

# Free pizza heralds opening of Little Caesars in Haverhill

BY CARA SPILSBURY  
STAFF WRITER

For 17 years, Doug Ruthven has traveled from Detroit, Mich., bringing fresh Little Caesars pizza to people in need.

He's been to 48 states and three Canadian provinces in the Love Kitchen, the pizza shop's mobile pizza station. It is an entire food preparation site housed inside a tractor-trailer that delivers warm meals.

Ruthven has seen the aftermath of Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, and was at Ground Zero after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11.

Last week, he was in the Love Kitchen making 50 pizzas for the homeless in Haverhill who came to dinner at Emmaus Inc. on Howe Street.

"It's the best way to give back when you're in the pizza business," he said as he systematically ladled sauce onto pizza after pizza. "It's very rewarding."

On the same day, Jared Beal and Mark Payne opened their new Little Caesars franchise on Hilldale Avenue in Haverhill. They were happy that their new beginning could coincide with such a positive event.

"Little Caesars contacted us and wanted to bring (the Love Kitchen) here," said Payne, "and of course we said yes."

As one of the newest additions to the local restaurant scene, Payne and Beal said they hope not only to provide a quality, affordable product to the people of Haverhill but also help to make the city better.

"I think both of us believe that if a community is strong, your family will be," said Beal, who said he will soon move his family to the area.

The duo has also franchised three Little Caesars restaurants in Sacramento, Calif.

The visit from the Love Kitchen was greeted with open arms by Emmaus clients and staff.

"Obviously, they're committed to being a great partner in the community, so we're happy to have them," said Gretchen Arntz, chief development officer at Emmaus.

The 500 slices of pizza turned out by the Love Kitchen that afternoon came at a particularly key time, because Emmaus has been struggling to keep enough food on its shelves, Arntz said. Donations

have been down and Arntz speculates that it is most likely a result of the downturn in the economy.

Also, the winter months, with Christmas and Thanksgiving, are the time when most people make donations. The influx of food often wanes as summer rolls around.

Food donations are accepted 24 hours a day at Emmaus House at

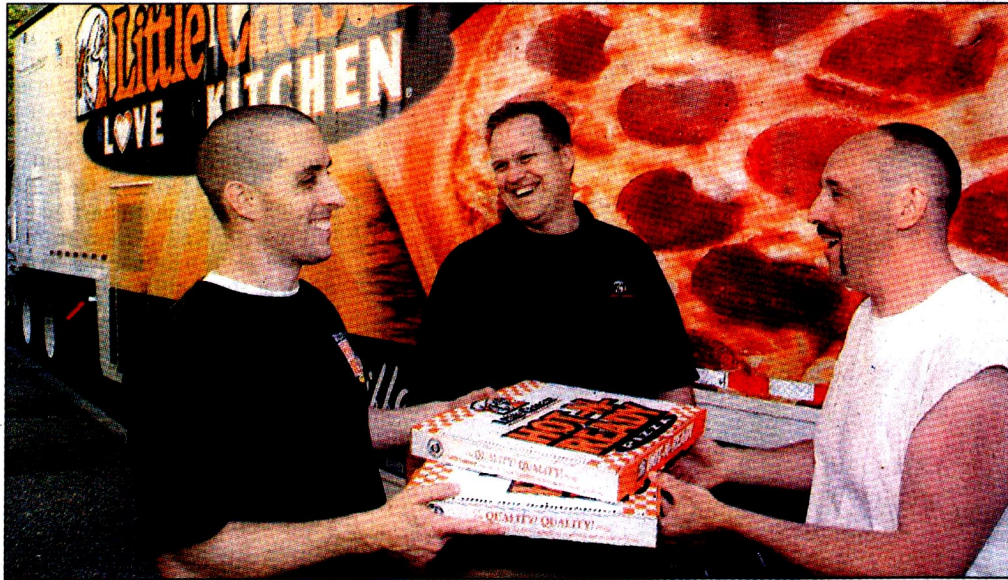
150 Howe St. The staff can handle any type of donation, with freezers and refrigerators for safe storage.

More than 200 people stay each night at Emmaus and about 150 of them people rely on Emmaus for their meals each day. Often, the meals are made with turkey or pasta, so the melty cheese and fluffy dough of a freshly cooked

pizza was a treat.

"It shows them that somebody out there cares," said Payne. "It's probably not every day they get food from a national chain."

"Pizza is something you can share with people," said Beal. "We just want them to have the opportunity to share this with each other."



CARL RUSSO/Staff photo

Jim Higgins, right, a resident of the Safe Haven Program at Emmaus in Haverhill, takes a free pizza compliments of Mark Payne, left, and Jared Beal, owners of the new Little Caesar's in Haverhill. The 50 pizzas and 500 slices were donated to the residents of Emmaus using Little Caesar's Love Kitchen; an 18-wheeler kitchen facility that made the pizzas.