

The METROWEST DAILY NEWS

SMOC celebrates its new home in Framingham



Margaret Davitt (in scooter) who has been a SMOC employee for 48 years helps with the ribbon-cutting at the new SMOC facility Tuesday afternoon in Framingham. DAILY NEWS STAFF PHOTO/ MARSHALL WOLFF

By Danielle Ameden, Daily News Staff
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FRAMINGHAM - Community partners joined the South Middlesex Opportunity Council Tuesday in celebrating the human service agency's new home at 7 Bishop St.

SMOC moved its offices from leased space on Howard Street across to the former Avery-Dennison factory, which it bought and renovated for \$5 million.

Now a bright and light-filled building with welcome desks on each of the two floors and colorful artwork throughout, the new headquarters is already a hubbub of activity.

Selectman Cheryl Tully Stoll, speaking at a ribbon-cutting ceremony, said such a facility adds dignity to the process of SMOC serving its clients.

"And I think that's very, very important," she told the large crowd that gathered outside.

Signs inside the main entrance point clients to the first floor for family services, such as Women's, Infants & Children, Voices Against Violence and fuel and rental assistance. Upstairs, SMOC is ready to offer housing and other help to single adults.

The ribbon-cutting drew board members, community leaders, lawmakers from all over the region and partners such as Framingham Police, Framingham Downtown Renaissance, the MetroWest Regional Transit Authority and the MetroWest Health Foundation.

Jim Cuddy, SMOC's executive director, led a tour and said the building will be a constant during the agency's future, helping and supporting clients whether they're there to use a computer, fill out an application for fuel assistance or seek help because they "don't have anywhere else to go."

"This is what this whole building is all about," he said. "This is what it represents."

Cuddy drew attention to the sunflower garden along the street and a peace garden by the parking lot, with benches for clients to sit and reflect.

Board member Robert Bachelder said the sunflowers out front, standing for optimism and positivity, represent the agency's core identity and culture of care.

State Rep. Tom Sannicandro, D-Ashland, said he's glad to see SMOC in the new home.

"These guys are doing phenomenal work and they make a big difference in a whole lot of people's lives," he said.

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