

## 2019 SUMMER INTERNS

Meet our amazing additional team members

**ANNA DURNING** is a senior at Middlebury College and plans to graduate in February 2020 with a joint major in Geography and Environmental Studies and a minor in Food Studies. "I really appreciate the opportunity to learn more about how the clinic functions and about all of the work that goes into providing comprehensive care. I have especially enjoyed meeting all of the people that put in so much work to make sure that the ODC succeeds, including patients, doctors, nurses, interpreters, drivers, dental hygienists, pizza makers, social workers, and more. They inspire me through their dedication to building a more healthy and just community," she says. Anna hopes to swim in as many waterfalls as possible, eat lots of maple creemees, get to know the greater community outside of the college, and hike all five of the Vermont's highest peaks! "I am also trying to learn how to bake sourdough bread, so any tips would be greatly appreciated."



Anna's program is funded by Middlebury College's Center for Community Engagement, through the Shepherd Higher Education Consortium on Poverty

**NICO PLUME** is also graduating next February from Middlebury College, with a degree in History and Spanish. He began volunteering with the ODC last fall, after he returned from a year abroad, during which he spent one semester in Córdoba, Spain, and the other in Santiago, Chile. "I was able to work on my Spanish a lot during that time and meet many people from other parts of the world. I'm really looking forward to learning about different parts of the ODC this summer, while still being able to participate as an interpreter during clinic." In addition to working with the ODC, he will also be conducting research for a professor of History at the College and will spend many hours this summer in the archives at the Henry Sheldon Museum of Vermont History. Nico hopes "to spend as much time as possible outdoors and in the sun this summer." Born and raised in California, he is looking forward to exploring what the Vermont summer has to offer, as well as getting to know a different side of Middlebury.



Nico's internship program is funded by Middlebury College's Center for Careers and Internships



**KELSEY SMITH** is a senior at Haverford College, in Pennsylvania, graduating in May 2020 with a major in Anthropology and a minor in Health Studies. She grew up in Middlebury and is back this summer to conduct her thesis research on access to healthcare. "I like getting to know the staff and volunteers that are so dedicated to providing a variety of wonderful resources to those that need them in Addison County. Despite the fact that I grew up in Middlebury, it is now clear to me how invisible some of the barriers to healthcare can be in a rural state. It has been a privilege to learn how the Open Door Clinic does their best to navigate these barriers, and to contribute to their success in any way I can. Conducting research into the ways Latinx migrant dairy workers in rural Vermont experience health and wellness will fill a gap in research and help to further our understanding of what a health care system that truly serves all Vermonters would look like."



Kelsey is using her summer back in Vermont to do research for her thesis while interning at ODC



## FROM A PATIENT & VOLUNTEERS

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I want to keep you forever!  
You guys are amazing.

The staff and volunteers make everyone feel part of a family and community.

I enjoy getting to know the patients, their culture, their problems and their joys.

I feel great being part of something that helps the community get their needs met.

The Open Door Clinic is a joyful and welcoming environment to college students.

[It's great] to make connections and to provide comfort and safety.

It's an absolute joy!

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## A GRATEFUL PATIENT'S STORY

JOSÉ is a young man who moved to Vermont from Chiapas in 2017. He came to work on a dairy farm, and had hopes of sending money home to his wife and his son, so his son "could have a good life in Mexico," as he tells us. One cold afternoon in March 2018, José and his employer arrived at the Open Door Clinic office, thinking this was a walk-in clinic. He was pleasantly surprised to find multiple Spanish-speaking staff members at the office, but disappointed to hear there was no doctor present to see him, as he arrived outside of clinic hours. José had been experiencing left side back pain radiating up his side to his chest. He had developed a fever and with the pain worsening, it was affecting his ability to work.

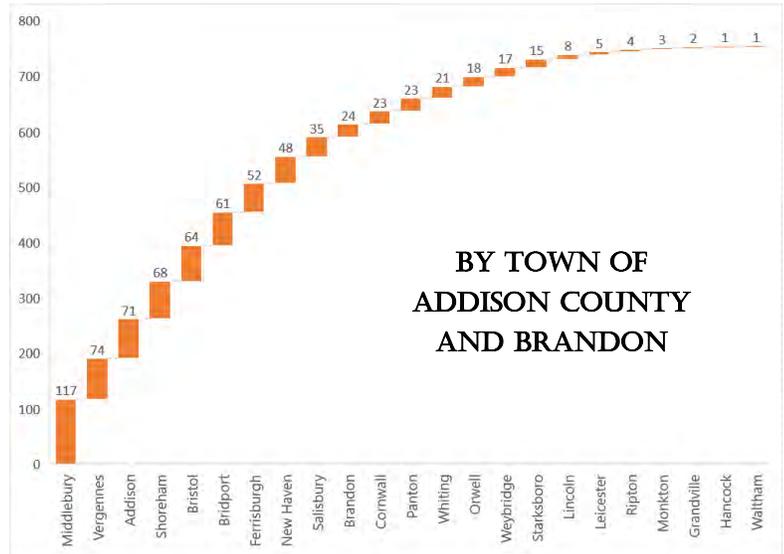
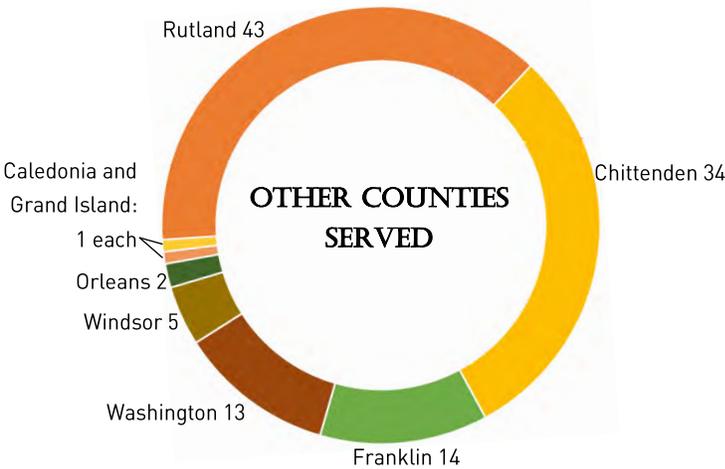
He was triaged and examined by the Spanish speaking nurse, who thought it wise to have him walk over to Porter Hospital's Express Care walk-in clinic. Before he left, ODC's bilingual administrative staff walked him through the process for applying for sliding scale hospital financial assistance and assisted him with the application. His boss was able to document his income on the spot, which allowed for a faster determination.

José and his employer walked up to the clinic, who was waiting for him with the iPad medical interpreter. He was examined and treated with antibiotics for a kidney infection. Although his symptoms soon dissipated, he was left worrying about how he would pay his medical bills, which he imagined to be quite lofty and beyond his ability to repay.

Then came the day when the ODC received his financial assistance determination. When ODC staff told him that they had received his determination, he fell silent. He was ecstatic to hear that his care would be 100% free for him. He shared that when he was back home in Mexico, he had some bills that were very difficult to cover. He was afraid that if he had to pay too much money to the hospital, he wouldn't be able to send money home to his wife, and his son would go hungry. He was effusive in his gratitude, and sent us a picture of his wife and son, of whom he said "he is my everything."

## WHERE OUR PATIENTS LIVE

Total number of patients served in 2018



### BY TOWN OF ADDISON COUNTY AND BRANDON



Heidi Sulis  
Open Door Clinic's Executive Director

## TAKING ODC TO ITS 30TH ANNIVERSARY

JUST over a year ago, we completed a comprehensive strategic planning process facilitated by our friend Bill Roper, a seasoned lawyer and non-profit professional. Brother to the late Marty Roper, a committed volunteer who was instrumental in helping us reach new heights, Bill wanted to dedicate his skills to support us through this significant effort. For several months, seven staff and ten board members were involved in discussing, reflecting upon and defining: a) goals we'd like to achieve over the next three years; and b) the best organizational path to take ODC to its 30th anniversary in 2020. The final plan was approved by our Board in June 2018 and is available on [www.opendoormidd.org](http://www.opendoormidd.org), under the "Publications" tab.

Now, with a year behind us, we must ask ourselves the critical question: how are we doing? To find out, our staff set aside dedicated time to review our goals, split among four categories of work: access, scope of service, support, and organizational continuity & longevity. We met in our customary circle and, taking critical stock of our successes and challenges, shared one by one within each of our areas of responsibility. As one might expect, we hit some bumps and barriers, but by and large, we determined that we'd done a very good job in meeting our goals and targets for year one.

Being intentional about conducting a review process allowed us to make some shifts in our priorities and realize that, realistically speaking, given our current model and framework, some of our goals are a big challenge, and will require effort and focus over a longer period of time. We are proud of the strides we've made and have launched into year two with a sense of accomplishment and positive energy to continue our work. I continue to be fueled by our incredibly talented and committed staff and interns, board, and enthusiastic volunteers.

*Heidi R. Sulis*

## PENCIL IT IN!



### ODC Fall 2019 Training

Saturday, Fall Equinox, 9/21/2019

9:30 am to 11 am for MDs, NPs, PTs, EMTs, Dietitians, Mental Health Counselors and other medical volunteers

9:30 am to 4:30 pm for medical interpreters (fluency in English and Spanish required)

Please send us an email at [odc@opendoormidd.org](mailto:odc@opendoormidd.org) for updates!

## STAY CONNECTED TO ODC



802-388-0137



[opendoorclinicvt](https://www.facebook.com/opendoorclinicvt)

Find us on Facebook for fresh content every week! What about celebrating your next birthday with a Facebook fundraiser for ODC?



Open Door Clinic



100 Porter Drive  
Middlebury, VT 05753

## ANIMATION ABOUT DIABETES: A YEAR'S WORTH OF WORK FOR COLLEGE GRADUATE



Michelle Lehman (floral blouse) and her friend Margo Reigle, a volunteer EMT, present the diabetes animation to Julia Doucet (grey blouse) and Jody Brakeley (stripe blouse), ODC's nurses

MICHELLE LEHMAN grew up in a bilingual household in Colorado. With her mom, from El Salvador, she learned to communicate in Spanish. With her dad, born in the U.S., in English. Early in life she saw how frustrating access to healthcare could be, even if she wasn't aware of the whole scenario back then.

"I remember going to the doctor with my mom and translating for her. It was difficult. I think it was then that I started to have these ideas", she says. By "these ideas", she means the inspiration to put together a five-minute animation about diabetes, narrated in Spanish.

The video was presented to Open Door Clinic's nurses, Jody Brakeley and Julia Doucet, last May. It will soon start to be used at our special quarterly clinics to help explain to patients what diabetes is.

Michelle, a recent graduate in Neuroscience from Middlebury College, never formally volunteered for ODC, but began brainstorming for an animation related to the clinic a couple of years ago, when talking with her friend Yuliana Lopez, also a College grad, who was an active medical interpreter and also

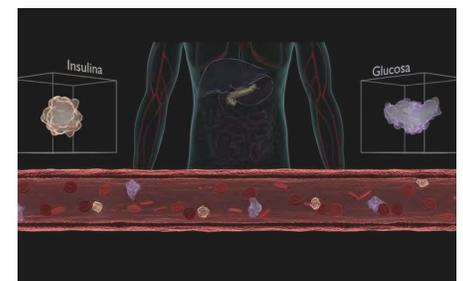
interned with us in the summer of 2017. "When I chose diabetes, I had conversations with more people and it ended up becoming a year long project, between writing the script, modeling and designing the animation. But even if I did everything - except the narration voice -, the project was a super collaborative effort. A lot of credit goes to Paola Meza, Richard Brach, Hector Vila and everyone who provided a lot of input for a culturally sensitive piece that communicates the message the right way. I didn't have to write a thesis to graduate, but I call this animation my 'personal thesis'. At a point, I had 40 or 50 computers on the animation lab at the College processing it," she explains. "If I were to have one single computer working on rendering the animation, it would be working non-stop for about 76 days".

Michelle thinks it was a combination of luck and happenstance that brought her to the ODC. "There wasn't a requirement from the College for a community-based project, but this animation was encapsulated by all my interests and things that move me. I was personally driven to create social impact. The first animation I did was for a professor at Middlebury who presented it at a conference in Florida. After that, a lot of

people reached out to me," remembers Michelle, who got an animation-related six-month internship for Oak Ridge National Laboratory, in Tennessee, starting in July.

"I didn't know it was going in this direction, but those episodes at the doctor with my mom were my source of inspiration. She watched the animation and loved it. It was a cool moment. She was blown away by my interest, as she had no idea I realized how frustrating the health system could be. It took me a while to tell her about it, but she was really happy. After watching it, people are interested in talking about it, so that's great."

Michelle's animation is available on ODC's YouTube channel. Type "Open Door Clinic" on YouTube and you will find it.



Insulin, pancreas, glucose, and blood are the stars in the animation