

News | Around Middletown

Community Health Center Honors Dr. Lecce for 35 Years of Care

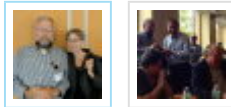
The modest Middletown physician, who's been with the health center since its founding, was roasted a bit by co-workers, who called him whip smart, a calming influence and very low-tech.

Posted by [Cassandra Day](#) (Editor) , October 01, 2013 at 07:06 PM



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Community Health Center for 35 years. He's seen with



Co-workers, friends and family of Dr. Carl Lecce gathered Sept. 26 at the Community Health Center for a luncheon and gentle roasting in honor of his 35 years of service.

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Lecce, who has been with the health center since its humble beginnings in 1978, when it was housed in the former Middletown bowling alley on Main Street, was praised and good-naturedly teased for his well-known qualities, among them his humility.

Mayor Dan Drew spoke briefly at the event. "Dr. Lecce was there from the very beginning, long before I was even born," which elicited laughter from the audience. He issued a proclamation naming Sept. 27 Dr. Carl Lecce Day.

Community Health Center locations are in towns across Connecticut, including Meriden, Clinton, Groton, Enfield and Danbury.

Margaret Flinter, senior vice president and clinical director of CHC, recalled the two meetings in the late 1980s, "when Carl and I were very much on the sunny side of 30. He instantly became a mentor who was incredibly thorough, incredibly compassionate, wickedly smart and very low-tech."

She quoted his often-said mantra when consulting with colleagues about patient cases: "history will give you most of the answers, the exam will fill in the rest."

Mark Masselli, president, CEO and founder of the Community Health Center, presented Lecce with two gifts: a jar of jelly made from the grapes growing on the roof of the health center and a royal blue T-shirt.

"One characteristic you don't know about Carl is why he got his own office — he's a slob," Masselli said to chuckles from the crowd. He then likened Lecce to Dr. Who, of the classic BBC television series, for his calming influence on people and held up a shirt reading, "Keep Calm I'm the Doctor."

On Sept. 6, 1978, Lecce began practicing medicine at the Community Health Center in Middletown, at the 635 Main Street building known as the "homeroom."

Lecce had just completed his residency in family medicine as a member of the first graduating class of the then new Middlesex Family Practice Residency Training Program. Flinter has worked closely with Lecce since she started in 1980 as a new nurse practitioner and National Health Service Corps Scholar.

"Carl was a tremendous doctor then as he is now; Calm, thorough, great listener and an incredible diagnostician. He mentored me and has continued to mentor so many others over the years," Flinter said.

CHC has grown from its original location in Middletown to include primary care centers in 13 cities across Connecticut as well as in schools and homeless shelters.

Lecce was born and raised in Montoursville, Pa., where he excelled in academics as well as sports. He completed his undergraduate degree in 1971 from Columbia University and received his M.D. from Pennsylvania State University College of Medicine in 1975.

After three years of residency, Lecce started his position with CHC in 1978 during the sixth year of operation; he has grown with the health center over its 41 years of existence.

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