

Kings Park perfect place for Utopia expansion

By JOHN M. LAINGER

Utopia Home Care, Inc. held a ribbon-cutting luncheon Friday, December 3 to celebrate the opening of its newest branch office, located at One Village Plaza in Kings Park, between the train station parking lot and Main Street.

Since the Kings Park branch office actually opened for business in mid-October, the ribbon-cutting luncheon recognized in the establishment of the branch office an occasion to commemorate the success of a family-owned business with Kings Park roots.

In 1983, Kings Park residents Manuel Martinez and his wife, Angelina, started a small home healthcare agency in an office at 32 East Main Street in Kings Park. "My husband and I had maybe five employees when we started," Mrs. Martinez said. "Everyone was family in the beginning."

As the business expanded, Mr. and Mrs. Martinez moved Utopia's office down the road to 60 East Main Street. Prior to opening the Kings Park branch office this October, 60 East Main Street housed Utopia's corporate headquarters and the support network for roughly 150 caregivers. Like its first

intra-Kings-Park move, the burgeoning business simply needed more space. The corporate headquarters is still located at 60 East Main Street.

As Mr. and Mrs. Martinez prepare to celebrate 22 years in business this February, the company that began in a small Kings Park office now operates 22 offices in three states (including the Kings Park branch office and 60 East Main Street), and employs approximately 1,400 people. Utopia has offices throughout Connecticut, and along Florida's Gulf Coast. In New York, Utopia has locations in New York City, Rockville Centre, Westbury, Babylon, Patchogue and Riverhead. In fact, Utopia is the largest minority-owned business on Long Island.

Its interstate success notwithstanding, Utopia has remained a family-owned, Kings Park-based company. "Kings Park has been very good to us," Mrs. Martinez said. The four Martinez children are all graduates of Kings Park High School: Manny Jr., class of 1978; Diane, 1979; David, 1983; and Paul, 1987. All four are involved in the business. Manny Jr., Diane and David are Executive Vice Presidents;



IT DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER THAN THIS: Present at the December 3 ribbon-cutting ceremony for Utopia Home Care, Inc.'s Kings Park branch office were (from left to right): Executive Vice President Diane Martinez-Contino, State Senator John Flanagan, Executive Vice President Manny Martinez, Jr., Angelina Martinez, the wife of Utopia's founder, Manny Martinez, Sr., Smithtown Supervisor Patrick Vecchio, Executive Vice President David Martinez and Smithtown Town Councilman Edward Wehrheim.

Manny handles the Florida offices, David, Connecticut, and Diane, New York. Paul is employed in an administrative capacity with the company.

Supervisor Vecchio attended the ribbon-cutting luncheon along with State Senator John Flanagan (R-Smithtown),

Smithtown Councilman Ed Wehrheim and Councilwoman Jane Conway. When Supervisor Vecchio's sons played King Park Youth little league, Supervisor coached their team. One of those teams included a catcher by the name of David Martinez. "David was on my

championship baseball team when I coached in the Kings Park Youth little league," Supervisor Vecchio said. "I have known the Martinez family for 30 years."

Diane Martinez, whose married name is Contino, said

Utopia opens new office in Kings Park

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Utopia provides every level of home-based healthcare including care for post-hospital convalescence, short and long term illness, accident rehabilitation and hospice, respite and pediatric care. The new Kings Park branch office includes a staff of about ten employees who provide the support network for the caregivers serving Kings Park and the greater Smithtown area.

Mrs. Martinez-Contino said Utopia has achieved a reputation for professional and compassionate home care by training its caregivers to treat the patient as they, the caregiver, would want to be treated. Utopia provides its caregivers with a comprehensive free training program designed to certify each caregiver as a Personal Care Aide or a Home Health Aide in New York State. Furthermore, caregivers are required to complete paid continuing education classes.

"We are always looking for people interested in the nursing field," Mrs. Martinez-Contino said, adding that many of Utopia's caregivers have worked as aides while they attend nursing school.

According to Utopia's home care model, Registered Nurses assess a new patient's condition and specific medical needs, then meet with the patient's physician to design a plan of

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