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The Other Famous Amos

by **Lisa Dawson** in [Arts+Entertainment](#), [Family](#)[Bookmark](#)by *Lisa Dawson*

When Reverend Shawn Amos thinks of Texas, the big, open, blue sky comes to mind.

As a musician, author, business owner and global traveler, Amos relocated in 2018 to Frisco from Los Angeles to continue his career in music and break into writing. He says the immensity of the sky and open spaces of North Texas have fueled his creativity.

“I even named one of my albums Blue Sky,” he says. “Frisco is a place where I let my imagination run free.”

The Reverend Shawn Amos & The Brotherhood, a blues band, is Amos’ musical destination for his imagination. A collaboration of harmonica blues and soulful folk, the band tours extensively and records albums at Blue Rock Artist Ranch and Studio in Wimberley, Texas.





Amos self-manages his busy music career with the help of publicists, agents and his lawyer. But it is just one of the many hats he wears – literally and figuratively (he frequently is seen wearing an actual hat).

Amos moved to Frisco to be closer to his three children, Piper, 21, Ellis, 17, and Harper, 13. When the pandemic started, he began writing *Cookies & Milk*, the story of a young boy (also named Ellis) who spends a summer with his father at a cookie store they open together. Through this process, father and son bond and gain a deeper understanding of one another.

The story's theme mimics Amos' own childhood. Growing up in Hollywood in the 1970s, Amos' father, Wally, founded the Famous Amos cookie empire in a small A-frame store on famed Sunset Boulevard.

The younger Amos helped his dad at the store as a child, using milk crates to reach the cash register. His job was to work in the front of the store and help customers while his father made cookies in the back. Amos' grandmother was also there, tending to a greenhouse she kept in the back of the store.



"It was very Hollywood in the '70s," Amos says. "It was a little store with wooden plank floors and lots of plants. But being there were some of the happiest times in my childhood."

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Amos grew up in a musical, entertainment-focused family. Before becoming famous as a cookie mogul, Wally Amos worked in New York City at the William Morris Agency and was the first black talent agent in the industry. In 1975, he launched Famous Amos cookies after dabbling in baking and leaning into a new hobby to relieve stress.

Amos' mother, Shirlee May, was an R&B singer who made a name for herself on New York City's club circuit in the 1960s. After a lifelong battle with mental illness, she took her own life in 2003.

Amos says he looked inward at his upbringing and coming of age in Hollywood as inspiration for his book.

"A lot of my music is biographical," he says. "And the book *Cookies & Milk* is biographical as well. It's based on my own relationship with my father and now my relationship with my son."



In the dedication, he notes that the book is for his father and his only son, Ellis, after whom the main character is named.

"When I moved to Frisco, it was to be closer to my son and two daughters. I had some repairing to do with my relationships," he says. When the pandemic forced Amos to temporarily stop touring, he turned to writing daily.

"The book is a lot about a black kid growing up in Hollywood. Although Los Angeles is seen as a multi-cultural metropolis, when you break it down by neighborhood, there's not a lot of diversity. That's one of the things I love about Frisco: diversity. It really goes against the stereotype of Texas, but I've met people here who I would never have met otherwise."



One of those people is Amos' girlfriend, Jinny Cho. She opened Detour Doughnuts in 2018 and has been bringing her gourmet doughnuts and craft coffee to the community ever since. Amos says she helped him discover Dallas-Fort Worth's food scene. "I love making weekly trips to the Dallas Farmers Market and Oak Cliff," he says.

When he's not touring with his band, recording in the studio, writing or traveling, Amos enjoys kayaking on Lake Lewisville, biking and playing with his dog by a creek near his West Frisco home.



As for the Reverend title, Amos recalls that during one of his tours in Italy, following his set, a bandmate said the crowd was shouting "Reverendo!"

"My buddy told me, 'They're calling you reverend,' and it just stuck."

Amos eventually became a reverend through an online course and has officiated a few weddings. "My music is my church," he says.

Amos is touring with his band and in the process of writing a sequel to *Cookies & Milk*, which is being developed as an animated series by Disney. His next book is due in September 2023 and will continue the story of his childhood, during which he experienced an artistic, creative environment with parents who weren't afraid to take risks.

If given the chance, Amos said he would go back in time and tell his 12-year-old self, "Keep the faith."

Lisa Dawson is a freelance writer and Frisco resident.

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Frisco STYLE Best of Business 2022

by **Becky Johnson** in Best of Business

Bookmark





Introduction by Mike Barber



There are many great award programs in North Texas that recognize exemplary businesses, but an outstanding local award for the Frisco business community is *Frisco STYLE Magazine's* Best of Business Awards.

There's no question that Frisco hosts many successful businesses — both longstanding and new — that complement other areas of excellence within our city such as the independent school district, city government and Chamber of Commerce. What better way to ensure continued excellence than to recognize businesses that continually perform above and beyond expectations.

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Recognizing above-par performance is an important part of continued success in general, but especially for the business community. Business recognition validates an added community value and at the same time provides recognition to the employees of the respective business in a variety of ways. Not only does such recognition boost and solidify a company's reputation within the local community, but it also provides additional morale to employees. The recognition also builds a stronger overall business community by supporting current businesses and encouraging new business in Frisco. Recognizing top-achieving businesses supports successful steps that can take a business to the next level.

The intentional gesture of supporting and encouraging others goes a long way. Building a stronger business community makes communities stronger overall. Whether Frisco residents utilize a business' products or services or are among its employees, they benefit from businesses that continually strive for excellence and are eligible for these prestigious awards.

In recognizing the Best of Business, *Frisco STYLE* sets the bar high for businesses to achieve and run a successful operation. Awards are presented in categories including Leadership and Vision, Company Culture and Financial Management, among others. These awards seek to ensure that all aspects of a business are considered.

Please take time to learn about and appreciate each of the local businesses recognized and what they have accomplished in earning a Best of Business award from *Frisco STYLE*. The Frisco business community will continue to grow and recognitions such as these push businesses to become leaders in their respective industries and, in the end, for the ultimate betterment of the entire community.

Mike Barber is a certified public accountant and partner with BKM Sowan Horan, LLP. He serves as chair of the board of directors for the Frisco Chamber of Commerce.

2022 Best of Business Evaluation and Selection Committee



Tony Felker

Tony Felker serves as President/CEO of the Frisco Chamber of Commerce. An 18-year veteran of the chamber of commerce industry, he received his IOM designation from West Institute in 2009 and his Certified Chamber Executive program designation in 2014. He served as the 2019 chair of the Board of Regents for the West Institute of Organization Management, a program of the U.S. Chamber of Commerce, and on



currently serves on the North Texas Commission board of directors, as an ex-officio board member for Visit Frisco and is on numerous steering and planning committees within Frisco. A graduate of Leadership Frisco Class III, Felker earned a Bachelor of Business in marketing from the University of Texas at Austin, as well as a Bachelor of Journalism. He is also a graduate of the University of Oklahoma Economic Development Institute and is pursuing his Certified Economic Developer designation.



Michelle Young

Michelle Young has served as CEO of Legacy Plumbing in Frisco for the past 16 years. Prior to founding this company with her husband, Michelle led an accounting team for a Plano consulting firm where she managed the organization's budgeting processes and financial reporting activities. Young has a bachelor's in finance and accounting from the University of Texas at Dallas. She is actively involved in several community organizations and enjoys her involvement with two business mastermind groups, as well as coaching business owners in her spare time. Her business has been the recipient of many awards and she has served on several selection committee panels including the Better Business Bureau's Torch Award for Ethics. Young resides in Frisco with her husband and is a proud mother of three Frisco ISD students.



Rich Allen

Rich Allen is on a mission to help business owners and key leaders create, build, grow and sustain the business of their dreams with the guidance of his company Tour de Profit. Allen has been a business coach and investor since 2007 and has worked with hundreds of leaders and business owners to help them solve their most difficult business challenges. He is a founding partner of Eagles Innovation Group, a company that funds, supports and nurtures new business startups. Allen has authored two books: *Tour de Profit* and *The Ultimate Business Tune Up: A Simple Yet Powerful Business Model That Will Transform the Lives of Small Business Owners*. He previously was a division president and vice president of human relations for Pella Corporation, a vice president of human relations for Texas Instruments and a U.S. Army Corp of Engineers captain. Allen holds a bachelor's in accounting from Arizona State University and an MBA in international business from the University of Texas at Dallas.



Stefanie E. Wagoner

Stefanie Wagoner has more than 20 year's experience in public administration, having served as director of business retention and expansion for the Frisco Economic Development Corporation since 2008. She previously worked at the cities of Southlake and Carrollton, focusing on planning and retail development. Wagoner holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in urban and regional planning from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign and a master's degree in public administration from the University of Texas at Arlington. She is a certified city planner and economic development financial professional. With a passion for giving back to the community, Wagoner is involved with the Rotary Club of Frisco and various entrepreneurship-focused initiatives. In 2020, she participated in the inaugural TEDxFrisco Talk.



Dr. Clinton Purtell

A professor of entrepreneurship and operations management, Dr. Clinton Purtell serves as associate director of the Jim McNatt Institute for Logistics Research at the University of North Texas and is a member of its Center for Integrated Intelligent Mobility Systems. His career and industry experience spans more than two decades in executive leadership roles with numerous Fortune 500 and Euro 50 firms leading global supply chains, strategic sourcing and corporate development in industries. Active in angel investing and venture capital in North Texas, Purtell serves on a number of small and mid-size boards and consults entrepreneurs and franchisors in areas of strategy, fundraising and operations. He received his Ph.D. in entrepreneurship from Oklahoma State University, an MBA from Belmont University and a Bachelor of Finance from Oklahoma City University as well as the honorable designation of executive scholar from Northwestern University, Kellogg School of Business in management science.

Building a Team



Easy Breezy Cleaning

House cleaners inhabit a place of special trust among many Frisco families. The individuals who work for Easy Breezy Cleaning come into people's homes, where customers need to feel safest. Residents also want to know that their homes will be cleaned on a set schedule — no exceptions — with guaranteed quality.

On the other side of the coin, the work environment and atmosphere of appreciation must be ideal for cleaning company employees. Easy Breezy Cleaning strives to meet all these criteria and more, earning them the Best of Business Building a Team Award.

Owner Shobha Pillai selects her employees carefully and is as committed to them as they are to her company. "Our core strength is to treat our cleaners the way we like to be treated: with dignity and respect," she says.

That begins with the hiring process. "We, of course, do background checks, but we also use gut (feelings). We hire for integrity and train for skill. If someone doesn't show integrity in the interview or training (processes), they don't make the cut. We want people who are going to love their jobs. We have very low turnover because we are very selective about who we hire. We all jump in to help each other in times of need."

Employees are sent to clients' homes according to a customer requirements. It may be one cleaning person or a team of three or four cleaners. All employees are rigorously trained and reviewed. Pillai knows that her cleaning teams are the ambassadors of her company, and she wants to keep those ambassadors happy.

"To keep staff lively and engaged, we regularly conduct contests, team-building family socials, breakfasts and personal email outreaches. These activities coalesce in building a strong team. Team bonuses, performance bonuses, recognition and customer feedback surveys are a great motivation to uphold the excellent reputation we have garnered for ourselves. Our staff looks up to us, and all our actions are designed to inculcate their trust."

In addition, customers and employees feel good about the cleaning equipment and solutions that are used in the process. Easy Breezy Cleaning uses only nontoxic and biodegradable products. This is unique in the cleaning business.

On a more personal level, "We make available free cleaning for teachers, first responders and families with chemotherapy patients," Pillai says. "We encourage our paying customers to nominate deserving families through the Cleaning for a Reason portal. Our staff who do these special jobs are compensated like a regular job. We take pride in the fact that several staff said they would take less so that we can provide more such services."

Easy Breezy Cleaning is an all-star company. Its employees are embraced as a cohesive team and customer satisfaction is its main goal.

Metrics





National Breast Cancer Foundation

The National Breast Cancer Foundation started in 1991 around the kitchen table of breast cancer survivor Janelle Hail. NBCF's mission is to assist women by providing help and inspiring hope in those impacted by breast cancer through early detection, education and support services. NBCF has the numbers to show its reach, earning the organization the Best of Business Metrics Award.

NBCF is consistently rated among the top charities by the charity assessment organization Charity Navigator. For the past 16 years, NBCF has earned Charity Navigator's four-out-of-four-star rating, showing that it exceed industry standards and outperforms most charities in its cause. On average, 80 percent of NBCF spending is directed back to its programs.

The pandemic was especially challenging for breast cancer charities as events, screenings, clinics and in-person support shut down. With the cancelation of such events, NBCF pivoted to digital, online and social campaigns that targeted all women, with an emphasis on underserved populations in Dallas-Fort Worth. It also continued patient support groups, moving those online.

Among major breast cancer organizations in the United States, NBCF was one of the only ones to grow in revenue and program spending during pandemic.

"Many industries were impacted differently through the pandemic," said Douglas Feil, chief program officer. "Our grocery, online retail and outdoor-lifestyle partners were growing and looking to give back to their community, particularly those serving the urgent health care needs of individuals and families. NBCF's revenue grew by over 35 percent last fiscal year because of our ability to provide specific opportunities for our donors to make a difference in the lives of women right here in Frisco and beyond."

NBCF has continued its successful numbers. It reached 500,000 Spanish-speaking households through a creative partnership with television network Univision. NBCF also provided 5,000 direct educational services and trained and utilized 13 Dallas-Fort Worth-area Community Ambassadors to help educate, navigate and connect women to local resources.

In 2021, the organization provided more than 15,000 mammograms, diagnostic, patient navigation and patient relief services for uninsured and low-income patients across the Metroplex. It has packed and distributed more than 10,000 patient HOPE Kits, and also facilitated a hybrid support group for Frisco ISD teachers and administrators who were facing breast cancer.

NBCF's high school internship program harnessed the power of young minds, resulting in the Game Pink online gaming fundraiser that raised more than \$100,000 to support its patient services.

When it comes to metrics, sometimes the most important number is one. A week into the pandemic, a metastatic breast cancer patient contacted NBCF. She was alone in her apartment and facing her last days. Hospitals were closing and the patient told NBCF her biggest fear was to die alone in her apartment. An NBCF patient navigator worked tirelessly for 24 hours to get her admitted and under the care of a clinician. The patient died a few days later, but she was not alone. A nurse was there by her side to hold her hand as she passed.

Structure & Organization



Taylor Morrison

Heading up a hot real estate market like Frisco's within an organization that serves the nation can be a challenge. Homebuilder and development company Taylor Morrison manages it successfully. The 124-person team in Dallas-Fort Worth is part of a 3,000-person national team, and uniting the regions strategically makes Taylor Morrison the Best of Business Structure and Organization Award winner.

Taylor Morrison brands include Esplanade, Darling Homes Collection by Taylor Morrison and Christopher Todd Communities built by Taylor Morrison. The publicly-traded company works coast-to-coast and is a seven-time recipient of the America's Most Trusted® Builder designation by Lifestory Research. Its structure includes a financial services segment for mortgage financing, title insurance and closing services and homeowners' insurance.

The company also operates a Build-to-Rent business that develops rental communities to provide another tier of consumers with high-quality, affordable housing options. Taylor Morrison's variety of options and services provide a unique homebuying experience centered on delivering homes that meet customers where they need to be.

Organizationally, Taylor Morrison's Dallas division develops an annual strategic plan that is reviewed on a quarterly basis with corporate and other division leaders. Divisions help guide decisions, and the Dallas area contributes information on local market conditions and interaction/progress across divisions. The company determines how to expand its footprint and evaluates timeliness and challenges so that growth can continue.

Keith Hurand, Taylor Morrison Dallas Division president, explains, "From our corporate office to our Dallas division in Frisco, we are rooted in strong values and backed by a solid reputation. We work to keep our group functioning at a high level by driving a culture of operational excellence, investing in top talent and providing key resources for career growth and development. We take pride in all we do and are never satisfied with the status quo."

Consistently improving drives corporate leaders to maintain strong strategic operational initiatives, disciplined capital allocation and values-based approach to sustainability. Unless you've been blissfully living on a deserted island, you know that the building industry had historic issues in 2021 with limited home supplies and supply chain constraints. That environment would have made it easier than ever for consumers to lose trust. However, Taylor Morrison captured its highest trust index score yet, which was double the industry average.

Despite the challenges the year presented, Taylor Morrison achieved a historically robust performance. In 2021, it delivered 13,699 homes, up nine percent year over year. The company ended the year with approximately 77,000 owned and controlled lots. Following each quarterly earnings call, Chairman and CEO Sheryl Palmer, Chief Financial Officer Lou Steffens and Chief Corporate Operations Officer Erik Heuser also lead all-employee calls to go over results directly with team members, followed by live Q&A sessions with the leadership team.

Serving Customers





Jasmine's Beat

Getting good customer reviews is one worthy goal, but unabashed delight is the ultimate goal for Jasmine's Beat. In fact, customers give those impromptu reviews every week through adaptive dance that delivers pure joy.

Jasmine's Beat is a dance company that caters to students of all ages and disabilities. It works with local organizations, schools, dance studios and hospitals through virtual sessions and in-person classes. Jasmine's Beat serves its clients so well that it has earned the company the Best of Business Serving Customers Award.

CEO Jasmine Mathew has loved dance her entire life and studied health care in college. "I have always been a dancer, and I learned that recreational therapy can utilize dance. In the process of working with different clients, there were a lot of people who said they would love to do a dance class, but no one was able to teach a class to them. I realized I could start this."

Mathew has relatives who have physical and learning differences, and she has seen firsthand how this can impact everyone in a family. It has made her even more passionate about sharing her love of dance.

Each of her Jasmine's Beat team members brings a different background to serve those who have special needs, disabilities or who need accommodations. Initial conversations about classes include details about the dance company's "no-judgement" atmosphere.

Mathew encourages team members to create adaptive choreography based on their expertise and the students' interests. The team shares ideas and successes on what has worked well, and undergoes deep-dive training annually. "We are a team with a genuine interest in our students and will create whatever is necessary to make it work," she says.

The dance instructors assess each client initially through forms submitted by the student or their family members. They create plans that fit the student and maintain an open conversation throughout, before and after each class.

Customer appreciation is on display at end-of-year recitals, with applause and gifts of appreciation. Mathew and her team find opportunities throughout the year to let students shine in the community through performances that showcase their hard work. Jasmine's Beat asks customers to provide online reviews and feedback explaining how Jasmine's Beat classes have impacted their lives. The positive reviews lead to more students.

Mathew has built her business to continually appreciate customers. She brings classes to people who can't travel or be in group settings. Her team works to encourage all students, celebrate their accomplishments and allow families to share in the happiness of dance.

Jasmine's Beat's best advertisers are its own customers, and Mathew says it is validating when current students bring friends to the company. "Our ambition is to be skilled at having fun through dance and to share this skill as a continued passion in the community," she says.

Leadership & Vision





The Aussie Grind

When husband-and-wife café owners Lui and Angie Monforte decided to bring the unique flavors of their native Australia to Frisco, they had a vision of a charming café with a full kitchen that served coffee drinks, custom cocktails and delicious food to happy customers. A few years later, they have achieved exactly that: a popular Frisco destination with hundreds of rave reviews online and ambiance, food and beverages that keep customers returning. This has earned The Aussie Grind the Best of Business Leadership & Vision Award.

As a unique dining destination, The Aussie Grind has gained a reputation as a lively café with an innovative, full-flavored menu. From teas and coffees to fresh smoothies and cocktails, there is a wide variety of beverage choices on its menu that pair well with the place's tasty food. It has a loyal following of customers who come for Australian classics like the Aussie Meat Pie.

What is the secret to The Aussie Grind's success? Service is the cornerstone of how the Monfortes lead their staff. "We never ask anyone to do anything we wouldn't do ourselves," Angie Monforte says. "We always lead by example."

Busy opening a second location in Farmers Branch, Monforte says The Aussie Grind is not a typical business. She and her husband manage their staff in a nontraditional way. The couple learned many valuable lessons during the pandemic. "Instead of letting people go (during) the early days of the pandemic, we extended our hours," she says. "We always want to be flexible for our employees and customers. When we need to step in and help, we do whatever we can. This is a real family run business."

Building the right team was one of the most important aspects of starting their business four years ago when the Monfortes immigrated to the United States. Brian Thomas started as a server three years ago and is now the Frisco location's manager. Lui Monforte trained Thomas, who is a head barista along with Ryann Townsend. Edith Asencio started as a line cook and was promoted to kitchen manager.

"Our team is vital to our success," Monforte says. "We recognize talent in our people and are proud to promote from within. Also, being present in every aspect of our business has allowed us to grow organically. We all take part in the business every day, and if there's an error, we never look to blame an individual. We all take responsibility and we all fix it."

From learning about new tax systems and accounting terms to navigating small business social media, Monforte says relocating to a new country and opening a business taught them many valuable lessons. "We feel very fortunate we were here when the pandemic happened, and because of everything we've gone through, we think on our feet a little more."

Giving Back



Lone Star Roots

Carrie Ermence, CEO and founder of Lone Star Roots, says giving back to the community where she and her family live and work is a big part of their business. This lifestyle brand, which encompasses all-things “Texas-proud” — from apparel and drinkware to ornaments — is the winner of the Best of Business Giving Back Award.

Ermence and her family are present in everything they do. For example, the small heart featured in their business’ logo is a special nod to her father, who passed away from heart disease in 2019, as well as to her love of Frisco. “We’ve always wanted to use this platform as not just a way to sell Texas-themed retail merchandise to our customers, but also as a platform to give back,” she says.

Lone Star Roots supports the American Heart Association and other national and local community organizations. Ermence is also an active member of the Frisco Chamber of Commerce as an ambassador and supporter of small businesses in Frisco.

Ermence likes to say that although she wasn’t born in Texas, she got here as fast as she could. When she and her family moved to Frisco in 2006, she was a kindergarten and first-grade teacher with Frisco ISD.

She and her husband, Mark, along with their children, Jack and Taylor, started Lone Star Roots at Frisco Mercantile and it quickly grew to reach an online customer base. “Our items appeal to a wide audience, and we believe Texas never leaves your heart. Our motto is love where you come from, root where you are.”

Ermence works with local Frisco organizations dedicated to giving back to the community. She and her team often help local schools with volunteer and fundraising efforts. They support Refresh Frisco and Refresh Little Elm, organizations that donate personal hygiene items to children. Lone Star Roots also supports Frisco Threads Closet, a nonprofit that gives Frisco ISD students access to free clothing; and the Treasured Vessels Foundation, which supports women rescued from sex trafficking in North Texas.

When she’s not managing her in-person and online locations or hosting a pop-up store at a local event, Ermence uses her popular presence on social media platforms like Facebook and Instagram to help raise awareness for community projects like the St. Arbor Community Garden in Frisco.

“We love to help organizations in any way we can,” she says. “From donating gift baskets to teachers or helping spread the word about fundraising efforts online, we are committed to helping give back to our community. We’re grateful to be able to help so many.”

Ermence says she’s also grateful for her customers and online followers and says they’ve helped the business grow. “The people that follow us are not only our boutique customers, but also want to help spread awareness about issues in our communities.

Winning Customers



Natalie Roberson Photography

When looking to document life's milestones — from marriage to a new baby or a career change — Frisco residents have repeatedly turned to Natalie Roberson's lifestyle photography, which is the Best of Business Winning Customers Award winner.

A previous Best of Business Award winner, it is evident that photographer Natalie Roberson and her husband, Nick, provide not only excellent photography services but also build lasting relationships with their clients.

"We frequently get phone calls from new clients and they mention they've heard about us or saw a review online," she says. "That's so important to us. We truly care about all of our photography clients, and we don't just want to take one set of pictures of them. We want to grow with them and their families." Through her photography, she helps clients remember all of life's little details. "Sometimes a photo can spark a memory like nothing else."

In business since 2010, Roberson says her strategy for attracting new customers is to treat her current customers especially well. "We excel in our customer service ... and getting to know each client on a personal level is important to us." One of the joys of the business is meeting new people and anticipating the excitement of an upcoming photo session.



Serving Frisco, Celina, Prosper and McKinney, Roberson and her team also travel to conduct photoshoots nationwide. They aim to make every photo shoot as easy and comfortable as possible for clients. “Even though we have a process we follow on every single shoot, we tailor the way we work based on clients’ specific needs and preferences. We want the process to be smooth and easy for everyone.”

Roberson estimates she photographs about 500 clients a year. She says the growth of Frisco and surrounding areas has helped attract new clientele as well as opportunities to build long-term relationships. “Frisco is booming, and there’s plenty of business to go around,” she says. While photography is a competitive business, she sees opportunity as more people relocating to North Texas. “The growth has been great for us.”

Customer Engagement



Texas Health Frisco

Texas Health Frisco has a goal to make sure that anyone who enters the facility — whether a patient or a visitor — is as comfortable as possible. It is a simple premise, but not all companies can achieve such a high standard of customer service. For the Texas Health Frisco team, it is their top priority, making the facility the winner of the Best of Business Customer Engagement Award.

Texas Health Frisco’s commitment to patients and the community started before the hospital opened. Shona Sowell, director of community relations, says it asked the community what it wanted in a hospital — aside from world-class physicians providing excellent health care, that is. “We took that feedback seriously,” she says. “The community said they didn’t want the facility to look like a hospital, so we used natural building materials like wood and limestone, and included walking trails and built a park in the back. They said they wanted a coffee bar, but not a Starbucks, so we added an Ascension Coffee station on the campus.”

When Texas Health Frisco was ready to open its doors, it was decided that the business goal would be to offer the highest quality healthcare possible with a focus on patient and visitor comfort and convenience. Each Texas Health Frisco team member completes a customer training program based on the award-winning Ritz-Carlton model. Hospital staffers who go above and beyond for patients and visitors are recognized for their service via a reward system in which they accumulate points that are used toward the purchase of gifts for themselves.

Communication is also a cornerstone of the hospital’s commitment to service. Sowell says consistent face-to-face communication and daily safety huddles work to relay important information, recognize employees, notify staff of health or policy changes and provide peer connection.

From providing special meals to useful items like phone chargers, Texas Health Frisco strives to meet not only patients’ medical needs, but also their emotional ones. Sowell says every team member knows that people may be there on the hardest day of their lives. “Listening and anticipating needs are vital to extending great service. When people enter the door, we don’t point or gesture directions. We walk them where they need to go. Simple gestures like that are how we deliver personal attention. We want to be a different healthcare model.”



to follow up and work to find resolution,” Sowell explains.

Hospital staffers are encouraged to help guests and patients. “We do this for patients and family members and beyond. We also encourage our team to spend time with family members and patients and get to know their needs. Once, we had a husband and wife admitted on their anniversary but, because of COVID, they were in separate rooms. The husband didn’t want to visit his wife until he had a gift for her, so we went and brought flowers for the gentleman to take to his wife’s room.”

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