

School's back in session, bringing many talented college and university students to SASH teams throughout Vermont. Partnerships between SASH and Vermont institutions of higher education enable SASH to expand programs and services, conduct research and undertake special projects while fulfilling students' needs for internships, service learning and upper-level course completion. This month we focus on these rewarding college-community linkages.



UVM's Center on Aging's SASH Fellowship starts 8th year

The [Center on Aging at the University of Vermont](#) has been an instrumental partner in SASH, starting in the early planning and pilot years of 2008-09. Since 2010, the Center has funded a year-long SASH fellowship, providing SASH with 20 hours per week of the services of a UVM medical student or a licensed RN pursuing a UVM doctorate in nursing.



“It’s an invaluable partnership that significantly strengthens and expands our work,” says Molly Dugan, statewide SASH director. “We’ve always had excellent students, thanks to the help of Jeanne Hutchins [the Center's executive director] and Mary Val Palumbo at UVM.”

This year’s nursing fellow is Sean Fiore RN, pictured above with Molly Dugan. Sean puts in 10 hours a week as part of a SASH team in Burlington and devotes the other 10 hours to research and special projects to support the statewide operation of SASH. His most recent focus has been updating materials on suicide prevention for use by statewide SASH staff. Sean is in his third year of the three-year [Doctorate in Nurse Practitioner program at UVM](#).



SASH college-community linkages: a sampling

- In Vermont’s Northeast Kingdom, [RuralEdge](#) partners with Vermont Technical College to bring student nurses to SASH sites, where they complete health assessments and record vital signs. “The SASH participants love the opportunity to meet someone new and be helpful in their learning -- and of course we benefit by getting many people assessed in one day,” says SASH program administrator Sylvia Dean.
- Castleton University nursing students enrolled in the upper-level Public Health Nursing course work with [Rutland Housing Authority](#) SASH teams, assisting SASH wellness nurses while gaining practical experience through a partnership that has been in place for years.
- University of Vermont (UVM) physical-therapy students play an important role in Vermont’s statewide falls prevention work, providing falls-risk screenings to older Vermonters through the “Stay Steady Vermont” program. SASH sites throughout Vermont host these screenings, which have ramped up this month in recognition of Falls Prevention Awareness Month (see [fallsfreevermont.org](#)), as have Tai Chi classes led by SASH staff throughout Vermont. In one of the many ways the organization supports efforts to prevent falls, [UVM Medical Center Elder Care Services](#) funds Tai Chi leader training for SASH staff.

- SASH teams in northwest Vermont reap numerous benefits from the placement of UVM graduate students in nursing (see following post) and dietetics at SASH sites, as well as pharmacy students from the Colchester campus of the [Albany College of Pharmacy & Health Sciences](#).



UVM medical, nursing students extend SASH's reach

A longtime collaboration with UVM through its Community & University Partnerships and Service Learning (CUPS) program places dozens of graduate nursing students with SASH each semester. All of the students are registered nurses enrolled in the graduate service-learning course “Caring for the Older Adult.”



The students and their SASH placements are overseen by Mary Val Palumbo, D.N.P., APRN, professor and director of interprofessional education with the UVM College of Nursing & Health Sciences, pictured here (back, 2nd from right) with Molly Dugan and this year's group of RNs working with SASH.

The RN students are in the first semester of their second year of the three-year doctorate program to become nurse practitioners. They work six hours one day a week at SASH sites conducting assessments – at least 80 a year in total, says Palumbo.

“It’s a great ‘win-win’ for SASH and for the students,” notes Dugan. “Not only are the students experienced and truly interested in learning about working with older adults, but given our limited staff and resources, they play a huge role in SASH’s work.”

Having graduate medical and nursing students work with SASH participants is “a great eye-opener for students,” adds UVM's Mary Val Palumbo. “By visiting people where they live, students get to see what the real world is like and what it takes to manage complex, chronic conditions in older adults, and they learn about validated tools to assess conditions such as anxiety and depression.”

Another important lesson students learn, says Palumbo: “They get to imprint in their mind what an older person looks like and what they need to maintain their health, versus working in a hospital where the only elders they see are ill and not doing well. They visit 90-year-old elders in their homes and see that they are doing very well, thank you very much.”



SASH diabetes pilot in Rutland yields positive results

Results from a SASH pilot with the Rutland Housing Authority SASH teams are in. The pilot set out to measure the impact of adding a community pharmacist to the SASH team for the purpose of helping SASH participants with diabetes or pre-diabetes better manage their condition. Pharmacist Marty Irons, of Rutland’s Beauchamp & O’Rourke Pharmacy, participated on the SASH team. [Download this summary](#) (PDF file) for details.



Partners represented on SASH teams throughout Vermont include members and affiliates of these organizations:



A comprehensive list of all the valued partners in SASH can be found in the [SASH Partnership](#).



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