

¡YOGA EN ESPAÑOL!

A FALL SERIES AT OTTER CREEK YOGA

Otter Creek Yoga founder, owner and teacher Joanna Colwell offered free beginner yoga classes to our Spanish-speaking patients this autumn, in collaboration with the ODC's wellness program. The 6-week series has been a sweet success! Each week 6-8 participants, often including one or two babies, convened at the studio in Middlebury. Joanna created a warm and welcoming atmosphere where babbling babies were not only welcomed but added joy to the experience. The classes, and Joanna's teaching time, were funded through the studio's Yoga Equity Project, which is supported by a generous anonymous donor. Joanna says,

"Yoga spaces tend to be full of very privileged and mostly white people. Breaking that down requires some creative thinking and some effort, so I was just thrilled when ODC approached me about doing this here because it's 100% my mission."



This class has been a wonderful and effective component of ODC's wellness program. Joanna sees yoga as an important mental health and wellness practice. She says that when she takes a good yoga class, she feels like she's just gotten physical therapy, spiritual counseling, and a mental health overhaul! One of the beautiful parts of this series has been the way the group has been able to come together at the end of class. Joanna notes that participants face so much isolation, and that some folks travel a long way to attend. Yoga has been a way for the group to come together and be in community. People stay for tea after class and hang out — and that's maybe just as important as what happens inside the classroom.

2023 Fall Outreach Season

- 260 COVID-19 vaccines provided
- 325 flu vaccines provided
- 63 patients saw a doctor for an appointment in our new van



2023 Fall Volunteer Training

- 23 attendees, including
- 17 interpreter candidates
 - 5 general or medical volunteers
 - 5 Midd J-term internship applicants
 - 1 former free clinic director and a bilingual pediatrician

Thank you to all our volunteers!

DR. ADAM FASOLI, DMD

A CLOSEUP ON THE PERSON AT THE HEART OF OUR DENTAL SERVICES

Since 2016, every Monday, Dr Fasoli, DMD, co-owner of Middlebury Dental Group (MDG), invites migrant farmworkers and other ODC patients to sit in a dental chair and receive vital care — free of charge. The MDG-hosted clinic has provided over \$100,000 in free hygiene and restorative care to our patients this year alone.

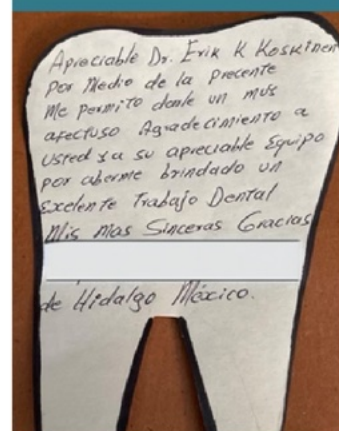
Dr. Fasoli first offered his services to the ODC when he learned that we were paying for limited dental care for our patients (first through a grant and then through a donor who was committed to our dental program). His work started with a few ODC patients and then grew in partnership with the University of New England (UNE).

Fourth-year UNE dental students who are preparing to graduate, volunteer at MDG and give their time and skills to provide restorative dental care for our patients under the supervision of Dr. Fasoli. MDG provides all of the space, equipment, and operatory, and of course the doctor's time. During our interview, Dr. Fasoli joked about how we always ask him to bill us for the materials such as dental drill bits and impression material - but it's more than it's worth to him to figure out the costs of those materials. In his own words, it's a minimal directly out-of-his-pocket expense. When we asked why he continues to devote his time and energy to serving ODC patients for free, he says it really seems like a no-brainer.

"These are important people in the community. There are not a lot of options for folks like this. [Many] don't speak the language. I can't imagine you dumping me in France and saying 'ok, live', and having no support, no anything, and they somehow figure out how to do it. They also go to great risks getting here. You have these individuals who are working very hard, all day long.... I think it's a really important thing to help these folks out. I feel like it's my duty as a neighbor here. I have lots of patients who are farmers and people who work on their farms – it's the only way their [farms are] able to survive."

Dr. Fasoli feels privileged to be in this position doing something he enjoys, is good at, and giving back to the community. Our gratitude goes to Dr. Fasoli for all the work he does to provide our patients with dental care out of the goodness of his heart. Dr. Fasoli, you're amazing!

Several other area dental providers also offer timely support to ODC patients with emergent and emergency dental needs, like extractions, broken or abscessed teeth. Here's a toothy note of thanks sent by one of our patients!



"Esteemed
Dr. Erik K.
Koskinen,

By means of the present I allow myself to extend my very warm thanks to you and your much-appreciated team for having provided such excellent dental work.

My most sincere
thanks"

- A patient with a
broken molar

A FAREWELL AND TWO HELLOS

FAREWELL SARA!



With sadness at her departure, and excitement for what lies ahead, we said a fond farewell this fall to **Sara Flores-Amper**. Sara served as our Patient Services Coordinator from April 2022 to September 2023. Our respect for Sara's skills and the challenges of the role only grew when Communications Coordinator Susannah McCandless stepped into the role for the month after Sara's departure, while we searched for a new hire. Thank you Sara for your time with ODC. We miss you and wish you all the best!

Outreach at the 10/28/23 Mexican Consulate Visit

- 41 people seen
- 11 provider visits
- 23 flu shots
- 22 COVID-19 shots
- 18 blood pressures
- 6 blood glucose tests
- 3 A1C tests
- 4 dental referrals
- 40 packages of menstrual products distributed



WELCOME VICTOR!



We are pleased to welcome **Victor Castro Montoya** to the Open Door Clinic as our new Patient Services Coordinator! Victor is well-equipped for the job, which consists of managing patient appointments and financial aid in English and Spanish – really the glue that holds our clinic together. Victor and his family moved to the U.S. almost two years ago from Chile, where he worked for 8.5 years at Banco de Chile as a customer service executive, helping clients resolve financial problems. Victor says that by being able to speak Spanish as part of his work, he feels a part of the Spanish speaking community here in Vermont. He loves that he is able to provide support to this community and be in relationship with others, which brings him great satisfaction. He is excited to be able to help others and grow and serve his community using all of the skills and experience from his past career that are directly applicable to his role at the ODC. He looks forward to polishing the systems and building efficiency to properly respond to the needs of those he is working with. Outside of his work with the clinic, Victor is an electric guitarist and violinist who would love to connect with local musicians. Please reach out to him with any leads at PatientCare@opendoormidd.org!

WELCOME CHARLOTTE!



Charlotte Reider-Smith first came to the Open Door Clinic interested in the role of patient services coordinator – but we soon learned that there was a better opportunity for her as Heidi's administrative assistant! Charlotte joined the team in September and has been helping out and filling in with whatever and whomever needs a hand, whether it's writing this newsletter, mailing flu clinic flyers, deeming our doctors, or more! Charlotte grew up in San Francisco, connecting and interacting with many native Spanish speakers. She also spent a year living in Ecuador with a host family where she honed her Spanish skills, and has been overjoyed to be welcomed into a community of supportive, brilliant and diverse people, where she has been able bring Spanish back into her life. She loves the opportunity to work for an organization with an unquestionable mission to get behind, and a staff that makes her feel at home. Charlotte graduated from Middlebury College in 2019 and now lives in Goshen, VT. She has spent the last two years building her home and art studio, where she is excited to deepen her roots and continue her oil painting practice!

#VANLIFE

A LOOK INTO THE MAKING OF OUR NEW EXAM VAN



Farewell, Blanca! You served us well.

If you've been following ODC news, you know how excited we are to announce the arrival of our 2022 Mercedes Sprinter outreach van. It's a welcome replacement for our 13-year-old Dodge Caravan, Blanca, transporting us and all our supplies to farms, orchards and beyond. Its arrival has been a revelation, providing private space for medical care during outreach. We spoke with the van's retrofitters to hear what it was like to do the build.

Shawn, co-founder of Burlington-based CHC Vans, spoke to us about how building a medical van, as opposed to their normal "glamping" (glamorous camping) vehicles, is a meaningful and unique venture for them. "I had such a good feeling in my heart about what we were doing – to build a van that will serve the community is on another level for us. And the fact that we're given an opportunity to support the ODC, migrant workers, and [other] underserved members of the community – we thought, this is cool and different."



Welcome, Serafin! Julia and Heidi pose with part of the build team on pick-up day. The van is named after Sara's recently departed grandfather, who frequently shared his warm, welcoming philosophy on life.

Most of the vans Shawn and his dedicated, Burlington-based team of five build are high-end, off-grid retrofits that serve a mostly privileged population: the builds cost roughly \$70,000. CHC offers a phased build over a year+ to make the cost accessible to a wider audience.

The build for ODC represented something different, albeit not completely new: CHC previously built a medical van for a NH mental health clinic. While psychologically, creating our medical van demanded a different headspace and type of endeavor than a glamping vehicle, the physical elements were not that distinct. Like more standard retrofits, our van had customized cabinetry, A/C, heat, power, and running water – mechanicals shared with any CHC build.

Perhaps the most unique element of our van was an exam table donated by Porter Hospital. It took a bit of creativity to install and secure, especially as Tucker noted that vans don't usually have flat floors - or walls, for that matter, demanding unusual precision.

Shawn hopes to continue to expand into more medical builds, and thinks this could be a beautiful extension of their business model. While others have reached out about medical builds (such as an NYC doctor interested in a fleet of mobile medical vehicles), CHC's primary focus continues to be their core clientele interested in camping, skiing and getting off-grid. That's also a value Shawn champions: travel and seeking new experiences.

Ironically, an injury sustained in Mexico on a surf trip first connected Shawn with the ODC: he needed care for his knee when he returned to Vermont. Julia checked him out, and he mentioned he did van builds. Months later, we reached out to see if he and his team were interested in taking on our project. CHC worked in partnership with Julia and Heidi as they aligned the right grants and generous private donor support, supplemented by municipal ARPA funding. Then Shawn, Tucker, and their dedicated team created a gorgeous and welcoming space on wheels. We're so grateful to them, and excited that our van is out in the field. The vision has come to life, and has already meaningfully improved the ways we provide outreach care. You can learn more about Shawn and Tucker, and their expertly crafted van builds, at CHCvans.com.



Julia runs through the van's systems with Tucker.