

fall, said: "Things have improved substantially over the past 5 to 10 years in this whole conflict. The conflict was there 20 years ago and maybe 10 years ago."

"It was a slow process for everyone to reach out to one another. There's a lot more contact than there was 5, 10 years ago."

But Mr. Iryami acknowledged that he dated only Persian women.

The Sephardic Heritage Alliance, formed four years ago, is dedicated to ensuring that second-generation Persian youngsters fit into Great Neck social life. Mr. Ohebshalom said that its getting-to-know-you meetings had brought Persian youths and their parents together with scholars, rabbis, P.T.A.'s, school principals, the fire and police departments and the local chamber of commerce.

"It's been tremendously effective," Mr. Ohebshalom said. He estimated that 20 years ago 8 out of 10 Great Neck residents resented the Persians. Nowadays, he said, the ratio is 1 in 10.

At Great Neck North High School, Mr. Kaplan said tensions between Persians and Americans had abated, and Vida Aziz's youngest daughter, Jennifer, 21, said that growing up in Great Neck and attending Great Neck North, her friends were mostly Americans.

REACHING OUT

Making Slow Progress Fostering Understanding

Many Persians are reaching out across the divide.

A few months ago, Mike Nassimi, a builder, sponsored a concert and dinner at his Kings Point estate for the benefit of the Great Neck Arts Center, a local cultural institution. He did not play host to the fundraiser just because he likes the arts center.

"It was to show to the community that Iranians are not here to create a little Iran in Great Neck," he said. "They are cultured people. They know of the arts. They know classical music."

Raymond Iryami, 28, president of the Iranian American Democrats of Nassau County, a Tehrani organization formed this