

Dannon adds yogurt scientists to Westchester's job mix

Written by

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GREENBURGH — Westchester's growing science industry, which has brought many new health and biotechnology jobs to the area, now includes yogurt.

Dannon unveiled its \$9 million Discovery and Innovation Center at the French company's American headquarters on Hillside Avenue in Greenburgh Thursday.

The project is expected to bring more than 30 research jobs to Westchester.

"It's a perfect example of a company that puts its money where its mouth is," said Casey McCormick, a senior product manager from Dutchess County who's been with Dannon for seven months.

The move will enhance communication between Dannon's marketing and R&D teams, company officials said. By having both functions under the same roof, Dannon CEO Gustavo Valle said, they'll be better able to understand American consumers and provide products they

want.

"The consumption of yogurt in this country is very low," Valle said. "We have a mission here. This is a key step-change."

Some of the company's scientists and nutritionists recently relocated here from Fort Worth, Texas, where Dannon had operated its research and development facility — a move that bucks the national trend of moving from the North to the South, said Tony Cicio, Dannon's vice president of human resources. The company will keep Fort Worth as a manufacturing center along with similar plants in Ohio and Utah.

Ken Bopp, director of product development for health and wellness, moved to the Lower Hudson Valley from Texas in mid-July, and he said he loves the area.

He's been staying with his wife, 7-year-old daughter and 2-year-old son in temporary housing in downtown White Plains, but they're looking to [buyahome](#), possibly in

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Bopp said he's impressed with the area's school districts and loves how the beach, country and Manhattan are all so close together.

"There's so many opportunities around here ... so many things for kids," he said.

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