

The Middletown Press (middletownpress.com), Serving Middletown CT and surrounding areas

News

UNITED WAY: The little health center that could

Saturday, May 19, 2012 1:29 AM EDT

By Kevin J. Wilhelm

Special to the Press

This month, Community Health Center is celebrating its 40th anniversary. It's always encouraging to hear about great ideas that not only come to fruition, but thrive and succeed. Typically, ideas only turn into reality when a group of committed people and organizations join together to make it so. This is indeed the case with CHC.

A group of community activists including current CEO Mark Masselli, Reba Moses, and Jerry Weitzman helped bring the Community Health Center to life in order to address the need for quality, affordable health services to those who could not access them elsewhere. A group of students from Wesleyan University were also critical during CHC's earliest years.

In 1972, the first CHC site was located in a small, converted apartment in Middletown. Today, the health center operates in thirteen cities in Connecticut with more than 200 program sites providing care to more than 130,000 patients, 90% of whom are at or near the poverty level. Patients can receive medical, dental, and behavioral primary care services.

During this growth, first in Middletown and then to other cities and towns, CHC has not rested on its laurels. Not only has the physical landscape of the organization's operations changed but so have the services. The organization has continued to incorporate innovative service delivery models and state of the art technology to best meet its patient's needs. There is a focus on prevention and health promotion, the keys to long-term good health as well as the reduction of health-related costs for people later on in life.

And now in its 40th anniversary year, Community Health Center recently unveiled its spectacular new "green" primary health care facility in the North End of Middletown. It is truly a jewel that shines upon the city.

The new building is fueling the revitalization of the North End. Even more importantly, critical health services will be delivered to all those who need it most in a setting worthy of the innovative, first-class care the patients receive within its walls.

Community Health Center was presented with a Special Achievement Award at United Way's Campaign Awards Breakfast in early May, a testament to the generosity and caring of the organization's employees. Mark Masselli sets the tone for giving, and he was presented with our Leadership Award two years ago while CHC received the Community Impact Award at our Annual Meeting in 2008.

Community Health Center is actually in the top ten in giving of all companies and organizations in Middlesex County. This past year, the health center's United Way employee campaign grew an impressive 77% and the number of donors increased 81%.

Congratulations to Community Health Center on your 40th anniversary. Thank you for all you do to provide quality health care to those who need it here in Middlesex County and throughout Connecticut.

Kevin Wilhelm is the executive director of Middlesex United Way.

URL: <http://www.middletownpress.com/articles/2012/05/19/news/doc4fb6ea54c8bdf655749448.prt>

© 2012 middletownpress.com, a **Journal Register** Property