

Bristol looks to 2023

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@DeanIWright

BRISTOL – With 2023 nearly here, people around Bristol of all walks are looking to a new year with a variety of hopes, goals and desires.

Robert Gianni, patron of Brian's Angels Homeless Outreach, said he's looking forward to warm weather coming back and the chance to return to driving tractor trailers for a living. He noted he had known the outreach's director, Pat Stebbins, for several years as he worked on stabilizing his home life while looking to a more independent future.

"I'm glad for what Pat here does," said Gianni. "She doesn't turn people away and there's a lot of help that you can't find many other places."

Stebbins said the biggest thing she hopes to attain in the coming new year is that the outreach is able to find a larger space to serve its patrons.

"There's been a lot of need, especially in the past year with evictions and the price of everything going up," she said. "We keep going forward though. We feed people, get them clothes, showers, coats and we'll keep doing it."

The director said she was thankful for those who continued to support the outreach's mission through its Meal Train website page and for donors like the Pat and Bob Wollenberg Fund at the Main Street Community Foundation which recently provided a grant covering clothing and food for Brian's Angels patrons.

Susan Comstock and Jasmine Christiano both volunteered on Christmas Eve at Brian's Angels.

"More space," said Comstock of her hopes for Brian's Angels next year. "We are falling over ourselves trying to accommodate so many people in different aspects of what they need now."

Christiano said she hoped to see a greater expansion of harm reduction programs throughout Central Connecticut. "We see a lot of clients getting worse instead of better, so I'd like to see more of that," she said.

With a variety of challenges having faced Bristol in the last few years, Bristol Mayor Jeff Caggiano said he has hope the city will see a successful 2023.

"In January, we expect to have a site plan for the Carrier project, which extends from Hope Street and all the way over to McDonald's," he said of anticipated apartment and retail space to be built along North Main Street. "A bunch of other projects downtown are coming too. The Carrier project is a game-changing project because it's the first mixed-use development downtown which I think a lot of people are looking for."



Dean Wright | Staff Volunteers at Brian's Angels help serve a meal to patrons over the holiday weekend.

Despite the “horrific events of October,” said the mayor of the shootings of Bristol police officers Lt. Dustin DeMonte, Sgt. Alex Hamzy and Officer Alec Iurato, with the late year displays and examples of area citizens coming together to support one another in a time of sadness, Caggiano feels confident Bristol will rally together into a successful 2023.

On Main Street, Brooklyn Deli and Market owner Nasser Nadeesh said with new development in town, he hopes to see the city examine parking issues in the coming year.

“We have vacation in the summertime and we’ll be going to visit family overseas,” he said of activities he looks forward to. “We hope this coming year is going to be better than last year though.”

With challenges for all Americans over the past few years due to the economy, covid and politics, however, Nadeesh does have his concerns with the future and wonders if the best of times haven’t passed for the country.