

Losing a beloved child is enough to break a person and ruin anyone's life.

Jeff Davis of Richmond, Ky, took what could have been the end and made a brand new beginning with a fresh outlook on life and a new local business, the Starving Monkey.

With the Starving Monkey, a restaurant home delivery service, Davis has set out to do one thing above all else: Bring quality customer service back.

The idea first came years ago when Davis was on a business trip in Chicago for his former employer Circle K. He and a friend were craving Mexican cuisine, but didn't dare to venture out in the big city and get lost.

"We were flipping through our hotel directory and, lo and behold, there was a place that would bring food to you, right to your room," Davis said. "We ordered it and about 30-35 minutes later, it came and it was hot, fresh, just really delicious. And I thought, 'Man, we need something like that in Richmond.'"

The idea sat in the back of Davis' brain for years as he made the transition from management at Circle K to Love's travel stop. And though he left for money, the switch was not a pleasant experience.

"The money part didn't bring the happiness part," Davis said. "Even though I did get to spend some time with my family, it was sporadic at best. And with the truck drivers being on the road for five days in row, stinking to high heaven, not taking a shower, mad cause they missed a deadline or whatever the case may be, they were just often ugly ugly people."

Then, tragedy struck.

In late April 2012, Davis' eight-year-old daughter Caya was involved in a swing set accident that left her unconscious and on life support until she passed away in May.

"It took a big piece of me," Davis said. "It forever changed me as a man. Until you lose a child you never know how low you can go. Well, you find out real quick."

After months of grieving, Davis realized where he was at in his life was no longer cutting it and decided to make a change.

"When Caya left us, I just told myself that I could not deal with negative people anymore. I couldn't be around negative surroundings," Davis said. "So I prayed about it and I said, 'Lord give me something to do that's positive.' And soon enough, he kind of put the monkey, the image of the restaurant home delivery, back into my head."

Though he questioned himself at first, Davis soon fully dedicated himself to the idea of honoring his daughter through this new business.

"I came to the realization that I was going to take my daughter's love of monkeys and find some way to remember her every minute of the day," Davis said. "We went and Googled a picture of an adorable

monkey, and that became our logo. And of course we had that put on her headstone, and that's how we were going to portray this thing."

He quickly began building his roster of restaurants that the Starving Monkey would cater to. His strategy was to focus on the smaller, independent businessmen in town rather than the bigger, well-established Richmond restaurants.

"I wanted to have something other than pizza and Chinese food, I wanted it even grander," Davis said. "I knew the bigger that I made it in my head, it sounds kind of funny, but that's how it was going to help me heal from losing my daughter and having all the idle time to sit and think and ponder. So it gave me more initiative to stretch it out and expand on it."

Davis currently has seven businesses lined up, including Sonic, Masala, Maroon's, Jackson's, Nuevo Vallarta, Lee's Chicken and Captain D's, with more potentially to come as time goes on. Davis noted customer interest in Babylon and Madison Garden.

"And I've got restaurants coming at me now," Davis said. "I didn't do that in the beginning. In the beginning, I went and recruited to them with basically my business card and strong words. It was kind of going on a wing and a prayer."

With the businesses lined up, Davis was able to focus on his main priority for the Starving Monkey: customer service. For \$5.99, Davis and his crew will deliver food from any of their affiliated restaurants to anywhere within Richmond city limits.

"It's all about image. We're doing this the way customer service needs to be, the way it was intended to be," Davis said. "There's so much negative in the world, this gives Richmond something positive to grasp onto."

Davis said this business is his way of giving back to a community that helped his family through such a difficult time.

"I'm not trying to become a millionaire with this, I'm doing this to give back to my community," Davis said. "My main goal is to take care some of these horrid medical bills we have, because we have a lot with what we went through, but ultimately I want to sit down when I'm paying my restaurants back and write a check to my church and thank them for everything they've done for us. We didn't cook for two months after the tragedy. People fed us. How loving is that?"

Ultimately, Davis said he feels all the success and praise belongs to the Almighty.

"It's really weird how since I've placed this in God's hands, it's all come full circle," Davis said. "It's amazing unless you've experienced it. To be honest, I wasn't as spiritual before I lost my baby. I can't explain it other than I'm trying to do the right thing so much in my head to get to where my daughter's at."

With the business only days away from kicking off its services, Davis said he's excited and optimistic for what's to come.

"Let the community grow this thing," Davis said. "That's what's so exciting for me and I want my family to share is to watch how big it becomes right in front of our very eyes. It's happening at such a rapid pace and it could go in so many ways. The sky's the limit. And I'm prepared. I know there are going to be hiccups in the road, there always are. But if I let God control every bit of this, it will work out fine."

For more information, check out The Starving Monkey's website at www.thestarvingmonkey.com, like their Facebook page or give them a call at 859-420-7685.