

Getting ‘good things done’: Three women team up to form Irving’s Alliance of community help

Nonprofits find synergy in their overlapping missions to provide social services.



Ruby Sevcik (from left), chief executive of Crisis Ministries; Michelle Flores, executive director of All Things Made New; and Sharon Johnston, founder and executive director of The Main Place, gather at Heritage Park in Irving. The three women teamed up to form the Irving-based Alliance, a group of nonprofits that serve families and teens. (Ben Torres / Special Contributor)

By [Harriet L. Blake](#)

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What happens when three dynamic women from three very different backgrounds who operate three successful nonprofits decide to team up? The Alliance of Irving.

The founders — Michelle Flores, Sharon Johnston and Ruby Sevcik — realized they had services that could help the others. They formed the Alliance in 2021 to bring together nonprofits that could jointly respond to the needs of residents.



Michelle Flores, 38, is a former Irving ISD elementary teacher who left the teaching world to found All Things Made New, which became a nonprofit in 2014. (Ben Torres / Special Contributor)

Mentoring youths

Flores, 38, is a former Irving ISD elementary school teacher who left the teaching world because, “It broke my heart to see the changes in students when they transitioned to middle school. In elementary school, from bell to bell, the students are supported. But by middle school, it shifts. Kids with good heads on their shoulders can succumb to peer pressure, depression, toxic thinking and sometimes bad relationships. Students need support to be successful.”

After much discussion with her husband, Adan, she walked away from teaching. The couple sold their home, as well as her wedding ring, to fund All Things Made New, which became a nonprofit in 2014.

Today, the agency, located at Kirkwood United Methodist Church in South Irving, offers mentorship, character development and life skills training to help young people lead fulfilling lives. The goal is to motivate middle school and high school students to be goal-oriented with strong character as they grow into adulthood. Flores says the agency partners with Irving ISD and gets referrals from the schools and Child Protective Services. The agency has five staff members and about 150 volunteers.



Sharon Johnston, 73, founded The Main Place to help homeless teens and families in need. (Ben Torres / Special Contributor)

Helping homeless kids

Johnston, 73, never knew that Irving had a homeless teen population. With six children in their blended family, she and her late husband, Carl, had sent their children to private schools. It was through Project PASS (Program for Assisting Students in School), the homeless education assistance program in Irving ISD, that Johnston was inspired to do more. She learned that roughly 1,000 Irving ISD students in pre-K through 12th grade were identified as homeless, and that only 1 out of 4 graduate and 1 out of 3 are drawn into human trafficking.

"I immediately called Project PASS and asked what their foremost need for high school students was," she said.

The result was her purchase of 100 pairs of jeans, 100 T-shirts and 100 hoodies. She was reimbursed by the Irving Women's Network. By 2006, Johnston founded The Main Place, where homeless teens and families in need can find new clothes and personal items.

It became a nonprofit in 2012, staffed solely by volunteers and located initially on Main Street in downtown Irving. Dubbed a "retail store without a cash register," The Main Place's goal is to help change clients' self-image.



Ruby Sevcik, 64, came to the nonprofit world as chief executive of Crisis Ministries after a successful business career. (Ben Torres / Special Contributor)

Bringing business sense

Sevcik, 64, owned a company and later became a consultant specializing in international trade, traveling all over the world. After nearly 30 years in her field, she was ready for something new. "I didn't want to retire," she said. "I just wanted to be challenged."

During her travels to countries such as India, Indonesia and Guatemala, "I saw what a difference it made in villages to have food and necessities such as shoes and medicine." She said she had first-hand knowledge of many of these issues, having lived in poverty until age 14.

Friends told her of a need at what was then called the Baptist Benevolent Ministries of Irving. Sevcik started volunteering in 2012. Six months later, she was asked to become the director.

"This was a tough decision because I still wanted to have contact with the individuals we served," Sevcik said. But thanks to her business background, she was able to develop a plan as the ministry shifted to become more than a food pantry.

The nonprofit changed its name to Crisis Ministries and now provides food as well as financial assistance, budget training and hygiene products.

The more she got involved at Crisis Ministries, the more Sevcik realized the need to network with other nonprofits. She met Flores and Johnston about five years ago at ICAN, Irving Community Action Network. ICAN brings nonprofits together along with business, government and faith groups to help Irving residents.

The three of them had their first meeting in February 2020.

The women saw the need for Irving nonprofits to do better, not just refer their clients to another organization for additional care. "We saw so much trauma," Flores said. "We needed to assess their needs and make it easier on these families not to relive the trauma they had experienced."

'Trauma-informed care'

The three women began giving each other direct referrals — providing the name of a person in other organizations who could help their clients. Each agency maintains its identity but shares information via a common website. This allows the case managers from all three agencies to view each client's story and help with "trauma-informed care."

Trauma-informed care, Sevcik said, allows clients to tell their story once and not be traumatized by having to retell to every organization where they are seeking help. "This helps the case managers connect the dots," Flores said.



Ruby Sevcik (from left), Sharon Johnston and Michelle Flores found that their nonprofits could help people by teaming up. “We found we worked well together. We don’t let people fall through the cracks,” Johnston says. (Ben Torres / Special Contributor)

“We found we worked well together. We don’t let people fall through the cracks,” Johnston said. In the case of the Rangel family, she said, “Ruby got the heat turned on and gave them food. I got the family clothing, and Michelle got them enrolled in

All Things Made New [for mentoring].”

The collaborating partners “helped my family come out of financial issues and allowed us to have the opportunity to grow into a more sustainable household,” Luis Rangel said. They “have not only helped us with utilities but are also helping my daughter grow into a mature and healthy young woman.”

The Alliance serves primarily Irving residents, but not exclusively. All Things Made New continues to mentor students who leave the Irving area, thanks to meetings on Zoom. Flores said Zoom is also helpful for clients who lack the means for transportation to visit in person.

“The Alliance partnership,” said Irving Mayor Rick Stopfer, “serves as a great example for how nonprofits serving various needs can combine resources, services and expertise to elevate and enhance the ways in which a community is served.”

Currently, The Main Place and All Things Made New lease space from Kirkwood United Methodist Church. Crisis Ministries owns its own building in downtown Irving.

The Alliance partners hope their fundraisers — including a golf tournament last fall and a fashion show and tea on May 21 at Christ Church in Irving — will help them get closer to their ultimate goal: being housed under one roof.

“We have outgrown our spaces,” Johnston said. “What we could really use is a large building, at least 38,000 square feet.” This would allow them to invite other nonprofits into the Alliance to offer additional services, such as mental health and veterans’ assistance.

The women believe they have been called to serve and help in their community. “We think it’s amazing that each of us was drawn to each other,” Sevcik said.

“More people with the same hearts help get good things done,” Johnston agreed.

How to help

The Alliance: theallianceirving.org

All Things Made New: allthingsmadenew.net

The Main Place: themainplaceirving.org

Crisis Ministries: crisis-ministries.org