



**Chris Kollar (Owner
-Your Family Dollar
Prescott)**

YOUR FAMILY DOLLAR PRESCOTT

The Triumph and Success of an Entrepreneur's Dream!

By Jonathan Vickers

“Don’t be afraid to ask for something, you already have no” is a quote that Chris Kollar of “Prescott’s, Your Family Dollar” remembers her parents (Rikkie and John Witteveenaying) saying to her growing up. It was to her a motivating quote that stuck with her when an opportunity presented itself to her almost by a happy coincidence in 2003.

Chris at the time, was working at Angelo’s Restaurant on old HWY 16 as a waitress for almost 20 years when she saw an opportunity to become her own boss as the Dollar Depot store was up for sale in Prescott (the same current location Your Family Dollar is in today). While Dollar Stores in the early 90’s, were becoming big business and consumers saw advantages in shopping at these types of retail outlets, this particular store in Prescott was waning, and was becoming obsolete. Chris however, saw big potential in the community of Prescott and noticed the store lacked the correct inventory mix and services that clientele wanted and needed. She noticed that in this small outlet mall the stores at the time were Curves, Herbal Magic, and a flower shop, which would be a perfect retail mix at a time she felt her vision of a dollar store would succeed. With the encouragement of her husband Les and her adult children Rick and Tami, Chris decided at the age of 46 to become

an entrepreneur and go for a major career and life altering change. She bought the existing inventory and started out on her own.

Now 15 years later, “Your Family Dollar - The Dollar Store with a Difference” has successfully, over the years, not only succeeded in an everchanging retail market, but thrived and grown against big box retailers like Giant Tiger and Liquidation World (now closed in Prescott), Dollarama and Dollar Tree in Brockville and even Walmart (Brockville). Chris proudly points out when she took over the store back in 2003, salesmen used to visit her store to help her stock the inventory. She remembers with a laugh “one of her first orders was for 72 sponges and wondered if they would sell?” (they did). Now Chris stocks the store with 1000’s of items from 12 suppliers she deals with, mainly on-line for ordering. She can rapidly adapt to the monthly or seasonal ordering changes.

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Through the years Chris added and became a Sears Catalogue outlet store (she sadly remarked how her customers miss ordering now from the bankrupt Sears company), she added gift baskets, cards, crafts, Oma in Oma’s Knitting, wrapping paper, wedding supplies and the growing party & balloon supply line for all occasions. Where back in 2003 a dollar store was “cash only”, Chris has now added debit and credit card options for her customers’ convenience and ease of payment. One big change Chris has made compared to a lot of smaller retail stores, is that Your Family Dollar is OPEN 7 DAYS A WEEK! Chris felt this was important to the community and to make sure her business succeeds in today’s economic climate.

One thing Chris reflected on was a personal tragedy for her and her family back in 2008 when her home caught fire on the North Channel Rd. nearby. She had only been in business 5 years back then, but on April 16th her life was turned upside down. Yet, the community of Prescott and her customers came daily to her store and offered help in any way. The community offered food, clothing and household items, as well as quilts, cards of support and money. Chris remembers how overwhelming it was and emotional, for the support and feeling so grateful to live in this area. She has not forgotten this, nor has her family. Chris, through donations of gift baskets or merchandise, when community groups or charities stop by the store, Chris is happy to help out.

Chris has been married to her husband Les for over 40 years, and has 4 grandchildren: Emma 9 years old and Abi 5 years old, her son Rick’s children. Her daughter Tami has Evan who is 7 and Ana who is 5 years old. Family is the center of everything for Chris and she has no plans to retire anytime soon. As we finished up our conversation, she remarked, “It’s been a privilege to have a business in Prescott and I am so grateful to be part of this community. I’d like to extend a “Special Thank You” to all of my customers for the last 15 years. I feel truly blessed.” LH