

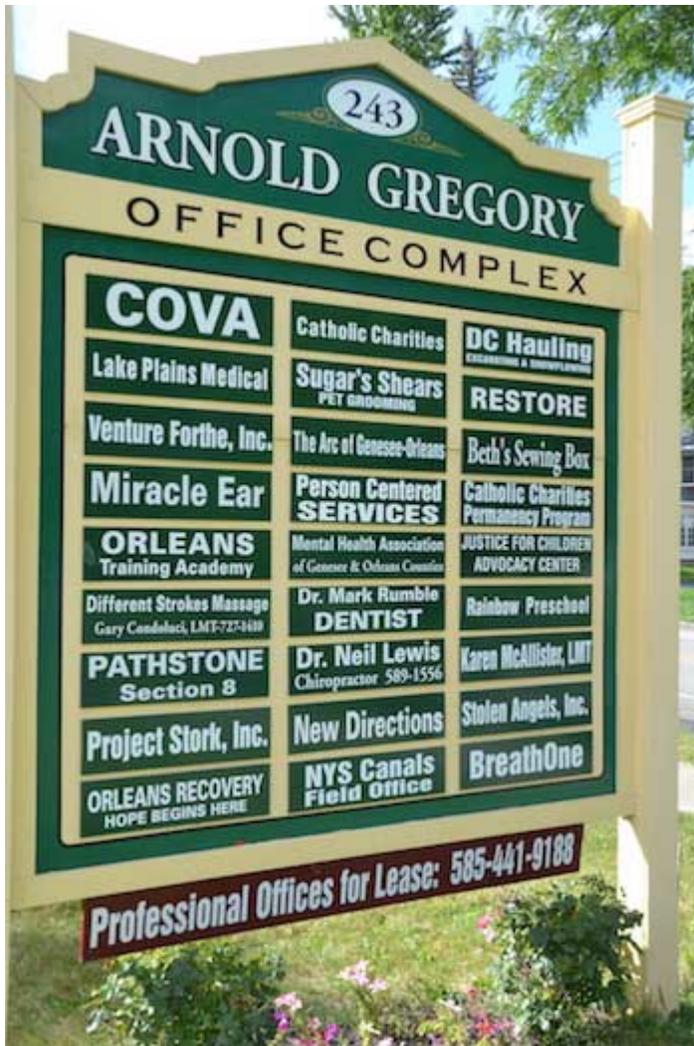
Former hospital in Albion is a bustling site with nearly 30 tenants



Photos by Tom Rivers: Ben DeGeorge of the DeGeorge Property Group sits on a couch in the front room of the Arnold Gregory Office Complex. In back is a snack shop that is run by the Arc of Genesee Orleans.

By Tom Rivers, Editor Posted 6 September 2019 at 11:20 am

Site resembles a mall with professional offices, retail and non-profits



There many tenants in the Arnold Gregory Office Complex on South Main Street.

ALBION – The former Arnold Gregory hospital in Albion continues its transformation as an office building. The site has added new tenants recently who say the building now functions as a mini-mall with professional offices, retail and space for non-profit organizations.

Ben DeGeorge and the DeGeorge Property Group bought the building five years ago from Lissow Development. They also bought Lissow apartments – the former Waterport Elementary School, Canal Towns Commons and an apartment building in Holley.

DeGeorge praises Ray Lissow for turning the former hospital into offices and an asset for the community. DeGeorge has picked up where Lissow left off, adding a business incubator with shared space for small businesses, and trying to accommodate other needs for tenants.

“It’s a community that wants to work with each other,” said DeGeorge, who is based in Monroe County. “The tenants, the local businesses and the local officials, everyone is so easy to work with.”

Arnold Gregory now has nearly 30 tenants, from medical services, a dog groomer, coffee shop and many others. DeGeorge has three maintenance workers devoted to Arnold Gregory and the three apartment buildings.

Theresa Pawlak is the office manager, in a suite with several small businesses sharing space in a business incubator. That shared space helps keep their costs down for rent, and still gives them a professional office.

Pawlak was born at Arnold Gregory. She then worked in the building as a prekindergarten teacher’s aide for a decade at the Rainbow Preschool.

“It’s nice to have someone outside the community invest here, someone who is young,” Pawlak said.



Theresa Pawlak works as the office manager at the former hospital, now owned by the DeGeorge Property Group.

DeGeorge, 32, said the Arnold Gregory Office Complex is a source of personal pride.

“Walking through this building is always exciting,” he said. “It’s such a neat place. This building is doing something. It’s such an important part of the community.”

DeGeorge said he is willing to work with startup companies and new organizations.



Beth Schorer, owner of Beth’s Sewing Box, does tailoring and other projects at her business, which also is a dry-cleaning stop. Robin Lewis is in back working on a quilting project.

Beth Schorer, owner of Beth’s Sewing Box, started in a small space down the hall in the first floor about 1 ½ years ago. It was an affordable entry to having an office. Her tailoring and alterations business grew, and she moved to a bigger space in the building.

“He gave me a chance,” Schorer said. “There is so much in here that people don’t see. It’s not a hospital anymore. It’s like a mall.”

Schorer moved into the bigger space in March. It gives her a dressing room and about double the area for her sewing equipment and to display dresses.

“She is one of our success stories,” DeGeorge said.

The building has about 50 original works of art on the walls, painted on canvases by former employee Rebekah Lee. DeGeorge worked with the Arc of Genesee Orleans to open a coffee and snack shop in the main lobby about three years ago. DeGeorge also added a conference room and a gym for the tenants.

He estimates about 100 people work in the building, and many clients and customers pass through the doors each day.



Cindy Eibl, owner of the Corner Gift Boutique, stands by the business at the Arnold Gregory Office Complex on South Main Street. Eibl said the building is business with tenants and their clients.

Cindy Eibl and Tina Page noticed the building is a busy place. Last holiday season near Christmas they intended to run the Corner Gift Boutique in the building from Oct. 1 to Dec. 31. They are a retail business, selling new and vintage gift items, and hand-crafted merchandise. They have stayed in the building this year because of the foot traffic inside.



Tina Page, co-owner of the Corner Gift Boutique, sells many gift items at the store.

“It was supposed to be seasonal,” Eibl said. “We were just looking to have a holiday shop.”

Many of the customers are other workers in the building, or their clients.

“There are a lot of people in here,” Eibl said. “I call it Albion’s little mini-mall.”

Orleans Recovery Hope moved into the building in December. The organization started in 2017. It is a peer organization that works with recovering addicts and their families. The office allows Orleans Recovery Hope to have a drop-in center and offer trainings. It also runs a grief group.

Wayne Litchfield is a volunteer, peer recovery advocate and a board member for the organization.

“It’s centrally located,” he said about Arnold Gregory. “It’s accessible to people. The nice part is the community is finding out about us.”



Wayne Litchfield said the Arnold Gregory location has been a good fit for Orleans Recovery Hope, where he is an active volunteer.