



Buenas tardes a todos (“Good afternoon to all”),

After 7 Vermont winters, I have headed back to Los Angeles, CA, to rejoin my family. May 18th was a beautiful, sunny, not-too-warm spring day, and it was my last day at the office. It could not have been any better, especially when lunch consisted of homemade *panuchos* and *tres leches* cake made by our amazing patients.

On my first-ever Tuesday clinic volunteering with the Open Door Clinic back in 2015, I spent the majority of the evening learning what some would call the “dreaded basics”: how to assist patients with new patient paperwork. Growing throughout my various roles at ODC, I came to recognize that the most valuable lessons I would learn about empathy, patience, and problem-solving stemmed from those delicate, initial interactions with patients. Seemingly simple demographic questions on the intake form quickly spiraled into stories about their families, their journeys, and their worries; I was honored and humbled that a patient would trust a stranger like me with their health. Especially on the challenging days, it was this awesome responsibility to the patients that kept me motivated and excited to be part of this work. Needless to say, helping patients with paperwork remained one of my favorite parts of the job up until the end of my time at ODC.

Over the years, as a medical interpreter, college intern, Administrative Assistant, and Dental and Patient Services Coordinator, I watched with awe and admiration at how a nondescript trailer at the back of the hospital parking lot adapted and grew to become an invaluable hub for free health resources, the place where people from all walks of life could seek the services they desired without judgment. There are so many injustices within our current national healthcare system that make what ODC does—providing free, quality healthcare—radical. Having followed patients across county and state lines through root canals, pregnancies, surgeries, mental health experiences, vocational transitions, and a global pandemic, I can say with certainty that the tenacity and compassion of the ODC staff and volunteers are unmatched. ODC demonstrates what real commitment to health equity can look like. To have been able to work for this organization and be welcomed into this community means the world to me.

Leaving the Vermont mountains was difficult, but it ended in the best way possible, with friend and family reunions, graduation celebrations, and a 4,000-mile road trip across the country (thank goodness for hybrid cars). These days, I’ve been settling back in with my family, learning how to surf, dodging COVID, exploring National Parks, and preparing to start the next chapter of my career this fall.

It was such a privilege and blessing to have been able to actually look forward to coming into the office every day and doing meaningful work with you all. I will miss you all very much, and please keep in touch!

Abrazos y hasta pronto (“hugs and see you soon”),

Paola

Paola Meza



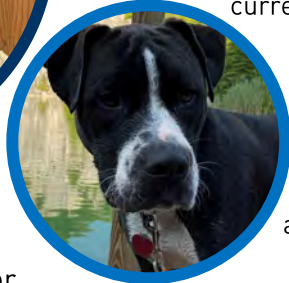
SUMMER ADDITION

FRESH EYES, NEW ENERGY



**Sara Flores-Amper
(and Paulie)**

Patient Services Coordinator



A RECENT GRADUATE from the University of Vermont, where she majored in Food Systems with a concentration in Nutrition and Food Science, Sara is ODC's new Patient Services Coordinator.

Sara is originally from New Paltz, New York, and she has traveled all over the world, spending time living in Israel, San Diego, and New York City. She currently lives in Burlington with her dog, Paulie.

Sara is a certified yoga instructor and enjoys cooking, being outside, spending time with her friends, crocheting, embroidery, and traveling. She is excited to be joining ODC and honored to be part of such a wonderful team.

MOLLY GRAZIOSO is a senior at Middlebury College and plans to graduate with a major in Spanish and a minor in Global Health. Recently back from studying abroad in Córdoba, Spain, for the spring semester, Molly is excited to continue using her Spanish and love for WhatsApp to help with any and all ODC needs this summer.

Though she grew up in Millburn, New Jersey, Molly recently became a "full-time Vermonter" after her family moved to Manchester Center last summer. As an aspiring healthcare professional (a midwife, perhaps?), she's eager to get to know her community's health needs and help facilitate access to all types of care. In her free time, she also looks forward to some Vermont summer favorites: swimming at the Gorge, picnics with friends at the Knoll, and many an iced coffee.

Molly's internship is made possible with funding from the Middlebury College Center for Community Engagement's Privilege and Poverty Program, which supports students to engage in local and national organizations committed to reducing the effects of different forms of inequality.

She is so grateful for the opportunity to pursue this meaningful work with such an inspiring team!



Molly Grazioso

Summer 2022 Intern



Molly just returned from a semester abroad in Spain

WE STRIVE to increase access to health care for people who are not easily served by traditional healthcare venues.

Our flexibility of service provision and wide array of support and wrap around services allow us to accompany our patients through an otherwise hard to navigate system. Over the past year we saw an unprecedented number of patients at a time when healthcare was most needed.

This data is part of our United Way of Addison County grant report and shows our performance between July 1, 2021 and June 30, 2022. All numbers exceeded our projections and we now celebrate all that we did to successfully test and vaccinate our patients, especially those members of our local BIPOC community who were at elevated risk for not being vaccinated.



Volunteer physical therapist Cindy Marshall at clinic

In partnership with the Vermont Department of Health, we embraced a new scope of work with the H2A workers, and provided repeated COVID testing upon entering the U.S. and Vermont, COVID vaccines, and education. This included working with farm and orchard owners to support and help manage outbreaks, housing challenges, and return-to-work issues and questions.

We continue to re-open and expand our services, including our *Mercado Libre* (free store), our quarterly diabetes and women's clinics, and new mental health services. We finally identified a Spanish-speaking mental health provider who can see our patients in Spanish — which is a huge accomplishment!



We held **106** clinics and provided **2,261** patient visits with a healthcare provider



We served **1,315** unduplicated patients



We served **526** Latinx migrant workers and **121** H2A seasonal agricultural workers



We arranged **2,424** Spanish-English interpreted visits for **529** distinct patients



ODC's health insurance navigator served **248** clients

SUPPORT OUR WORK

Via check

Open Door Clinic
100 Porter Drive
Middlebury, VT 05753

On our website

www.opendoormidd.org/donate

On Amazon Smile

Look for Community Health Services of Addison County

On Facebook

facebook.com/opendoorclinicvt

Sunshine Fund

During August 1-15, 100% of donations received from Lawson's Finest Liquids' taproom guests in Waitsfield and through their online store will be allocated to us. Cheers!

A TUESDAY ODC STORY

AS MUCH AS WE PLAN AHEAD, WE NEVER KNOW WHAT TO EXPECT AT CLINIC



By Savannah Solomon, RN*

IN EARLY SPRING, as we were in the midst of our Tuesday evening clinic, I walked a group of eight people: men, women, and children, none of whom we were expecting. All had literally just arrived to Vermont from Mexico that morning. After walking across the desert and making it to Vermont, some had injuries, some were seeking medical appointments, but all were in search of one thing: COVID Vaccines. We were amazed by this. After all they had been through to get here, their priority seemingly remained to protect themselves and others against COVID. They had heard of us through family members in the community and were directed here to have their medical needs tended to. Then and there, we took them all on as patients, got them all vaccinated with either first, second, or booster vaccines, and inquired about what their medical needs were.

One woman in the group was suffering from an eye injury that she had obtained a week earlier from a tree branch while walking across the desert. She had loss of vision, swelling, and redness. A nurse had a look, discussed the case with our volunteer doctor at clinic that night, and we made the decision to bring her to the ER that night. One of our Spanish speaking colleagues completed the financial assistance application with her, walked her up to the ER where she was evaluated, and the attending doctor immediately got her scheduled with an eye surgeon the following day. We followed up with her the next morning, and learned she was unable to pay for the eye surgeon appointment so was going to skip the appointment. We knew we had to find a solution to get her seen quickly. Our nurse called UVM Medical Center Ophthalmology, explained the situation and circumstances – she was a Spanish speaker, with a traumatic eye injury, with zero dollars, living in rural Addison County. UVMMC understood the complexity and seriousness of the situation and we worked together to get her in to an appointment at UVMMC within the next 30 minutes from the start of that phone call. They told us, do not worry about finances, and it is okay if she is late, let's just get her in asap. And we did – she arrived within 30 minutes to Burlington, was seen, and her eye was tended to. It has healed and her vision is back.

All the women of the group were seeking birth control as well, some as young as 18, some 35 years old. They had no forms of birth control with them or in them. We had conversations about birth control and provided condoms in the mean time. However, we only had a few left. So, we called Porter Women's Health, asked if we could have some condoms to hand out, and they gave us a large bag. The following day, Vermont Dept of Health also provided us with a large bag of condoms. That same day, we made calls to Planned Parenthood in Middlebury**, got all the women in for appointments, and they were able to get their preferred form of birth control. This empowered them to take control of their bodies and their lives, to best provide for themselves, their families, and their children they had to leave in Mexico.

**Savannah Solomon is one of ODC's Nurse Case Managers*

*** We will greatly miss our partnership with the former Middlebury Planned Parenthood office staff, but will continue to collaborate with other PP offices and local providers to meet our patients' needs.*

