

## Groundbreaking held at Kent recovery center

BY RUTH EPSTEIN REPUBLICAN-AMERICAN  
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KENT -- The first step in an expansion of High Watch Recovery Center took place Monday with the official groundbreaking ceremony.

The facility, which provides programs for those chronically addicted to drugs and alcohol, is adding a new medical building and expanding its offices on the 206-acre, well-manicured campus.

Sen. Andrew W. Roraback, R-Goshen, and First Selectman Bruce K. Adams were among the dignitaries to help Janina Kean, president and chief executive officer, staff members and clients mark the start of the \$2.2 million project, which is expected to be completed in May. The medical building will be a 5,800-square-foot one-story structure. Another 4,300 square feet of renovation to existing offices will also take place. The number of beds will not be increased.

Kean started off the ceremony by paying tribute to First Lady Betty Ford, who died recently. "She eliminated the shame around the disease of alcohol and drug addiction," she said.

The idea for this center dates back to 1939 when Bill and Lois Wilson, along with Marty Mann, first visited what was then known as Joy Farm. Bill Wilson was a co-founder of Alcoholics Anonymous; his wife started Al-Anon. Mann was the first woman in AA. A year later under Bill Wilson's guidance, High Watch, the first recovery community in the world based on the 12-step principle, was formed.

Dr. Oreste Arcuni, the director of addiction medicine at the facility, said treatment has developed over the years, but at High Watch it is still grounded in the 12-step theory. Addiction is treated as an illness and recovery takes place when there is spirituality and kindness, he said.

Those who work with the clients realize that it often takes several visits before a client meets success. Most clients at High Watch have been in treatment before. More than half of the 49 staffers are in recovery.

"Relapse is not failure, provided they get back in rehab," Arcuni said. "It's not a failure if you learn from it."

Clients are required to stay a minimum of 21 days, with an average stay of 31 days. The rate is \$297 a day and since all but nine of the 78 are self-paying, the operation is self-sufficient.