

Business

Updated: Community Gathers for New Health Center Construction's Midway Point

Middletown dignitaries, Macdonough School students, North End residents, Wesleyan's president are among those who celebrated a 'topping off' ceremony Wednesday for the \$17 million project.

By [Cassandra Day](#) | [Email the author](#) | May 11, 2011

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What do you think of the project? [Tell us in the comments.](#)



Community Health Center CEO Mark Masselli shares a moment with his wife Jennifer Alexander as the beam is hoisted, while Margaret Flinter, senior vice president and clinical director of CHC, documents the event. Credit: [Cassandra Day](#)

About 100 people congregated Wednesday at the construction site on Grand Street in Middletown's North End to mark the halfway point in building the new, 48,000-square-foot [Community Health Center](#) on Main.

CHC CEO Mark Masselli led the festivities, which included 12 second- and fourth-graders from Macdonough Elementary School and several longtime North End residents: Jim Lessor of Ferry Street, Ray and Linda Gionfriddo, Furno Luigi and James Williams.

In his speech Masselli likened the signing of the 7,000-pound steel beam to the movie, "Thor," saying the construction workers working high above the ground on the skeleton of a building, "are like gods to us."

He explained to students that the "tree" affixed to the beam is a common practice in building construction, and hearkens back to a Scandanavian religious ceremony whereby a tree was employed to appease their ancestors who had been displaced.

Middlesex County Chamber of Commerce President Larry McHugh praised Masselli's and Flinter's "vision, dedication and passion toward helping people out and their commitment to Middletown."

The center, designed to [Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design](#) standards, and costing \$17 million, will replace the health center which has been housed at 635 Main St. since 1972 and will contain medical, dental and behavior health services, which now occupy three different buildings.

The roof will feature a garden with flowers, vegetables, berries and views of the Arrigoni Bridge and downtown.

The 14-month project is slated for completion in early March 2012.