



**The Storehouse**  
OF COLLIN COUNTY

**Contact:**

Elizabeth Lenart  
214-394-7457  
[Elenart2013@gmail.com](mailto:Elenart2013@gmail.com)

**The Storehouse of Collin County**

1401 Mira Vista Boulevard  
Plano, TX 75093  
469.385.1813  
[info@thestorehouseecc.org](mailto:info@thestorehouseecc.org)

## **The Storehouse of Collin County Launches Transformative Job Program with Innovative Work Well Methodology**

*Lux Ice, a craft-ice company newly relocated to North Texas, announced as first job partner*



**Lux Ice:** Andres Tovar (left), smiles towards his coworker (Carlos Castillo) while packing drinking ice inside the facility on Tuesday, Sept. 26, 2023, in Flower Mound, Texas. Tovar and his wife, Marlene, and their children Andrea, 18, and Rafael, 14, made the decision to come to the U.S. in October 2019 due to the political and economic situation in Venezuela.

**Plano, Texas – Sept. 25, 2023 –** [The Storehouse of Collin County](#) announces a new job partnership program that builds on its existing pathway of programs to facilitate connection between employers and the neighbors from The Storehouse. Based on an innovative and proprietary Work Well Methodology, The Storehouse is working with neighbors on their journeys into employment. The program is designed to provide neighbors with a living wage, full benefits, and a path to transformation, while providing the employer with a base of pre-vetted employees who are ready to work.

The first partner in this new program is [Lux Ice](#), a leading craft-ice company, which relocated to Flower Mound from the Philadelphia area in April. Today 25 neighbors, all of whom are English as a Second Language (ESL) students at The Academy – an educational program launched by The Storehouse in 2022 – are employed by Lux and receiving a living wage and full benefits. Fifteen more neighbors are in the queue to begin work at Lux, and The Storehouse is working to place 100 neighbors with job

partners by the end of this fiscal year in June. This workforce consists of immigrants from Latin America – engineers, doctors, and businesspeople – who left everything behind in search of a better life for their families in the U.S.

“We could not be more excited about the launch of our job partnership program, and it is incredible to see this program come to fruition with Lux Ice, a company that shares our values,” said Candace Winslow, CEO, The Storehouse of Collin County. “It has been a joy working hand-in-hand with Lux’s caring leadership team toward transformation for each of these neighbors.”

The job partnership program is structured around The Storehouse’s proprietary Work Well Methodology, which walks with neighbors from their time in The Academy throughout their time in the job partnership program. As part of this, each neighbor is assigned a mentor for a full year in partnership with professional volunteers. Additionally, The Storehouse conducts English training once a month at Lux focusing on conversational items and terms used on the production floor. Lux complements the neighbors’ studies with special days each week when everyone on the team is asked to speak English all day, and most recently, the opportunity to receive Rosetta Stone licenses.

“Our partnership with The Storehouse has exceeded our expectations and has by far provided the most talented labor force any of us have seen in our careers,” said Mark Rogers, partner and managing member, Lux Ice, and a PepsiCo alum. “They are trying to better themselves and become accustomed to working in the U.S. While most companies are looking at how they can retain workers, we are working with each neighbor to help them advance and move back into their previous careers. Hopefully in three to five years they can be back doing what they did in their home countries. Lux makes its partnership with The Storehouse central to our mission: to transform lives.”

The partnership first began over coffee and conversation between Winslow and Rogers, a loyal donor and supporter of The Storehouse. Rogers listened intently as Winslow shared the nonprofit’s five-year vision and focus of creating employment opportunities for The Storehouse neighbors, who first begin their journeys to transformation in the food pantry line.

“If a neighbor is in the pantry line, where we serve 650 to 700 families each distribution day, we know they have other needs as well, which is why The Storehouse’s four programs (Seven Loaves Food Pantry, Joseph’s Coat Closing Closet, Project Hope Neighbor Care, and The Academy Education Program) are integrated. In The Academy we truly get to know our neighbors, helping us to live into our vision to change their life trajectories.”

The two leaders quickly recognized that The Storehouse could be an ideal recruiting pool for operational positions on the production floor and more. Lux had been looking to expand on a national level, and the partnership with The Storehouse sealed the deal, accelerating the move to Texas.

Five neighbors working at Lux Ice have already been promoted, including one individual who is back in her previous career and now is accounts payable specialist at Lux. The other four have been promoted

to “breakers” on the production floor. They relieve others and have additional responsibilities and are among the first invited to enroll in Rosetta Stone courses provided by Lux.

“When we talk of hope for our neighbors, and they see their peers promoted within a couple of months, that puts hope on a whole new attainable level,” said Jeff Morton, COO, The Storehouse of Collin County. “Working with Lux is nothing short of a blessing. We have built all of this from scratch and are working closely together to make both sides work, and we are transforming lives. It is a true partnership, and we are excited to replicate this with other job partners in the coming months.”

“This team is an unexpected bright light for us – the ‘secret sauce’ that accelerates Lux on the manufacturing floor and has already given us a competitive advantage,” said Mike McKenzie, vice president of operations. “Our managerial leadership team, which includes three engineers with over 100 years of combined manufacturing experience, has never seen a group of workers like this. They know how to set up a line. You give them a starting point, and in an hour, they have the equipment layout, casting procedures to maximum efficiency. Their desire to see us succeed is such an inspiration!”



**Learning English:** Olga Ramos (center), volunteer, helping students during the English as a Second Language (ESL) pilot class in the summer of 2023 through The Academy Education Program.

**Andres Tovar is one of those inspirational workers at Lux.** He and his wife, Marlene, and their children Rafael, 14, and Andrea, 18, made the decision to come to the U.S. in October 2019 due to the political and economic situation in Venezuela.

“I can’t believe it was almost three years ago when I was standing in the food line at The Storehouse,” said Andres Tovar. “A good friend of mine recommended I go to The Storehouse. He said they would be able to help me with resources so I can better provide for my family and improve our situation here.”

While in Venezuela, Tovar was a systems engineer, specializing in executive sales with 3M products, which enabled him to provide well for his family. Marlene, also a systems engineer, enjoyed baking.

“It was difficult to start over in the U.S. since we faced language barriers. We started in a small one-bedroom apartment, where we shared one bathroom. Little by little we adjusted to our new lifestyle. I got a job as a janitor working the night shift, and Marlene worked in a warehouse. Then the pandemic

hit. Three months after we arrived, I had to get another job because the private Christian school where I worked closed due to the pandemic. We were unemployed for almost three months until I was able to get a job at another warehouse. Thankfully, The Storehouse helped our family tremendously during these three months, and we were able to put food on the table for my children every day.”

“While in Venezuela, baking was my passion,” said Marlene Tovar. “I dedicated myself to baking and taught classes for future pastry chefs. When we arrived here and found ourselves out of work, I had the idea I could use my skills to supplement our income, and that is how our company, Cachitos Bakery, started. Local customers started coming to me for orders, but I could not serve them well because I didn’t speak English. Because of the opportunity to learn English at The Storehouse, I can now better understand my American customers.”

Recently, the Tovars secured a commercial space for Cachitos Bakery and will open soon. Andrea just began her freshman year at Texas Woman’s University, where she is studying nursing. Rafael just began his freshman year at Creekview High School, and Andres’ dream is to continue to grow professionally every day at Lux Ice.

“In his previous jobs, he would often come home irritated or upset,” said Marlene Tovar. “Today, he comes home calmer and relaxed because he knows he has a secure job, and he is happier.”

“Andres is the friendliest with such a warm and caring personality,” added Mike McKenzie. “He is extremely conscientious about the quality of our products and pays attention to every detail in all that he does. We are blessed to have him on our team.”

“I am so grateful for this opportunity at Lux,” added Andres Tovar. “It allows me to provide stability for my children and see them advance in their education. We would also love to buy a house and grow our bakery business, which will help us further improve our financial situation in the U.S.”



**Learning English:** Andres & Marlene attending English classes at The Storehouse on the first day of the fall semester on Sept. 10, 2022. Students in the ESL program attend class for four hours each Saturday for 12 consecutive weeks. The Tovars are currently enrolled in ESL 103. Their efforts to learn English while supporting their family inspires their daughter, Andrea Tovar, 18. “My parents are hard-working people that chase their dreams and inspire others to do so,” said Andrea.

Andres and Marlene just began the fall semester of The Academy's ESL classes, alongside 167 other students. The classes, held on Saturday mornings for 12 weeks, fill up quickly each semester with a waiting list because neighbors understand that learning English is the key to their success in the U.S.

"My parents are hard-working people that chase their dreams and inspire others to do so," said Andrea Tovar. "It is exciting to see them finally happy, financially stable, and find their true passions. At my high school graduation, I dedicated a special message on the top of my cap which said, 'Para mis padres, que llegaron sin nada y me lo dieron todo,' which means, 'for my parents that came here with nothing. And they gave me everything.'"

Lux Ice is projected to employ up to 100 neighbors in living-wage jobs by the end of 2024. The Storehouse is currently working to establish new job partnerships with additional companies.

**###**

**[The Storehouse of Collin County](#)**, a nonprofit founded in 2009, provides short-term assistance and long-term transformation to residents of Collin, Dallas, and Denton Counties through four programs. Seven Loaves Food Pantry serves over 5,000 families each month; Joseph's Coat Clothing Closet provides clothing at no cost; Project Hope Neighbor Care offers case management and resource referral; and The Academy Education Program provides free and reduced-cost classes to assist with language, job, or life skills development. During its previous fiscal year, The Storehouse served 146,922 unduplicated neighbors with the support of more than 2,000 volunteers. In August 2023, the North Texas Food Bank honored The Storehouse with the Hope for Tomorrow Award. Visit [www.thestorehousecc.org](http://www.thestorehousecc.org). The Storehouse EIN: 27-1883333

**[Lux Ice](#)**, a leader in the fast-growing craft-ice industry, was founded in 2020 by entrepreneur and partner Shawn Kilcoyne. Elevating beverage experiences with slow-melting, crystal-clear ice spheres, Lux Ice is available at leading retailers, restaurants and other foodservice locations nationwide. Through its core values of trust, agility and ownership, Lux Ice strives to be the "coolest" place to work and engage in its communities to support long-term self-sustaining employment. Visit [www.luxiceusa.com](http://www.luxiceusa.com) or call 267-853-8200.