

Caring Transitions franchise opens

By JOHN KIPPY CASH

SPECIAL TO THE DAILY RECORD

Thanks in part to medical breakthroughs, Americans are living longer than ever before. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, people age 65 and older will represent more than 18 percent of the population by the year 2030.

Many of those baby boomers will relocate to a retirement home or assisted living community. They represent a business opportunity for Caring Transitions.

OVERVIEW: "When people face transitions such as illness, divorce or the death of a loved one, they can become easily overwhelmed with feelings of anxiety, confusion and helplessness," said John Salomone, president of the Morristown-based franchise of Caring Transitions. "They don't know where to begin or what questions to ask. Very often it falls to the children to take care of the details. But what if the kids live in Kansas City? That's where we come in."

ADVOCATES, NOT BROKERS: "We act as the family's on-site advocate while keeping their best interest at heart. We are not real estate brokers or antique dealers but, for a fee, we will handle all of the details of the move," said Leigh Schaeffer, Salomone's wife and company vice president.

"We develop a transition plan, locate and sort personal belongings, photograph items for sale, pack and ship heirlooms, prepare the new home for resettling,

OPEN FOR BUSINESS

Who: Caring Transitions of North Central New Jersey

Address: 45 Park Place South, No. 359, Morristown

Telephone: 973-343-7890

Owners: John Salomone and Leigh Schaeffer

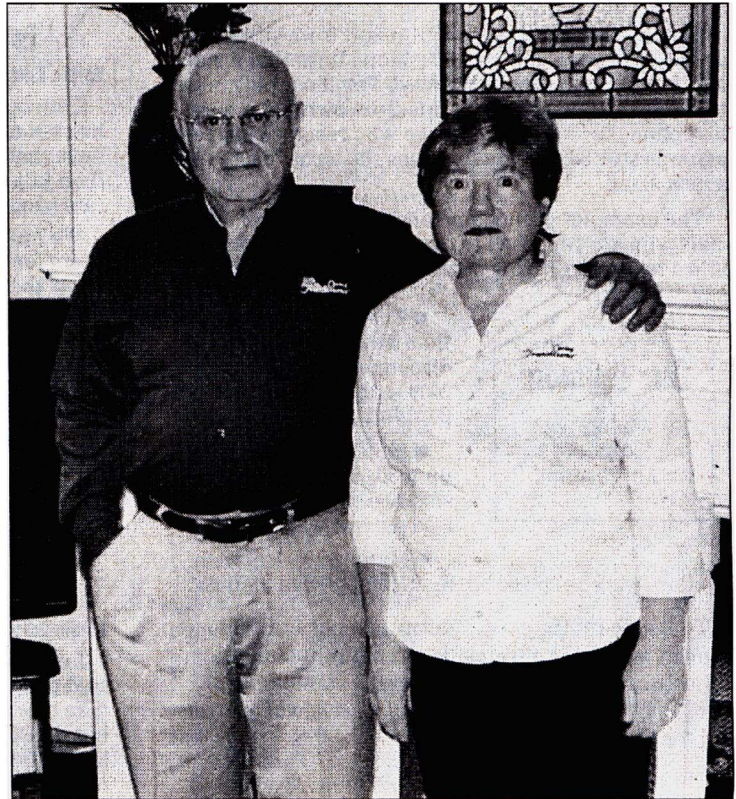
Hours: 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Monday through Friday

clean and prepare the old house for sale and promote the sale of items through established auction sites," Salomone added.

MOST CHALLENGING PART OF THE BUSINESS: "It's very difficult leaving a house you've lived in for 30 or 40 years. We try to provide the support and empathy necessary. I was a social worker for 15 years and some of the same qualities carry over to this business," Schaeffer said.

IF YOU COULD START OVER, WHAT WOULD YOU DO DIFFERENTLY? "I would double the time it takes to get set up," Schaeffer said. "We were not realistic. If someone says it will take two months to get going I would give it four months."

WHY GO WITH A FRANCHISE OPERATION? "Because Caring Transitions has the experience and marketing know-how," Salomone said. "They know the best way to market your possessions at the highest price possible. And we clean out the entire house, donating items that do not sell to charitable or-



STAFF PHOTO: JOHN KIPPY CASH

John Salomone and Leigh Schaeffer are combining their experience from previous careers to help the senior community in Morris County as franchisees of Caring Transitions.

ganizations, which may give a tax deduction."

ADVICE: "You will need some sort of a business plan, as simple as it might be," Salomone said. "You have to like being around seniors. We did a lot of research and traveled to sites to check out properties. The bottom line: I

like the experience of helping people. I get a rush out of it."

"A short time ago this business didn't exist. But times change. Now I believe it's a necessity. You have to be ready to take advantage of that," Schaeffer added.