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Wavelengths

UTEC to Open Haverhill HQ June 4: Take an Exclusive Look Inside

 By Allison Corneau | 11 hours ago



UTEC's new Haverhill space opens at 241 Winter St. on Tuesday, June 4. (WHAV News photograph)

One year after announcing plans to bring their anti-violence effort to Haverhill, UTEC is officially opening their city headquarters at 241 Winter St., on Tuesday, June 4.

As CEO Gregg Croteau and his team of outreach workers tell WHAV, the group that works largely behind the scenes to bring peace to rival gang sets and encourage gang-affiliated youth to seek employment plans a grand opening ceremony to introduce the community to the 20-year-old Lowell-based organization.

UTEC comes to Haverhill thanks to a two-year Safe and Successful Youth

Initiative grant from the Baker-Polito Administration, with Croteau and staff working alongside the Haverhill Police Department, Essex County Sheriff's Office, Haverhill District Court probation department and other state and local agencies to meet proven-risk youth where they're at.

Haverhill Police Deputy Chief Anthony Haugh explained UTEC's multi-faceted approach to WHAV as somewhat of a lifeline. "Like many problems, we're not going to arrest our way out of issues we're having with gangs and we need partners and they need other avenues. UTEC is a great

resource in providing that," Haugh said. "They do everything from providing transportation, to jobs, counseling and their whole program just rounds out the package of what we can offer the youth to show that there's an alternative to gang life."

Inside the 5,000-square foot space outfitted by interior designer Mally Skok and former UTEC member Sunny Harrison is mostly office space for streetworkers Carlos Collazo and Eric Cruz, along with a soon-to-be hired transitional coach and mental health clinician. UTEC's Director of Organizing and Policy Geoff Foster tells WHAV his ideal vision for the space is a drop-in center for youth, who can enjoy the location's pingpong table and workout equipment while socializing with friends. There's even a book nook with children's toys and reading materials for kids of UTEC members.

Buoyed by a recent visit to the Haverhill HQ from Gov. Charlie Baker, the UTEC team is already winning support from local leaders, including City Councilor William J. Macek, who praised Croteau at a recent meeting.

"Rome wasn't built in a night and we're not going to correct problems in a night. We're a city so we have city problems but you are the solution to some of our city problems," Macek said.

UTEC Haverhill's grand opening takes place starting at 9:30 a.m. on Tuesday, June 4. The event is free and open to all.

Additional gallery at the link: <https://whav.net/2019/05/31/utec-to-open-haverhill-hq-june-4-take-an-exclusive-look-inside/>