

newhavenBIZ

FEBRUARY 15, 2019

Deli with a difference opens on Legion Ave.



PHOTO | NEW HAVEN BIZ

New Haven Mayor Toni N. Harp, left, and Continuum of Care CEO Patti Walker at Wednesday's ribbon-cutting for the Grassroots Deli.

MICHAEL C. BINGHAM

Located at 109 Legion Ave., the gleaming new Grassroots Deli serves sandwiches, wraps, salads and soups to a Hill neighborhood sorely lacking in dining options.

There's something else different about the Grassroots Deli, which officially opened for business with a Wednesday ribbon-cutting (though it actually first opened in November): It's housed in the same building that's home to Continuum of Care, a New Haven-based non-profit that serves clients with mental illnesses, intellectual disabilities, autism and substance-abuse disorders.

In her welcoming remarks Mayor Toni N. Harp said the Grassroots addressed three local needs — as a healthy dining option for an underserved neighborhood, a vocational skills training ground for Continuum clients who might work in the deli, and as a welcome source of revenue for a facility in large part subject to the vagaries of state funding.

A deli was always part of Continuum CEO Patti Walker's vision when designing and building the 30,000-square-foot administrative office building on Legion Avenue.

"Most folks don't know that this deli was part of the original plan when building this building," which opened in November 2016, Walker said. But shifting priorities and state budget cuts delayed the deli's creation for two years.

Now that it's a reality, Walker said she is confident Grassroots "will provide the community with a resource it needs, our clients with [job-training] opportunities that they can take advantage of, and also provide needed funding so that we can keep expanding these very needed programs."

Continuum of Care operates some 44 properties, employs 900 people, and assists about 2,000 clients annually with programs such as community-based crisis recovery services; transitional, short- and long-term residential living services; in-home support services; wellness programs; personal, social, financial and work-related skill-building; and training and vocational opportunities.

Contact Michael C. Bingham at mbingham@newhavenbiz.com