

NEWS RELEASE



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New plaza improves safety, appearance of Bridgeport Hospital entrance

BRIDGEPORT, CT (Sept. 18, 2013) – Bridgeport Hospital held a ribbon-cutting ceremony Sept. 11 to officially open Grant Street Plaza, a pedestrian park that improves the safety and appearance of the entryway to the hospital.

Highlights of the project include trees, shrubs and other greenery, a sheltered ground-level walkway between the hospital’s Agnes and Ernie Kaulbach Parking Pavilion and main entrance, and a water sculpture that serves as the centerpiece of the redesigned area.

Among those on hand for the ceremony were Bridgeport Mayor Bill Finch, City Council President Tom McCarthy and other members of the council and city government. Representing the hospital were President and CEO Bill Jennings, Chief Operating Officer Norm Roth and plastic and reconstructive surgeon Joseph (Brad) O’Connell, MD, whose 2010 conversation with Jennings about pedestrian safety inspired the plaza project. Also attending was Marna P. Borgstrom, president and CEO of Yale New Haven Health System, of which Bridgeport Hospital is a part.

The plaza occupies the former portion of Grant Street between Central and Mill Hill avenues. The City Council agreed last year to turn over that part of Grant Street to the hospital for construction of the plaza, which aligns with Mayor Finch’s vision of neighborhood “pocket parks” and more green space throughout the city.

“Our goal is to be the greenest city in New England, maybe even the entire United States,” the mayor said at the ceremony.

The project began in January of this year, with O&G Industries, which has an office in Bridgeport, as the lead contractor. Bridgeport-based Antinozzi Architects designed the plaza. All of the other contractors who worked on the project are also based in Connecticut. Work was completed in early September.

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The project cost was \$2.5 million for above-ground work and \$1.5 million for drainage, utility relocation (electric, water, gas and sewer separation) and traffic signal improvements, paid from the hospital's capital budget over a two-year period. Ongoing community and employee donations, including \$60,000 raised during a recent employee giving campaign, are helping to defray the costs.

As a result of the redesign, there is no longer vehicle access from Central Avenue to the part of Grant Street in front of the hospital. Vehicles can continue to access the parking pavilion and traffic circle outside the main entrance for drop-off and pick-up via Mill Hill Avenue.

"Aren't we lucky?" Mayor Finch asked the audience of more than 100 people at the ceremony. "Bridgeport Hospital, as part of Yale New Haven Health System, provides us with some of the best health care in the country, and now it has a great new front door."

"We have made the community better today, thanks to Bridgeport Hospital and its willingness to work with the city and community on this project," added McCarthy. "The hospital did it the right way."

Jennings shared the story of how Dr. O'Connell proposed the idea for the plaza, when the two sat together at a charity event just a few weeks after Jennings became the hospital CEO in October 2010.

"Dr. O'Connell had a to-do list of 21 things to improve the hospital and the plaza was one of them," Jennings said. "The safety of patients and staff was the genesis of this idea."

"I had a vision that to deliver healthcare in the 21st century, you need a campus," Dr. O'Connell said. "It's great to see the idea come to fruition."

"One year ago, the road between our main entrance and parking garage was a busy urban street and crossing it was a challenge," said Roth, who served as master of ceremonies. "Now it's much safer and people can enjoy green space and a wonderful new entrance to the hospital. In fact, I've heard people call it the 'new' Bridgeport Hospital."

"First impressions count," Jennings said. "This new plaza sets the stage for the high-quality care we provide. While we need to become more efficient because of reductions in government funding, we also need to invest in our future – and that includes our image."

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Bridgeport Hospital is a member of Yale New Haven Health System (YNHHS), the largest and most comprehensive integrated health care delivery system in Connecticut. Yale New Haven Health System is recognized for advanced clinical care, quality, service, cost effectiveness and commitment to improving the health status of the populations it serves. Yale New Haven Health System's service area covers portions of eastern New York, the state of Connecticut and southwestern Rhode Island. Yale New Haven Health System is committed to making the best health care easier to use.