

Winmark plans 20-store expansion in N. Texas by 2013

BY KERRI PANCHUK | STAFF WRITER

Franchisor Winmark Corp. plans to grow its crop of 25 North Texas resale shops to 45 locations by 2013.

Winmark's stores, which operate under the names Plato's Closet, Once Upon a Child, Play it Again Sports and Music Go Round, are run locally by independent franchisees selling used children's clothing, sporting goods, musical instruments and tween-to-teenage apparel.

The stores also sell new brand-

name goods.

Three locations are already in the works, including two Once Upon a Child shops — one in McKinney and another off of Skillman Street in Dallas — and a Plato's Closet in Cedar Hill, said Pete First, director of franchise development for Minneapolis-based Winmark.

Winmark is growing on the heels of consistent financial strength, posting a profit of \$2.7 million in the third quarter, up 50 percent from \$1.8 million a year ago, according to corporate statements.

"We are looking at Irving, McKinney, Frisco, University Park, Arlington, Duncanville and Flower Mound," First said.

Each store needs 2,700 to 3,500 square feet of retail space in high-traffic retail strip centers.

The average initial franchisee investment for a Winmark brand is \$200,000 and \$300,000, depending on the franchise, First said.



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Annual store sales average between \$660,000 and \$725,000 per location, First said.

"The fact that we have expanded and continue to grow our business ... that's an indication that it is a profitable business," said Jule' Miller, a franchisee who operates six Winmark stores in D-FW with business partner Rachel Wilson.

Much like First, who said the North Texas region has the ability to absorb more discount resale stores, Miller sees the area's client base as loyal — and growing.

She opened her first store in 2000 and now owns three Once Upon a Child shops and three Plato's Closet stores.

"It's such a big market, and I feel like people are willing ... even if they can't find something in one particular store, to drive to another store," Miller said.

"We have customers willing to drive between our stores — they are looking for the value of that product," she said.

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