



# THE OPEN DOOR

March 2016

## Open Door Clinic Launches Innovative Dental Program



Heidi Considine, RDH, and Adam Fasoli, DMD, are happy to be part of ODC's dental program

Good health begins with a healthy mouth! The ODC is taking this statement seriously, and after a thorough phase of planning, launched an innovative dental program for its patients last summer.

Julia Doucet, Open Door's Outreach Nurse, wanted to make a dental program a reality at the clinic. "When I started at ODC, I read a lot of research articles on migrant health. A local

researcher from UVM had recently completed a needs assessment of the migrant population and found that lack of access to dental care was one of their top concerns. I talked to many people about the idea of starting a dental program based on our clinic's model of volunteers, but always got the same answer: dentists would never consider it. But we realized we'd never asked them, and when we did, some said: "Sure!"

With the support of five local, volunteer dentists, including our recently designated Dental Director, Adam Fasoli, DMD, our goal is to reach 50 patients in the first year of the program, and provide them with dental health information, screenings, preventive and restorative care.

Fasoli knew that he wanted to be in the healthcare profession, but did not discover dentistry until after he graduated from Middlebury College, in 2004, with a BA in Religion. He then went to Tufts School of Dental Medicine. "Dentistry allows me to help people with their oral health needs and also gives me the freedom to practice exactly the way I think will benefit my patients the most. The patients who receive care from the ODC are an integral and vital part of our community and economy, and I am very excited to help integrate these patients into our healthcare community", he says.

To launch the program with necessary hardware and software, we were fortunate to be awarded two grants, one from Delta Dental, of \$6,520, and one from the Vermont Community Foundation, of \$25,000. We have begun to purchase equipment and hired our very own dental hygienist, Heidi Considine, RDH, who will be supervising the program and taking care of our patients' oral hygiene needs.

"The best part of my work are the wonderful people I get to meet daily. I've always been fascinated with the medical field and have always had a deep appreciation for the complexity of the human body. I am excited to help with any oral health concerns they may have!", says Heidi.

The program will be all set to have its first patients scheduled by early spring.

*"You have truly made all of us who have volunteered in some capacity for the Clinic to feel so very appreciated. It has been such a great pleasure working with you all over these past several years!"*

*- Louise Giovannella effortlessly coordinated Amistad, our volunteer drivers network, for three years*

*"I have really enjoyed spending time in the office this J-Term. Everyone is very friendly and the place has a nice, positive energy."*

*- Patrick Monette is a Junior at Middlebury College and started volunteering in January 2016*



### Flu Clinic Updates

In 2015, the Open Door Clinic volunteer outreach team visited 35 farms in Addison County and gave 270 flu and Tdap vaccines in the field. Above, Ed Sullivan, Steve Brown, Patty Lewis and Carol Causton are ready to take action on a farm.

# 2015 IN REVIEW

## By the Numbers

- 768 Distinct Patients
- 355 New Patients
- 1094 Medical Visits
- 1328 Case Management Services
- 270 Migrant Farm Workers
- 663 Individual Interactions with our Certified navigator
- 63 Patients helped to access affordable dental care
- \$70,777 raised in our annual appeal thanks to our dedicated donors

## Volunteers Make the Difference



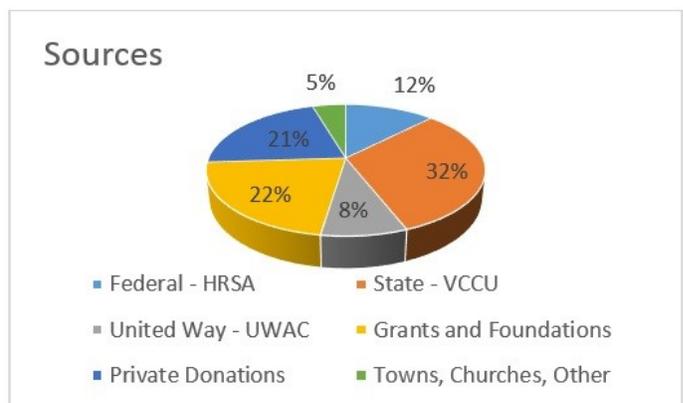
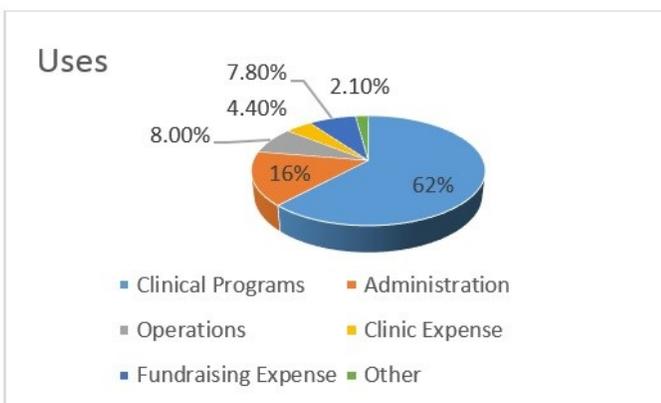
Alice Berninghausen, Tim Cope, ODC's Nurse Manager Jody Brakeley, Mary Beth Tichacek and Ed Sullivan enjoy our barbecue celebration at the Button Bay State Park last fall, with chicken donated by Misty Knoll Farm and live music provided by Connie Leach and Chris Prickitt

In 2015, 144 volunteers provided 2,798 hours of healthcare, medical interpretation, administrative support, and driving, for a total value of \$138,047.

Other in-kind donations from Porter Hospital, such as rent, lab and radiology services totaled \$124,779, for a grand total of **\$262,826**.

We are extremely grateful for being in such an amazing and supportive community! If you know of anyone who could volunteer with the Open Door Clinic, please spread the word. We are always looking for healthcare providers and medical interpreters fluent in Spanish.

## 2015 Year-end Financials - Total Annual Budget: \$310,719



## Meet Staff Member: Cooper Couch



By Abigail Benz

Cooper Couch first joined the ODC as a volunteer medical interpreter. Timing worked in our favor and, since May 2015, he has been part of our staff!

A graduate of Middlebury College, Cooper found his passion for Spanish while in his hometown of Enid, OK. Since childhood, he was surrounded by the language and culture, whether inside school or at the local farms and churches where he volunteered.

Cooper has experienced challenging moments and rewarding ones at the ODC. At times when patients do not make it to their appointments due to perceived barriers, it makes his job a little bit harder to navigate. However, he feels rewarded when some patients share their amazing life stories with him.

Cooper has a deep interest in medicine. He was able to intern at a hospital in Spain, where he got to do rotations with residents and helped with the delivery of over 50 babies!

In the future, he plans to attend PA school. For Heidi Sulis, ODC's Executive Director, "Cooper has been a wonderful asset. We wish him all the best as he pursues a career in medicine."

## ODC's VHC Navigator reaches out to community

Melanie Clark completes 409 interactions with patients and community members between July 1, 2015 and February 22, 2016



Melanie Clark answers the questions of a community member in her office at the ODC

January 31<sup>st</sup> 2016 marked the end of the third open enrollment period for Vermont Health Connect (VHC). Over the past few years, Vermont has devoted a significant amount of resources into creating a state-based health insurance marketplace, allowing individuals to compare plans, apply for subsidies and enroll in their desired plans. Although becoming insured has had challenges, the implementation of the Affordable Care Act - and Vermont Health Connect - has been successful in reducing the number of uninsured residents in Vermont.

According to the 2014 Vermont Household Health Insurance Survey, the number of uninsured Vermont residents dropped from 6.8% in 2012 to 3.7% in 2014. Of the approximately 23,000 uninsured Vermonters, it is estimated that 1,546 live in Addison County.

Over the past few years, the ODC has played a significant role in helping to reduce the number of uninsured Vermonters in our county. In part through a grant from the Department of Vermont Health Access, Melanie Clark, ODC's Certified VHC Navigator, has implemented outreach activities and supported services to get Vermont residents informed and covered.

As published in an online Addison Independent article at the end of January, word of mouth is a powerful tool in our community. In December, Melanie talked to a woman who was left without health insurance due to some changes in her employer's policies. Upset, she attended a presentation by Melanie and from there decided to meet with her at our office. This individual was thrilled to not only find a health plan that met her particular healthcare needs, but to also learn that it was going to cost less than her employer's plan. She soon returned to the clinic with her brother, so that he too could find health coverage.

"It was 7 o'clock on a cold, rainy night, but when we walked into the Open Door Clinic and talked to Melanie, you'd have thought it was noontime on a sunny day. When my brother found out he could afford health coverage, he was so thrilled I think he wanted to hug Melanie", remembers the woman.

In the following week, the brother returned to the clinic with his son, who came with his girlfriend. She's a cook and isn't offered health insurance through her work. Before leaving, she made an appointment for herself and her sister. One person's misfortune in losing her health insurance resulted in five people ultimately becoming enrolled!

From July 1, 2015 to February 15, 2016, Melanie talked to 280 distinct individuals, for whom services were free-of-charge. "The feedback we have had for Melanie's help is consistently glowing! She is kind, knowledgeable, and her tenacity sees many people through successful enrollment", says Heidi Sulis, ODC's Executive Director. "Our community is lucky to have her!", she adds.

## Learning About Cultural and Linguistic Competency



**Maria Mercedes Avila during the training sponsored by the ODC**

On any Tuesday night, or every-other Thursday night, when one walks in to the Open Door Clinic's medical office, it wouldn't feel obvious that we are in the whitest state of

the nation (according to the 2010 census). The waiting room is full of diversity, with people of different skin-colors talking with different accents, waiting to be seen by one of our volunteer health care providers. While 60% of our patients seen in 2015 were Latino migrant farm workers, at any given clinic they may easily comprise 100% of the patient population.

As part of our mission of providing access to quality healthcare services in a compassionate, respectful and culturally sensitive manner, the ODC regularly offers training to volunteers and community members to bridge the cultural gaps and assure a sensitive and culturally-competent approach to delivering health care.

On January 20, the clinic held a free three-hour training for health care providers—volunteers and non-volunteers alike — with Maria Mercedes Avila, Ph.D., Adjunct Assistant Professor in the College of Nursing and Health Sciences at the University of Vermont. Avila's presentation shed light on cultural increasing self-awareness of racial, ethnic and class biases and included how to incorporate cultural and linguistic competence into health care practices. Avila mentioned the importance of creating a diverse work environment, ideally mirroring the populations served, hiring people from different cultural and social backgrounds, and retaining them in the team.

For Julia Doucet, ODC's Outreach Nurse, "Being aware of the cultural contexts from which our patients come is really important in providing health care that is relevant, safe, and effective. It is so important that all of us at the clinic learn how our own culture, language, and background and that of our patients affect how we hear, act, and react to each other."

### Dedicated Volunteer Ed Sullivan Passes Away

We are very sad to announce that our good friend and dedicated volunteer, Ed Sullivan, passed away on Friday, February 26. Ed had been struggling for some time with a rare form of bone cancer. He died peacefully at home, in Ripton, surrounded by his family. We send our sincere condolences to his wife, Kathleen. We will always remember him showing up bright and early with coffee in his hands and donuts for the staff and volunteers during outreach season.

## ODC Spring Training

Pencil it in: Saturday, 3/12 is the ODC's next volunteer training!

Medical providers are welcome to attend from 10 to 11 am; medical interpreters (we are specifically looking for Spanish-speakers) will attend from 10 am to 4:30 pm.

If you are interested, please send us an email so that we can organize materials and plan lunch: [odc@opendoormidd.org](mailto:odc@opendoormidd.org)

The training will be in room 219 at Middlebury College's McCardell Bicentennial Hall.

All are welcome!



**Taylor Shortsleeve, Class of 2015, and Livi Raggio, Class of 2016, were two of the ODC's interns**

## ODC selected to host a summer intern!

For the fourth year in a row, the Open Door Clinic is thrilled to have been selected by the Community Engagement Office at Middlebury College to host a summer Shepherd intern.

The internship lasts ten weeks between June and August. In 2016, seven Addison County organizations that fight poverty and support marginalized populations will be hosting interns.