

MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR: *Kristina Marquez, 53*

When it comes to charity, owner of hair-salon chain a cut above

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More than 30 years ago, Kristina Marquez met her husband in a Pennsylvania beauty salon. She had just graduated high school, and he was the young stylist who cut her hair.

"It was love at first cut," Marquez said. "That was it — I liked my hair cut, liked him."

Marquez took a job at the hair salon, and before long, her relationship with stylist Dennis Marquez was about more than hair.

In 1974, they moved from Pittsburgh to Lake Worth and got married at St. Juliana Catholic Church in West Palm Beach. Kristina Marquez graduated from Lake Worth Beauty Academy in 1976.

In 1975, the couple opened the first Pizzazz Hair Design in West Palm Beach. The business has branched out to six locations; the newest one opened earlier this month. The Marquezes, who live in Wellington now and have four grown children and five grandchildren, still cut hair and teach classes for stylists every Wednesday at their salons.

Marquez is excited about an opportunity to blend her profession with another of her passions: charity work.

A client told Marquez about Village of Hope, a new residential program for young adults who outgrew the state's foster care system when they turned 18. She wants to help men and women in the program get started in the beauty industry. Village of Hope is just north of

for Village of Hope. She also donated two spa packages with gift certificates for salon services and two baskets of beauty products to Pizzazz Hair Design for the event auction.

The Village of Hope campus consists of six two-bedroom apartments and has two residents.

"It's beautiful. It's really, really nice," she said. "It's not like a project."

She said the program is planning for growth and trying to raise money to build more apartments.

Marquez is no stranger to working with young people who need help. She used to volunteer at the former Florida Institute for Girls, a detention center for girls ages 13 to 18 that closed in 2005.

"I would go in and talk about the Bible, talk about whatever to help these kids," said Marquez, who attends St. Rita Catholic Church.

"Maybe I could use what I learned there and help (Village of Hope)."

She also has used her hairstylist skills and her businesses to benefit the community and reach out to young people in other ways.

Pizzazz Hair Design employees used to style hair and do makeup for an annual fashion show at Wellington High School, she said. She and her husband also have spoken to teens on career day at the school.

"We always had the feeling that if we helped our community well they would use our services," Marquez said.

