

## A Safe Place to Rest



Shelter Coordinator, Maggie, with guest, Anne.

■ *Written by Janine Fleri. Janine works in our Community Relations and Development Department and spent an evening visiting with guests in our new Winter Warming Shelter.*

It's an average night at CHCB's Winter Warming Shelter; doors open at 6pm and a steady stream of people, many of whom are regulars, filters in. Serving as the area's only low-barrier shelter, this space on South Winooski Avenue has been welcoming any adult over the age of 18, regardless of sobriety, since November 1, 2016 as long as they follow some basic rules of conduct.

As the guests get settled, it becomes obvious they share common immediate goals: get out of the cold, get off of their feet, and have some food. Tonight's dinner: Pasta with sauce and sausage, along with a salad. When the group is invited to line up at the

kitchen, everyone is polite and gracious — "please" and "thank you" bookend each serving of food.

"It's a nice thing here. Come in, have dinner, watch a movie, go to bed," one guest comments while a Harry Potter movie plays on the donated TV. A handful of other guests pepper the sofas in the living room area, one man reads a magazine, another pops his head in to the shelter coordinator's office to ask for a letter so he can apply for a library card. The common want amongst the guests here is a safe place to rest.

"Lately I've been coming in here and going to bed early. It's not from anything going on or from walking around, it's just being homeless itself is draining," says Anne, a guest who has relied on the shelter since the start of the season. "I'll come in here, socialize

## Thank You Donors!

**55** meal donors covering 125 dinners (and counting!)

**\$49,690** in monetary donations restricted to the warming shelter, including 18 days of extended operational funds from UVM Medical Center

**\$5,144** in donated items like furniture and books

**13** local agencies as community partners such as the First United Methodist Church providing showers

**40** shelter volunteers

a little bit, have dinner – I love that they serve dinner and you don't have to worry about it. I feel safe here. Out there I don't feel so safe."

Thanks to the generosity of the local community, Anne and her peers can enjoy security and creature comforts in the form of donated clothes, bedding, and meals. The shelter, itself, is made homier by contributions of furniture, décor and entertainment.

At present, the shelter is set to close on April 18. In a perfect world, the shelter would operate year-round, providing a place for guests to build relationships and connect with the services and support they need for a lifetime home. For CHCB, health care is more than just a doctor's visit; it's a comprehensive approach to sustainable wellness for all of our community members.

## A Note from Alison

“CHCB stands as testimony to the power of the Federally Qualified Health Center model and what can be grown and nurtured as a community.”

Alison Calderara, CHCB CEO



■ In 1994, I was one of eighteen CHCB staff who helped to start Vermont’s second Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC). United by a common vision of access to affordable health care for all Vermonters, we were fueled and inspired by the community need we saw every day in our tiny clinic. Over the years, our dreams grew to realize a School-Based Dental Center, our

Safe Harbor and Pearl Street health centers, easy access to psychiatry services, supportive housing and now seven sites welcoming 25,000 Vermonters from all walks of life. CHCB stands as testimony to the power of the FQHC model and what can be grown and nurtured as a community.

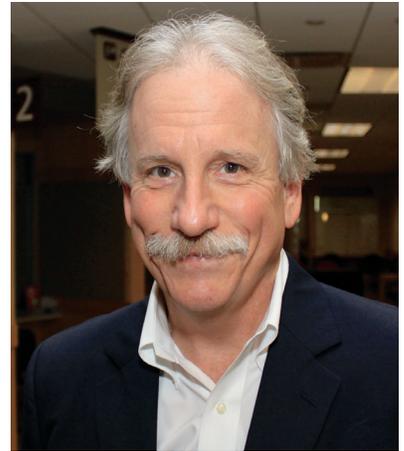
Today, now being honored as CHCB’s

newest CEO, I know that while CHCB is not as recognizable as that original storefront clinic, the same heart, mission and values are woven into all we do. Despite the constant change demanded by health care, CHCB will continue to stand strong and committed to community, the health and wellbeing of all Vermonters, and our timeless mission of care.

## Missions United with Dr. Peter Gunther as Chief Medical Officer

“...we had the same mission of improving lives, creating access, and being here for people – all people – who need us.”

Dr. Peter Gunther, CHCB CMO



■ Although he would humbly and politely refuse this statement, Dr. Peter Gunther is one of the most respected, knowledgeable and admired doctors in the community. Known for his proactive, kind and comprehensive approach to health care, it’s no wonder why CHCB is thrilled to welcome Dr. Gunther as Chief Medical Officer.

practices in health care forward. As he noted: “It’s very important that we focus on our external relationships; certainly with other organizations and health care partners, but also with practices that are brought on as new CHCB sites. There is a lot we can learn from each other and we can take what’s best from each site and use it toward better patient care.”

And he would know about what it’s like to join CHCB. As a founding partner

of GoodHEALTH, an internal medicine practice in South Burlington, he helped onboard them as the seventh CHCB site in July of 2016. “Our partnership made sense, not only for the long-term sustainability of GoodHEALTH, but because we had the same mission of improving lives, creating access, and being here for people – all people – who need us. This is exciting.”

Dr. Gunther sees this new position as the greatest opportunity to bring best

# A Full Circle of Support

■ The Bosnian Genocide in the 1990's brought a wave of immigrants to Burlington. One of these new Vermonters was Medina. She remembers that the transition to her new home was not an easy one. "Although I was 17 and had graduated, I was placed back in school as a sophomore to learn English. The other students picked on me and called me an alien." It took a while for her family to learn the language and become accustomed to life in America. One constant that helped bridge this gap was the care she received at the Community Health Centers.

Like most refugees who arrive in our community, Medina began care at CHCB shortly after her arrival. "When you finally get settled, that's when you need to start processing what happened to you – that's when you

end up with PTSD. The doctors at CHCB played a big role in my recovery from the trauma I experienced during the war." Then, when she was diagnosed with cancer three years ago, it was the same doctors who helped her through it. "They supported me every step of the way."

Medina now works at CHCB's Patient Support Center, where she helps new Vermonters connect to the health and human services they need to transition to life in the states. On any given day, you can find her working with patients to complete a Medicaid application, apply for 3SquaresVT, look for housing assistance, and more. "Working with refugees is beyond rewarding and I'm grateful for the opportunity to help those like me who have come to Vermont seeking a safe place to call home."



CHCB's Patient Support Center helps patients connect to services such as:

- **Insurance (Medicaid, VT Health Connect, etc.)**
- **CHCB's Sliding-Fee Scale**
- **Homeless Healthcare Program (HHP)**
- **3Squares Vermont**
- **Ladies First**
- **Help with cost of prescription medications**
- **UVMHC Health Assistance Program (HAP)**
- **Eye care**
- **Other state and local services as needed**

## Empowering Patients with Affordable Options

CHCB is part of a Federally Qualified Health Center pharmacy network which offers our patients reduced-cost prescriptions, even available by mail-order, and also benefits us as a nonprofit organization.

According to Medical Assistant Amanda Duffy, one patient was paying over \$600 for his monthly refill at a commercial pharmacy. "We told him about the CHP, and now he's paying \$11 for a 30-day supply of the same medication."

For our patients, the savings enables and empowers them to manage

chronic health conditions like diabetes.

"We had a patient whose blood sugar levels were out of control. His endocrinologist told us he was being non-compliant with his treatment plan," shares Deb Purvis, the Practice Manager at our South End Health Center. "But really, it was that he simply couldn't afford his medications. We put in a referral to enable his endocrinologist to prescribe through CHP, and now his care plan is back on track."



## Help CHCB do what's right, no matter what comes.

Dear Friends,

CHCB Family Physician, Dr. Karen Sokol, has a most unusual practice. Operating out of her Subaru office on wheels, Dr. Sokol hits the road every day for CHCB. As one of Vermont's few home-visit-only physicians, Dr. Sokol cares for some of our community's most frail and vulnerable community residents:

- Lorraine is 80-years-old and is fiercely independent. She still has a bucket list, her many wonderful grandchildren, and a best friend who shares her love for ice cream. Lorraine also suffers from an autoimmune disease and an aging heart and kidneys. Homebound and struggling with debilitating side effects of her medication, Lorraine stopped taking her prescription. She is deeply afraid of losing her independence and zest for life.

Dr. Sokol works gently with Lorraine, relaying the concern of her specialist about more damage to her body without the medication. After working together on a new treatment plan and medication, compromise is forged. Lorraine is ready to try again.

- Nancy is finally housed after drifting in and out of homelessness. Despite her struggles with mental illness, Nancy has been able to live independently. At this visit, something has changed. Nancy has lost weight and stopped showering. She tells Dr. Sokol food just doesn't taste good anymore.

Dr. Sokol is worried Nancy has early onset dementia. She arranges for home health visits and regular weight checks. She will increase her visits and begins the process to move Nancy to assisted living where she can stay safe, fed and bathed.

CHCB's Doctor-at-Home Program is just one of our innovative primary care services that make sense for all of us. This "ounce of prevention" keeps Vermonters independent, out of the hospital, safe and cared for within their community.

For over 40 years, caring people like you have helped CHCB stand strong and stay focused on the health of our whole community. Together, we fight for health care for all Vermonters. We deliver the quality primary care and support services – like those of Dr. Sokol – that everyone needs to stay healthy. We care for our community's most vulnerable in compassionate, yet cost-effective, ways.

Our mission needs you now more than ever.

Many thanks,

Alison Calderara, M.Ed.  
Chief Executive Officer

**P.S. A study of Medicaid claims 13 states, including Vermont, confirms total cost of care for health center patients was 24% lower.\* In these uncertain times, please help CHCB deliver sensible, affordable health care that works for everyone.**

\*Bi-State Primary Care Vermont Sourcebook, January 2017.



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# Salud

Presented by

Burlington Health & Rehab | **Genesis**

Proudly Co-Chaired by Patrick Robins, Lisa Schamberg and John Crabbe

**Thursday, April 13 at 6:30 pm**

**The Essex, Vermont's Culinary Resort & Spa**

"Salud" is the premiere local auction of upscale wines, craft beers and unique experiences with a food and wine pairing.

**Tickets on sale now: [www.chcb.org/donate/salud](http://www.chcb.org/donate/salud)**

The Community Health Centers are funded in part through a grant from the U.S. Health and Human Services Administration.

All CHCB programs and services are accessible to people with disabilities. This newsletter is available in alternative formats upon request.

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