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The Detour of a Lifetime

by **Lisa Dawson** in Dining, Profiles

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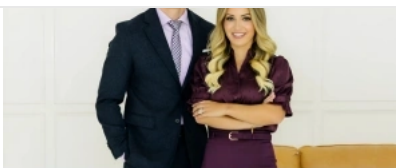
By Lisa Dawson

Say what you want about doughnuts, but there’s no denying they have a quirky personality. First, you can spell them two different ways, and neither is wrong: donuts or doughnuts. Second, you can bake them into almost any shape and flavor them however you’d like, and then there are toppings (that’s a whole separate topic). There’s just no denying the eclectic nature of doughnuts, starting with bending simple spelling rules and completing with an anything-goes attitude. From unique flavors to bright colors and fun-sounding names, doughnuts are the food that doesn’t take itself too seriously but has some serious die-hard fans.

Many of those doughnut fans can be found on any given morning at Detour Doughnuts and Coffee in Frisco. Chef and owner Jinny Cho understands the love language of food and mixes daily creativity with decades of baking experience to create some of the best doughnuts Dallas Ft. Worth (DFW) has to offer. Aside from exotic and creative flavors like Fig and Mascarpone and Crème Brûlée, she’s also experimenting with flavor combinations that break the open-centered round mold with combinations like Lavender and Turmeric and Blueberry Goat Cheese.

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When you enter Detour, it's obvious doughnuts are the star of the show, but there's a feeling of happiness that's powerful enough to make you want to hang out. When asked about how doughnuts make people feel, Cho effortlessly explains how doughnuts can elevate a mood. "Everyone should feel like a sprinkle doughnut," she says. All one has to do is read the resounding reviews of their doughnuts online, with hundreds of happy customers singing the store's praises. Detour's doughnuts have been praised by D Magazine and also named one of the ten best doughnuts in DFW by Eater Dallas.



about her business, Cho is clearly passionate about doughnuts, customers, and the community. She's equal parts savvy businessperson and like a friend you met to catch up with over coffee. Taking some time to sit and relax in the cheerful, eclectic store reminds you you're there to experience much more than a tasty doughnut; you're having a 'sprinkle doughnut' type of day.

Cho's roots in entrepreneurship and doughnuts run deep. Her family emigrated from Korea, and her parents owned and operated doughnut shops around the metroplex for many years. She helped run their stores as a kid growing up and learned early on how small businesses work. "My family ran everything," she says. Cho notes she found inspiration for Detour Doughnuts while traveling and seeing different doughnut stores in places like London. "Making doughnuts is very labor intensive," says Cho. "We get started at midnight every day, and the process usually takes eight hours." With her team of six full and part-time employees, Detour makes approximately 2,500 doughnuts each week. She says when it comes to operating her store, her parents were intentional with their advice: never say no and remain open 365 days a year.





success. “There’s no foot traffic in Frisco, so we focus on a rotating menu of new flavors to keep our customers coming back,” she says. “We try to create products that people get excited about. The store itself has a vibe that is inviting. We call ourselves a radically traditional doughnut shop, and that really says everything you need to know about my approach. I’m big on comfort, and I’m big on curiosity, and every doughnut we make is a reflection of those two things. We’ve been really lucky that our customers trust us enough that we will never lead them too far astray. They can get their traditional glazed doughnut and try out a Mango Sticky Rice.”

As a full-time working mom, Cho says balancing running a business and raising a child is something she leans into for support. When asked how she juggles it all, she laughs and says it depends on the day of the week. “I’m really lucky to have a strong network of people that I can lean on for advice, occasional childcare, and midnight meltdowns. My mom has been in this business for as long as I can remember, and our conversations are invaluable. My boyfriend, Shawn, tours quite a lot as a blues musician, but when he’s in town, he’s always happy to help out.”



Detour doesn’t stop with doughnuts as they offer fresh empanadas by Del Campo Empanadas and pigs in a blanket, which offer savory alternatives to their deliciously sweet doughnuts. Detour takes their coffee seriously, too. Espressos and specialty coffees are made on a La Marzocco, and the beans come from local roaster Oak Cliff Coffee. With a vibrant menu of flavors from sweet to savory, premium coffee, and a hip vibe, there’s no better place to be than Detour when the doughnut and coffee mood strikes.

A recent day in August was a particularly exciting day for the Detour team when they had a triple celebration. The theme was back to school, and the store celebrated by giving away 500 doughnuts to Frisco ISD students and teachers and celebrated their fifth anniversary. It’s also the day the proclamation was signed by city leaders and Mayor Jeff Cheney to designate August 9th Detour Doughnuts Day.

When Cho reflects on the last five years, she notes that opening a business and surviving the pandemic was no small feat, especially in the food industry. She says accepting orders online via the store’s website and their social media following has helped them through tough times, like last summer’s heat wave. “During extreme heat like that, it’s a lot of ask of people to come out to the store,” she explains. She says in the future, the store may partner with local delivery services to make their products even more accessible.

“I’m all about pushing boundaries,” says Cho. “Five years ago, people were not used to fancy and elegant doughnuts, but now here we are. Our tagline is: ‘Take A Detour.’ It’s about taking a different path. A lot of





Connecting with customers and the community at large is important to Cho, who believes in being active within different organizations and giving back to the city of Frisco and beyond. In 2021, when Asian hate crimes were on the rise during the pandemic, Cho and her team began making doughnuts with the hashtag #StopAsianHate decorated on them. All the proceeds from those doughnut sales went to support the Asian American community through the AAPI Community Fund, which serves AAPI-serving non-profits across the U.S. "That campaign happened years ago, and people are still talking about it," says Cho. She said recently that a young woman from a local Frisco high school interviewed her for their radio program. The young woman mentioned the campaign and asked Cho questions about it. "I realized the impact that had on so many people. In the end, it had the impact I was hoping it would, which is inspiring people to take care of each other."

Looking forward, Cho says she is very happy with her retail business and is taking time to explore new ideas. "We are building our catering, events, and custom business right now. We've had a lot of fun doing events at Tory Burch, Omni PGA, and Stonebriar Country Club. I'd like to create more quality partnerships like these," she says. "It's been five years at this location, and we'll be here for another five. It's a lot to try and grow a business and I want to be careful about getting too big too fast. Right now, I'm looking for a sustainable happy balance between living life and doing what I love and running a business. I have some ideas for the next chapter," she says.

The name Detour was very intentional for Cho, who says she thought a lot about the name when she was preparing to open her store. "Initially, I was going to call the store Knead Doughnuts, but I found out the name was taken. I was in a panic and I was driving on Preston Road and saw a detour sign. I thought about the alliteration of detour and doughnuts and how a detour reminded me that I had just graduated college with a biomedical engineering degree from UT Dallas, and I was going to take my life in a totally different direction."

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Embracing the unpredictable twists and turns of life and business just may be similar to a doughnut itself: it takes hard work, but the payoff at the end is sweet. As for the spelling, Cho said she always knew her doughnuts wouldn't be the same if they were spelled d-o-n-u-t. "The ugh makes them taste better."

Lisa Dawson is a freelance writer living in Frisco.



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Children should not have to endure hunger outside of the school day, which is why the mission statement of Frisco Fastpacs is exactly that: to ensure that no child in Frisco has to endure hunger when school is not in session. This beloved Frisco-based private 501(c) 3 non-profit operates entirely on donations of food and funds from the private sector. Their mission is clear, and their vision is to eliminate hunger for all students in our community.

A hunger issue in Frisco might surprise you, but the reality is that thousands of families are dealing with this daily and weekly in our city.

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While undertaking a fasting commitment during Lent 2013, the original founder and Frisco resident, Marian Schulze, discovered that many families in our community do not have access to enough basic food supplies, week in and week out. While children qualify for free and reduced lunches in the school cafeteria, they possibly go hungry through the weekend and during school holidays or off days.



Having experienced sacrifice and then the discomfort of hunger while fasting, Ms. Schulze felt compelled to do something about this gap, and the organization was born. “We do a really good job in Frisco of hiding our poverty, but once I knew the issue was there, I could not un-know it,” she explains.

Frisco Fastpacs started off serving 13 children at one school (Shawnee Trail Elementary), and now the organization serves over 1,000 children in Pre-K through 12th grade. They deliver individual, pre-packed meal bags of non-perishable food items to all 77 Frisco ISD schools every week. Ten years in, Ms. Schulze describes her relationship with Fastpacs as quite different, now referring to the organization as her fifth child.

“I gave birth to her, and just like my other children, it’s taken a village to raise her. The Fastpacs village is much greater in number and wider in scope. Every person involved is critical to her success and well-being. She wasn’t in my care as long as my other children, and now I am actively watching her grow and mature from the sidelines as others continue to mold and shape her,” she says.





Ms. Schulze continues, “She’s turning out better and stronger than I imagined or hoped. Just like my other children, she brings her fair share of tears and laughter, frustration, and joy. She still needs me, but not in the ways she used to. Her village is growing by the day, and she is as loved and cared for as she ever was, and that’s all I can ask. I will continue to watch her grow with such pride. I’ll always be here when she needs me because she will always be my baby.”

Executive Director Heather Canterbury has been with Frisco Fastpacs for eight years. She spends much of her time driving the overall strategic vision of the organization, creating brand awareness, and meeting and working with people, businesses, and groups all over the Frisco community who seek to and can provide an opportunity to give back.

“I wake up every day appreciating the work I do for a company with a mission and knowing our vision is to eliminate hunger,” Ms. Canterbury says. “I always ask myself, ‘What am I doing today to help that?’” The Fastpacs process during a typical week has been fine-tuned and described simply as ‘food in and food out.’ It starts when supplies are collected from various locations like the North Texas Food Bank and local supermarkets and then combined with any recent community food drive deliveries at their warehouse in West Frisco. From Monday to Wednesday, these supplies are sorted and prepped by volunteers in an assembly line set up, ready for packers to put the bags together.

All kinds of different volunteer groups come to the warehouse to help pack, from corporate businesses, sports teams, philanthropic organizations, and bible study groups, to name a few. Each bag is assembled by hand and delivered to the schools in Frisco ISD by Fastpacs



It's a well-oiled machine and fine-tuned process. Through challenges faced and lessons learned along the way, the organization can pivot at any time to ensure no family misses that donation pack.

The pandemic presented its own set of issues, but the team quickly rallied and was able to shift from a drive-thru operation to porch-drop home delivery. "I'm regularly blown away by this humble Frisco community," Ms. Canterbury states. "Regardless of its rapid growth, it still has a small town feel and a mentality of always helping."

Emotion written all over her face, Ms. Canterbury recalls a significant moment during an aggressive population growth period in Frisco around 2016-2017, when the demand for their services outweighed the dollars coming in. The organization had to create a waitlist for the first time in history. An email was sent out to explain and be transparent about the situation to approximately 600 recipients, and on the back of that, the contributions started to roll in. As the community pulled together for Frisco's children, that feeling of joy will always sit with her.





Ms. Canterbury works closely with Kim McGuire, Operations Manager of Frisco Fastpacs, who admits Fastpacs has been a huge part of her life for the last ten years. Kim is involved in all aspects of the operation, from being a delivery driver to a pack night leader and board member.

"I have known Marian Schulze for over 20 years, and when she told me what she was starting with Frisco Fastpacs, I was eager to jump on board and help. I have been involved in all aspects of the organization and absolutely love what I do. I adore the volunteers and the friendships I have made. Knowing that we are helping to fill children's bellies over the weekend so that they can come to school on Monday ready to learn is my big reason why. I hear from families from time to time and they are so thankful and grateful for the extra food. I can't go without saying the community rallies around Fastpacs with an outpouring of help through volunteering and resources, whether it's monetary or food donations. We couldn't do what we do without the support of this amazing Frisco community," Ms. McGuire says.

I also engaged with some of the Frisco Fastpacs Board of Directors to get their take on the organization's role in Frisco and their passion and motivation for getting involved. Meaghan Wall, current Board President, shares, "There are a lot of organizations doing a lot of good things in Frisco, but I wanted to find a place that made a huge impact with little overhead. Frisco Fastpacs is that organization. It's a no-brainer when you can impact childhood hunger in your backyard by simply packing a bag of food and getting it into a child's hands. Who wouldn't want to be involved? There aren't a lot of bells and whistles or variations of the program. It's food for hungry kids. It's something we can all agree needs to happen."



So many parts of our city are shiny and new. We have a lot of wealth in our community. But, within any community and even in Frisco, there is a need, and with the increased cost of living, it's been hard for some families to keep up. There may be a home to live in, but the pantry and refrigerator could be empty. The packs that kids bring home from Frisco Fastpacs provide essential food for times when school meals aren't an option.

Karen Cunningham is a past President and no stranger to serving. She joined Frisco Fastpacs in 2019. "Frisco Fastpacs has such a simple but tremendously impactful purpose. With the services Fastpacs provides in our community, we have kids who are now food secure when school isn't in session," Ms. Cunningham explains.

"The time I spend volunteering and serving on the Board for Frisco Fastpacs allows me to support neighbors in our community in a meaningful and impactful way. Frisco has a very giving, compassionate community. I enjoy being a small part of ensuring we continue to lift our neighbors during a time of need," Ms. Cunningham adds.

Rene Archambault is known to many for her role on the Frisco ISD Board of Trustees and understands how vital the work of Frisco Fastpacs is for families in Frisco. "Fastpacs is a lifeline for many Frisco ISD families. Having an organization like Fastpacs stand in the gap of food security between school weeks is critical for the well-being of our over 68,000 students. I am forever appreciative of the thousands of families that Fastpacs serves every week and the generations of children that will continue to be served by this group of selfless leaders and volunteers. The



Board member Ann Anderson reflects on the time when Marian Schulze started the organization in her dining room. “The origin story of Frisco Fastpacs is what first drew me to this organization. What kept me was the need they were filling for the students in Frisco ISD. The first time I went to a pack it struck me that a mom would receive the pack and use components of it to create a meal for the family. The facts are that every child we serve represents a family that is hungry, and that is not lost on me. I loved how Frisco Fastpacs so quickly adapted during COVID-19 and continues to evolve to meet the needs of the diverse population of students we serve,” Ms. Anderson explains.

She adds, “Serving on the Board of Directors with a group of equally concerned individuals to advance their mission has been an absolute honor. Seeing how the organization has grown over the past ten years is incredible, and the strategies being implemented for the future will sustain and grow. The heart of this board is to serve, and it is great to work with them. We also have a wonderful group of committee members and community volunteers that pack the meals each week, and the drivers that deliver are integral to continuing the work we are doing.”

Many groups and people host fundraisers that benefit Frisco Fastpacs, but the organization also independently hosts one large annual fundraiser entitled ‘Empty Bowls Frisco.’ Now in its 6th year, it will take place at Verona Villa on April 18th, 2024, and is focused on raising awareness to help end hunger right here in our community.

During the event, different restaurants provide award-winning dishes for dinner while attendees can enjoy live entertainment, mingle with friends, make new connections, and partake in the silent auction. Leading up to this event, there are two pre-events in the form of bowl painting parties on March 6th and March 21st. The bowls painted at these events become the event bowls for the Empty Bowls Frisco fundraiser.

Looking to the future, the organization wants to continue to engage and form partnerships with more people in the Frisco business community who are ready to support their mission and end child hunger. This year, Fastpacs proudly celebrates its ten-year anniversary and plans to mark the occasion with the local community are in the works.

During the 2022-2023 school year, volunteers assembled and delivered over 110,000 meals and gave over 5,100 hours of their time. A typical bag consists of fruit, veggies, proteins, breakfast items, pasta/rice cups or soups, snack crackers, and desserts. While Frisco Fastpacs is making a great difference, your generous support is imperative to continue improving the lives of these students in need.

Want to get involved? There are three ways anyone can contribute. Time, donations, or a combination of both. Continual contributions of shelf-stable, healthy foods are a must. Imagine how a small bag of food can make such a difference in a family’s life. If you want to contribute or get involved, check the Frisco Fastpacs website for upcoming events and extensive details on how to make a difference in these families’ lives and the Frisco community because, remember, no child in Frisco should have to endure hunger when school is not in session.

Yvonne Brown is a Frisco-based freelance writer who enjoys lattes, authentic Italian food, preferably on a patio, and exploring all aspects of North Texas life with her family and friends.

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