

ODC THE OPEN DOOR

OPEN DOOR CLINIC

Increasing Access to Healthcare

Fall 2021 | Year 7 | Issue 3

THIS YEAR, AS THE OPEN DOOR CLINIC celebrates 30 years of providing healthcare, we smile in amazement at how far we have come. Established as Community Health Services of Addison County in 1991, we have never strayed far from our grass roots origins: we remain a community-based organization that can only exist because our community believes everyone deserves access to healthcare.

Current and former volunteers, staff and board members, patients, donors and community partners have helped to shape the Open Door Clinic and its success story. As we dare to envision what the next years will bring, and with gratitude for all who have come before us and all who will succeed us, we welcome all the anticipated and unexpected changes that we see on the horizon. In collaboration with many community partners, we look forward to doing our part to keeping our increasingly diverse population whole and healthy.

Heidi



30 YEARS IN THE NEWS

Headlines that tell history

The Village Voice—9/28/1992

Mobile health care program to provide health services to Addison Co.
by Pat Mattison Village Voice 9/28/92

The Valley Voice—11/29/1993

Community Health Services of Addison County holds second low cost dental clinic

The Addison Independent—11/20/1995

Health on Wheels to make final run; clinic set to open

By JOHN FLOWERS
ADDISON COUNTY — There's bad news and good news for low-income folks in Addison County who have no health insurance. The bad news is that Health on Wheels, the mobile health clinic established by Community Health Services of Addison County, is making its final run.



SONJA OLSON

between CHSAC, Porter Hospital and a local physicians' office. "I think everyone has a right to routine health care, and I would hope that we could help open that door," CHSAC Coordinator Sonja Olson said of her hopes for the clinic. Olson and other CHSAC officials have

The Valley Voice—circa 1996

Open Door Clinic Tuesday evening moves to Cedar Ledge Family Practice

The Valley Voice—11/16/1996

Coalition of clinics receives federal funding

The Addison County Independent—2/13/1997

Clinic moves to Porter building
Open-door health care aids many in need of assistance

The Valley Voice—circa 1997

Free clinic praises volunteers who keep healthcare doors open to all

Seven Days—10/31/2007

Weekly Dose

A Middlebury volunteer clinic quietly cares for the un- and underinsured — including migrant workers

The Addison Independent—2/9/2017

Locals embark on American odyssey
Starksboro couple is driving to Brazil, raising money for Open Door Clinic

5/2/2019

Voyage to Mexico a revelation
Open Door Clinic's Doucet reconnects with migrant workers

VPR — 9/26/2021

How Vermont Has Vaccinated Its Farm Workers

Seven Days—10/13/2021

Costly Journey, Vermont's Migrant Farmworkers Tell Their Stories

Burlington Free Press—circa 1992



Nurse practitioner Annastacia Cowles bids Traci Human goodbye after a knee examination at the Health on Wheels health care bus. The bus, sponsored by Community Health Services of Addison County, brings health care to people in rural areas.

Bus brings care to rural residents

The Addison Independent
9/20/2004

Free clinic expands its hours
Growing need spurs Saturday hours
By JOHN FLOWERS

1/3/2008

Area migrant workers receiving medical aid

5/2009

Health grant to aid farm workers
Clinic reaches out to migrant laborers
By JOHN FLOWERS

11/20/2017

Free dental clinic hits its stride
By JOHN FLOWERS
MIDDLEBURY — Around 17

4/29/2021

Free clinic rolls out COVID vaccines to farmworkers
Volunteers visit more than 50 local farms

By JOHN FLOWERS
MIDDLEBURY — Most people see the COVID-19 vaccine as a ticket to freedom, travel and reconnecting with friends and loved ones after 14 months of pandemic-forced seclusion. Consequently, the vaccine leads to its own best advertisement. For the most part, "if you offer it, they will come."

Heidi Salas, executive director of ODC, calls the traveling COVID vaccine clinics "humanity at its best."



6/25/2020
Clinic sees spike in insurance inquiries

Seven Days—6/9/2021

Pandemic All-Star: Julia Doucet, Open Door Clinic Outreach Nurse, Middlebury

ODC'S PEOPLE AND STORIES

Reflections on 30 years of service

I don't have a specific story, but I want to say that every person I've met through ODC — staff or volunteer — has been 110% nicer than your average person!!

It's a joy to work with all of you.



Mary Beth Tichacek
volunteer nurse



Carol Causton
volunteer nurse and
chair of the board



Carol on the cover of the Addison County Independent on July 23, 2012

In 2008, after retiring from a large cancer hospital and moving up to Vermont fulltime, one of the first things I did was volunteer at ODC. Not long after, I joined the Board as well! My roles? Well, I volunteer at clinic as a nurse and go out to the farms and orchards with outreach.

Over the years, I have watched our outreach program grow and grow as the farm owners and their workers have gained more confidence and trust in us. This has been a very important step for the migrant workers. As a result, we are the health service they turn to. We have gone a long way to meet their needs, for example providing interpretation services for all their healthcare visits.

Many of the office staff speak Spanish, as does Julia [Doucet, ODC's outreach nurse], me, and several of the providers. We have developed a close team that goes out to the farms so that when Covid vaccination time came, we were ready and able to give over 1,300 shots.

During the many years of volunteering, what has given the greatest pleasure has been to see ODC grow and enlarge its scope of practice like developing dental care and an extensive outreach program. **What we have been able to accomplish is quite amazing – I always say we are like "the little engine that could".**

My name is Ainaka Luna. I am from Colombia and have lived in Vermont for 16 years. I am a Spanish teacher, a dancer, I love hiking, reading, yoga, and movies. I identify as Afrolatinamerican and love sharing my culture and roots.

I have volunteered with the ODC for more than 10 years. **I love interpreting, I have to be focused and present.** My mind moves fast in tune with the brief instance of listening and delivering the message with accuracy in two languages. Through ODC I received training and I learned about the reality of the Latinx migrant workers in Vermont.

I feel proud, humbled, and grateful for the trust I receive when interpreting and the satisfaction of helping people in fragile moments. I have a good experience in the USA and use my privilege to help people that are excluded in disadvantage only because of their origin or how they came here.

Migrants carry painful luggage. For many, the sorrow of leaving loved ones and lives behind increases when paperwork stops them from doing the hard work they perform here, in the shadows, and often mistreated, contributing without benefits to sustain the agro-industrial cheap labor of this country. Before discriminating, think about where your dairy and produce comes from and thanks the hands of so many migrants that harvested them.

Consider volunteering, make new friends and learn about other cultures to make a better Vermont.



Ainaka Luna
volunteer interpreter



Audrey Goettl
former office volunteer
and staff member

I can't believe it's been 30 years!

My ODC story is the fact that working there inspired me to get into nursing.

Working with two amazing, independent, capable, smart, and badass nurses (Jody Brakeley and Julia Doucet) made me want to be like that!

Now I am working as a nurse at a FQHC in Seattle with a huge Spanish-speaking population (many of whom remind me of our ODC patients) and pursuing my nurse practitioner degree.

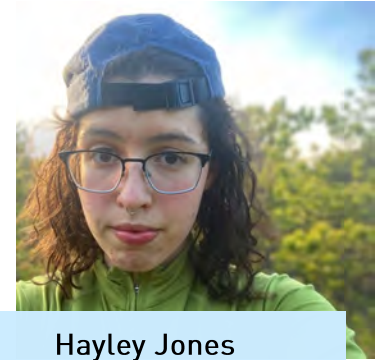
It really all did start after working at ODC!

Working with the Open Door Clinic has been an unexpected blessing.

Not only have I discovered my passion for medical interpretation and deepened connections with folks across Addison County, I met one of my dearest friends!

Even when I'm busy with work, I keep coming back to the ODC.

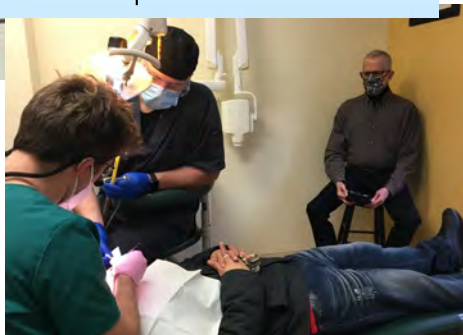
Happy 30th anniversary!



Hayley Jones
volunteer interpreter



Roberto Viguez
volunteer interpreter, evaluator,
proofreader



Above, circa 2001, a novice volunteer. On the right, in 2021, Roberto celebrates his 20th year volunteering with ODC!

By volunteering at the Clinic I have learned two things about something that is very much in the news these days: infrastructure.

I have learned about a community who, by its quiet and efficient work, keeps the county's dairy industry alive, and I have learned about another community who keeps that first group of workers healthy by also doing its job quietly and efficiently, ODC.

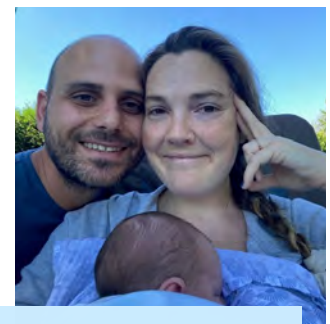
That's what an infrastructure is supposed to do — I am grateful for the chance to be a part of ODC.

Melanie was so helpful and down to earth when assisting me with my Medicaid application.

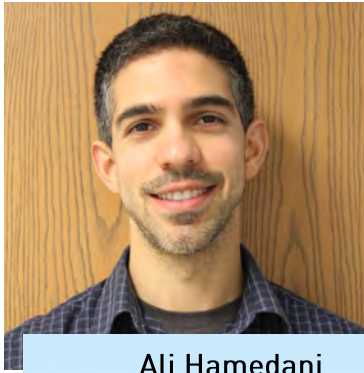
She was professional and personal, and helped make the process so much easier. Never having applied before, it was pretty confusing when I looked online. With Melanie's help, I got set up right away.

She even assisted with getting previous medical services covered which was a huge relief for me and my family. I was able to receive wonderful midwife care throughout my pregnancy and postpartum all thanks to ODC.

Thank you so much!



Carrlee Denault
client



Ali Hamedani
volunteer physical therapist

The Open Door Clinic was the first place I worked with a patient who didn't speak English. Because of an ODC workshop I attended, I knew how to speak directly to the patient. I remember being impressed with the volunteer interpreters at ODC, they are quite good at accurately interpreting.

I was born in Iran and lived there until I was about 7. My family moved from there to the UK, and then to California, where I grew up. We then moved to the East Coast and I came to UVM. Farsi is my first language, so if there is a patient who speaks Farsi, I could treat them without an interpreter. I am learning American sign language and I am interested in improving my Spanish skills to the proficiency level to see patients without an interpreter.

I really like all visits, they are all remarkable in their own way. There was one time when a Spanish-speaking patient came in without checking in, so I asked him if he needed an interpreter and he said he didn't want one. We were able to do the visit without one, so that stood out. If it wasn't his preference not to have one, I would have urged to go ahead and have an interpreter with us. But it went well.

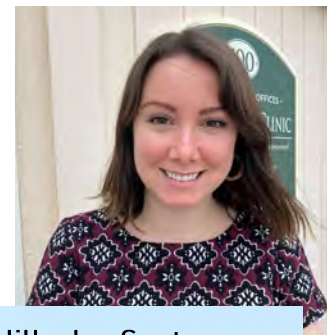
As for hobbies, I really like to bake, biking, and running. I like experimenting with different types of bread and desserts too, and I enjoy making and eating pizza.

I really appreciate that Open Door Clinic is free. I work for a non-profit and the vast majority of our patients have Medicare. But in other settings I've worked in, people's insurances were a factor to consider of how much they had available for physical therapy. So not having that or any other financial things impacting care, I really appreciate that about Open Door Clinic. **It really simplifies things in an important way.**

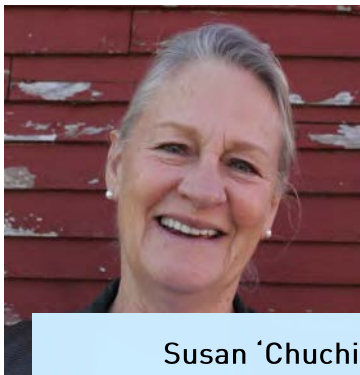
My journey with the Open Door Clinic began in the fall of 2019, when, as a student at Middlebury College, I started volunteering as a medical interpreter and an office volunteer. Then my scholarship-funded student insurance expired with graduation, so I became a patient until the ODC's Health Connect Navigator Melanie Clark worked her magic and enrolled me in an affordable plan. The pandemic was in full swing, and my volunteering adapted to remote interpretation. By February 2021, I was lucky enough to join the team that helped me so much, and my appreciation for their hard work has only grown exponentially.

The ODC makes a difference — to economically and socially marginalized patients excluded from our healthcare system, to farm owners and farmworkers, who can now literally breathe easy knowing their health and livelihoods are protected, and to staff and volunteers, who have been given support and, speaking for myself, opportunities to grow personally and professionally.

The past year and a half have taught us that our community is made stronger when we come together for the health and safety of our neighbors.



Jilly dos Santos
former patient, volunteer,
and staff member



Susan 'Chuchi' Veguez
volunteer interpreter and advocate

My first two “grandkids” whose births I was present at turn 16 this academic year. One turned 16 today and another in December.

Hard to believe.

Both are about to get licenses.

I was serving as the interpreter at an ophthalmologist appointment, and while waiting for the doctor, who was taking a while to come, and staring at the eye-examining devices in the half-dark room, I started talking.

Christiane: “Where in Mexico are you from?”

Patient: “From Tabasco, but I lived a long time in Ciudad Juárez.”

C: “And how long have you been here?”

P: “Five years.”

C: “You came straight to Vermont? Or you spent time in other places?”

P: “Straight here.”

C: “Straight into this cold?”

P: “Yes.”

C: “And always working with the cows?”

P: “Yes. I feel so sorry for them. At 3 am, they don’t want to get out of bed.”

C: “And that cold machine sucking their tits must not be pleasant.”

P: “It indeed isn’t. For the first milking of the day, they must feel very cold.

They look at me as if asking me not to do that with them.”

C: “And don’t you miss Mexico?”

P: “I do. But it’s very dangerous, because of the drugs.”

C: “It must be a beautiful place.”

After a silent second:

P: “You know, it’s really beautiful. One can walk without anyone coming to ask for papers, without fear of the police, with all the freedom in the world.

That is very beautiful.”

I, from my privileged position, had been waiting for him to brag about the Caribbean beaches or the ruins of the pyramids, and had no time to respond, because the doctor arrived just then.

Many years later, I still think often about this person who, before making any complaints about having broken sleep to handle three milking shifts a day, spoke with such affection about the cows, without even mentioning that he wakes up before them himself, and that he also faces colder temperatures below zero Fahrenheit in the winter.



Christiane Kokubo
ODC’s communications
specialist



Alice Berninghausen
volunteer office support

Because I don't speak Spanish and I'm not a health care worker, I spend my ODC volunteer time providing office support. Most recently I have helped with the recording and reporting of the Covid vaccinations that have been given by Julia and the ODC Outreach team. This has been a tremendously complicated and focused effort during the past six months.

Once our clinic got access to the Pfizer vaccine, Julia sprang into action and devised a plan to travel to farms, orchards, ethnic restaurants and other key locations where potentially vulnerable folks live and work. You may have seen our white ODC van around town. Lots of tricky choreography was involved as the first jabs had to be followed in a timely fashion (three weeks later) with the second jabs.

Back in the office, ODC had to follow the protocols of reporting all vaccinations to the State Health Department. We recorded the Covid information that we administered into the database, as well as into individual paper charts (the date & batch number of dose #1 followed by the date & batch number of dose #2). In addition, the results of any Covid tests that had been ordered, whether negative or positive, had to be carefully documented.

When a positive Covid test comes in at any of the locations that we serve, quarantines need to be put into effect immediately, and Julia and our ODC outreach folks continue to be instrumental in informing the employers of how to help their workers minimize Covid spread.

As of October 20, 2021, the Open Door Clinic has administered 1481 vaccination shots to 808 people.

Our work is ongoing. This pandemic is not over. But all Vermonters and especially those of us who live in Addison County can be proud of our state's health statistics that are some of the lowest for Covid in the entire US.

The Open Door team of workers delivers quality health care to a wide variety of Addison County folks. **Every time I go into the office I feel happy and a sense of pride in being involved in improving the lives of citizens of our community.** To get this right, there is a lot of behind-the-scenes choreography involving careful allocation of personnel resources as well as financial resources.

I'm pleased to be involved in the ODC dance.

Do you have an ODC to share?

Would you like to help us rescue ODC's memories by sharing something? An episode, a paragraph, a sentence, a picture, an audio message, a video, a poem, a haiku? Please reach out!

Send us an email at odc@opendoormidd.org or give us a call at 802-388-0137.
We are hoping to have these memories shared on ODC's website and Facebook page.

WELCOME, NEW STAFF MEMBERS!



Alysse Anton

Administrative Assistant

ALYSSE was born in the French-speaking region of Switzerland to a Swiss mother and a Spanish father. After college, she left Switzerland to teach French in Bogota, Colombia.

In parallel of her French teaching career, Alysse also completed a M.A. in mental health counseling and worked at the Chittenden Emergency Food Shelf coordinating the homebound grocery delivery program, and creating social events to create a connection among the often-isolated homebound population.

She is excited to be part of the team at Open Door Clinic assisting with any administrative needs in the office, communicating with patients in the language of their choice, and completing any other special projects that would be useful and respectful to the mission of Open Door Clinic.

When she is not working, Alysse enjoys being outdoors at all seasons, hiking, biking, and rock climbing with her husband and dog.

SAVANNAH has been a nurse for nearly 10 years working in various fields, but most recently in community health specializing in caring for those struggling with substance use disorder. Passionate about human and environmental rights, she is excited to join ODC and facilitate a welcoming and safe atmosphere to any and all, with kindness and a smile.

Savannah believes every human has the right to health, happiness, and safety; and feels very honored to be part of a community that strives to provide that for our neighbors.

Outside of nursing, she enjoys being outdoors, camping, hiking, gardening, listening to music, or creating art, primarily pottery. Her dog, Joplin (after Janis), is next to her on all adventures. She grew up in the Islands, currently lives in Burlington, and loves our beautiful state of Vermont. She looks forward to giving back to our communities who so kindly give to us.



Savannah Solomon

Registered Nurse

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100 Porter Drive
Middlebury, VT 05753

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of Addison County

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charity to benefit when booking your
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processing fees to us!

