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FRISCO IS ONE OF THE NATION'S FASTEST GROWING CITIES. As more and more people make the move to our North Dallas area, new businesses are also calling Frisco home. Of the more than 2,000 firms in Frisco, nearly a quarter of those are owned by minorities.*

"It's a great business area," states Nabil Dimassi, director of operations for the restaurant chain Fadi's Mediterranean Grill, which recently opened a branch in Shafer Plaza next to Stonebriar Centre. "The people who live in Frisco are outgoing, middle- to high-income families who eat out a lot. It's also a great shopping area."

The Lebanese Dimassi family, life-long restaurateurs, opened the original Fadi's (named after Nabil's brother) in Houston in 1997. The restaurant serves healthful, inexpensive food from such countries as Greece, Turkey, Lebanon and Morocco. Another Houston branch and two Dallas branches followed. The family saw the benefit of opening a fifth location to serve North Dallas and soon settled on Frisco. The Shafer Plaza location recently opened in March.

"So far it's been great," says Dimassi. "[In addition to families], we've attracted a lot of businesses for lunch."

RESIDENTIAL FINANCING MARKET

Another business that's seen the benefit of being located in a boomtown is Southwest Funding, a Texas Residential Mortgage company, which provides both residential and commercial financing.

"Why go anywhere else when there's so much opportunity and excitement here," says Branch Manager Devin

Mathews, who is Asian. "It's like the city's motto says—you live here, eat here, play here and stay here."

Devin partnered with Chuck Sykes five years ago to open the mortgage franchise. "Frisco is so new and growing that we thought it was a great opportunity," states Mathews.

Last year, Southwest Funding was the most productive branch, with the most loan closings among Texas Residential Mortgage's 90 branches in 22 states. Mathews and Sykes also provide corporate services, aimed at helping employees of other small businesses save money on their next home purchase or refinance.

"Frisco has great schools for kids and lots of great shopping and businesses making it a great place to locate," says Mathews. "We're not leaving; we're here to stay."



Turkish coffee, a specialty at Fadi's Mediterranean Grill

photo by Chris Johnson

frisco: land of opportunity for all

by lauren l. bechen

amount of success just by being here. The energy is explosive."

She also points out that business owners don't have to do it alone. "There's an enormous amount of talent in the city that can help guide you, as well as banks that want to empower you."

Originally a bioengineer, Kimmich started her business four years ago in order to better control her time. The Latina-owned company specializes in medical and legal translation from English to Spanish and vice versa. Kimmich also does translations in German and Italian. Her gentle, soothing voice has provided Spanish language telephone messages for such companies as Home Depot, Estee Lauder and Fuji Films. She has also provided translation services on a volunteer basis for both the City of

TRANSLATION SERVICES

Sara Kimmich, owner of La Voz Translation Services, agrees. "Any business stands an incredible



*Fadi's
Mediterranean Grill
photo by Chris Johnson*

Frisco and the Frisco Housing Authority.

It's a passion for community

service that drives Kimmich.

In addition to being a business owner, she also serves as a Frisco Housing Authority commissioner, a special courts commissioner and PTA president for Rogers Elementary. The Frisco Chamber of Commerce recently honored Kimmich with its Spirit of Frisco Award, which is given to the person who reflects the community's spirit and well-being.

Kimmich has now set her sights on empowering other Latino businesses. She is working with local Latino business owners to create a Latin business development committee of the Frisco

Chamber of Commerce.

"Hispanics represent a large number of our service-oriented businesses. They build our roads and homes, cook our food and maintain our yards," states Kimmich. "We want to give them a voice."

The proposed group plans to help Latin businesses by having other successful entrepreneurs share their experiences and providing assistance with financing and additional business needs. It's Kimmich's hope that someday the group will also be able to offer scholarships to further help the Latino community.

She adds, "I love living here and I want to make it better for others."

Lauren L. Bechen is a freelance writer living in McKinney.

**According to the 1997 Economic Census of Minority- and Women-owned Businesses, U.S. Department of Commerce, Frisco has 2,129 total firms. Of that number, 422 are minority-owned (284 Hispanic).*

Tell us about your experiences with other local businesses. Please send your letters to editor@friscostyle.com.

"I love living here and I want to make it better for others."