




TEXAS CO-OP POWER

June 2017



THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

Frisco Family Services
helps CoServ Member
get life back on track



“It could not have happened at a better place. Frisco was more of a community state of mind place to live. It was oriented towards family.”

—Darlene Jenkins

reconstructing a **life**

by Dawn Cobb/dcobb@coserv.com

When her husband was diagnosed with terminal colon cancer, Darlene Jenkins found herself in an unfamiliar position: in need.



WHAT: Frisco Family Services (FFS) assists Frisco and Frisco ISD residents who are facing hunger, homelessness and other urgent needs to help improve their quality of life and become self-sufficient.

HOW: FFS works with individuals to achieve or maintain self-sufficiency through adult education classes on such areas as job readiness, parenting and nutrition. Emergency financial assistance helps qualified clients with rent or mortgage payments, utilities, medication and gasoline.

FOOD PANTRY: Set up like a grocery store, Frisco's only community food pantry allows for the selection of foods families prefer. Food is donated by area residents, churches, civic groups and businesses.

SHOP: Frisco Resale carries a wide selection of upscale resale furniture, clothing, household goods, accessories, shoes, framed artwork, books and jewelry. Furniture, Décor and More offers toys, sporting equipment and furniture.

FOR EXAMPLE: In assisting more than 3,700 individuals during the 2015-2016 fiscal year, FFS:

- **Provided more than \$301,660 in Emergency Financial Assistance**
- **Distributed more than 567,800 pounds of food through Frisco's only community food pantry**
- **Issued \$27,720 in vouchers for clothing and household goods at Frisco Resale**

UPCOMING: Summer Lunch Program to provide school-aged children with lunches and snack packs, and a place to participate in activities when school is out.

IMMEDIATE NEEDS: Individual serving sizes of juice boxes, oatmeal, cereal, granola bars, chips, wrapped snacks, fruit cups/pouches



Frisco Family Services

8780 Third St., Frisco, TX 75034

Email: info@friscofamilyservices.org

Web: FriscoFamilyServices.org

FFS Food Pantry

9085 Dogwood St.
(972) 335-9495

Frisco Resale

9125 Dogwood St.
(972) 712-7833

Through Frisco Family Services, newly widowed **Darlene Jenkins** charted a new course for the next chapter of her life.

When her husband was diagnosed with terminal colon cancer in 2012, Darlene, who'd spent her life serving as a minister's wife, found herself in an unfamiliar position: in need.

The couple had retired to Little Elm to be near one of their five grown children. After **Berlin Jenkins'** diagnosis, Darlene liquidated assets to pay medical bills and care for him. A nurse recommended they seek assistance from Frisco Family Services (FFS), a social services agency that has helped Frisco-area residents get back on their feet since 1994.

Nickie Contreras, lead case manager at the agency, remembered the Jenkins' first visit.

"They didn't want to come in and ask for help because they had been able to make ends meet on their own," she said. "But with his current medical situation, they just couldn't do it anymore."

Frisco Family Services helped Darlene keep her husband in their Little Elm home as long as she could.

"I wanted to maintain him in a certain lifestyle that he was accustomed to," she said.

The couple received funds to pay for utilities and food, as well as gas vouchers. Darlene also received life skills training and learned how to cook on a budget with foods her husband could eat.

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Darlene was shopping at the Frisco Food Pantry for her husband one day when a volunteer asked her: "Do you ever get anything for yourself?" She replied, "No." The volunteer told her: "This is for both of you." What did she choose first? A chocolate bar.

"That particular day when she told me I could get something for myself, I was outdone because I'm addicted to chocolate. It made me feel like I was a real person."

Darlene vividly recalled shopping at the FFS food pantry to pick up groceries for her husband. One day, a volunteer asked her if she was getting anything to eat. That was when Darlene learned she could choose something for herself.

“It made me feel like I was still a person,” she said. “For the volunteers to care that much for the people who come in there, that said a lot to me.”

After Berlin’s passing in May 2013, Darlene felt lost and alone.

“After my husband died, I thought the services terminated,” Darlene said. She went to Nickie, who told her, “No Mrs. Jenkins. You are still in a crisis situation. And we’ll help you until you’re able to help yourself.”

FFS guided her to set new goals. Darlene worked as a home health aide and found a part-time job at an insurance company. She took computer classes to catch up with technology. She sold her home, relocated to an apartment and then moved in with her daughter – all with the intent to operate within an affordable budget.

Almost two years ago, she interviewed for a position

at Ethan Allen in Frisco. When she was hired as a customer service specialist, Darlene rushed to share the news with the volunteers at FFS.

“I didn’t have anyone else to tell,” she said. “Frisco Family Services was my family.”

In October 2016, Darlene set a goal to wean herself from FFS resources.

“I came off the program in December, and I’ve maintained my independence,” she said. “I’ve had some ruffles, but I’m still standing.”

At age 60, Darlene is persevering, but she also credits her case manager, Nickie.

“She made me see the road map to recovery,” Darlene said. “They help you reconstruct your life behind a crisis.”

Like many middle-class couples, Darlene

said that she and her husband never anticipated the challenges they ended up facing.

“The struggle is real,” she said. “I have a different perspective now of real-life struggles. We read about it, but until you’re actually in the midst of a crisis like that, I don’t think people really understand – how it can either destroy you or make you a really tough cookie.”

“Becoming a senior citizen was hard enough. But starting at zero at this point in my life was even more difficult. For anyone in this area, don’t be ashamed or afraid to reach out to Frisco Family Services.

Because, they understand.”

—Darlene Jenkins



“I received the fans and heaters that are a part of that philanthropic program on behalf of CoServ. It may not seem like a lot but it’s major in the eyesight of myself and others who receive those items from Frisco Family Services.”



groceries

Shoppers can peruse the aisles for their favorite canned goods, breakfast cereals, fresh foods and even toiletries—almost everything that would be available in any neighborhood grocery store.



necessities

While writing your grocery list this week, consider adding individual serving sizes of juice boxes, granola bars, fruit cups and other kid-friendly snacks to help feed Frisco children over the summer.



furnishings

At Furniture, Décor and More, you can buy art for the wall or a comfortable couch for the living room. An offshoot of Frisco Resale, the shop's wide selection helps residents refurbish their lives.



NEED A HELPING HAND?

Contact One of CoServ's
Community Partners

Frisco Family Services is one of eight social service agencies that CoServ partners with to assist North Texas residents in need.

For a detailed list and contact information, please visit CoServ.com/Community.

Thank you, CoServ Members and Customers, because we couldn't do any of this without your generosity. More than 70 percent of you "round up" your electric and gas bills to the nearest dollar every month. The average Operation Roundup® donation, per participant, is 50 cents a month, or \$6 a year, and the extra pennies go to the CoServ Charitable Foundation (CCF), which distributes every cent to worthy causes within CoServ's service territory.

Since 2004, CoServ Members and Customers have raised \$8 million through Operation Roundup® that has been distributed to more than 200 area nonprofits, civic organizations and first responders.

CCF's focus is on providing donations, resources and manpower to make positive impacts in the communities we serve. These initiatives are divided into three key categories:

- Supporting Education
- Meeting Basic Human Needs
- Promoting Community Vitality

CCF is now accepting applications online.

Nonprofits that meet eligibility requirements are encouraged to apply.

Visit CoServ.com/Community for details. Questions? Email CCF@coserv.com.



“As a CoServ Member, I'm glad that my bill gets rounded up because I know where it's going to.”

Nickie Contreras
Lead Case Manager
Frisco Family Services