have reached out and people are really thankful that Food in Motion has adapted and we're able to offer something besides fast foods and other things that are essential. That has been really heartwarming for us. I think the fact that this is so new to us and the fact that we're being able to put this model as a restaurant/delivery pick-up service, we're able to do it so quickly and overnight is rewarding for myself and the fact that people are actually ordering and we're getting support from our friends, the ones that we see on a daily basis, just gives me the reassurance that things are going to be okay. There were a couple of days where it was really tough to breathe for a little while because I didn't know if there was going to be a Food in Motion anymore."

On Monday, Food in Motion announced they were looking at

more ways to give back to the community by distributing homemade Italian-Canadian meals to frontline healthcare workers at Southlake Regional Health Centre. Individuals can go online to Food in Motion's website to help make this program possible by donating \$12 to sponsor the cost of a meal which will be distributed each Thursday and Friday to those helping to fight the pandemic.

They hope to distribute up to 120 meals each week through this initiative.

?We are so grateful for everything they are doing for us, so we just wanted to give back,? says Mr. Cosentino. ?My cousin is a nurse and people are dropping off yogurt and NutriGrain bars, but there is something else we can do: Food in Motion wants to be able to arrange meals for the doctors and nurses. You will be able to go to our website to support our frontliners. You can donate one meal, which is \$12 and you can donate as many as you want. We're going to cap off [donations] every Wednesday and then we will be able to make the meals Thursday and Friday morning and we'll deliver them ourselves.?

For more information on how you can become involved in the initiative ? and order some tasty meals from a local business for yourself ? visit www.foodinmotion.ca or call 905-503-3462.

By Brock Weir