



OP-ED by Todd Graves, Founder, Owner & CEO, Fry Cook & Cashier of Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers

RESTAURANTS ARE OPEN, AND ESSENTIAL, AND YOU'RE STILL WELCOME TO DRIVE-THRU OR PICK-UP

In light of the most recent updates regarding COVID-19, several cities and states have issued a stay-at-home mandate, and more will continue to do so in the days ahead. So what does that mean for restaurants?

Shout it from the rooftops: Restaurants Are Open!

During local stay-at-home mandates, many citizens don't realize that they can leave their house for essential needs from essential businesses. But, what exactly is an "essential" business? Technically, it's up to cities and states to decide, but there are some businesses that all locales have deemed essential. Some of these include restaurants, grocery stores, gas stations, pharmacies, banks and veterinary clinics.

Yes, restaurants have been deemed essential businesses by the executive office of the United States, so they can remain open for curbside pick-up, delivery (in-house and third party) and drive-thru.

While every restaurant should be doubling down on health and safety, and held to a high standard when it comes to practicing proper social distancing, they are also providing a critical service during this challenging time. Restaurants like [Raising Cane's](#), where our drive-thru business remains brisk, are feeding citizens from coast-to-coast throughout this unprecedented crisis.

Grocery stores are already struggling to keep up with demand and average citizens are not in a financial position to buy excessive groceries, or to stockpile their freezers and pantries for a drawn-out lockdown. Many Americans also don't have the time to prepare three meals a day. In addition, more than half of all food spending is made at restaurants. That means restaurants are more essential than ever.

Prior to COVID-19, the restaurant industry had 15.6 million employees serving customers from more than one million restaurants across the country. The National Restaurant Association predicts five to seven million of those jobs could be lost over the next three months. We are all doing everything we can to keep our workers employed, so we're counting on our communities to partner with us in the days and weeks ahead. I'm proud that Raising Cane's has retained all of our amazing crew to date, and as long as we can keep our drive-thrus busy, we'll continue to do so for the duration.

Support your local restaurants

Like many businesses across the country, restaurants have been devastated by the pandemic. Dining inside a restaurant is no longer an option, which is especially hard for concepts that don't have a drive-thru. In most cases, restaurants are being forced to completely change their business model in order to stay open.

Now, more than ever, is the time to [support your local restaurants](#). Take a break from cooking and have your favorite meals delivered, or get some fresh air and take advantage of curbside pick-up or drive-thru. Many restaurants have launched special discounts and offers, like family meals that are meant to be enjoyed at home. Some restaurants, like [Dog Haus](#), have even opened their pantry to provide essential items like eggs, chicken and baking mixes, to help support their customers.

Restaurants are adapting, so it's time for us to adapt too. Embrace the change and help support your local eateries. Tell your family, friends and neighbors ...**RESTAURANTS ARE OPEN!**

Todd Graves is the Founder, Owner & CEO, Fry Cook & Cashier of Raising Cane's Chicken Fingers, a Baton Rouge, La.-based restaurant company with more than 500 Restaurants in 27 states and five countries. The company has ONE LOVE®—quality chicken finger meals—and is continually recognized for its unique business model and Customer satisfaction.