

**RED ZONE:** The U.S. spends \$600 million a year to test the blood supply, DMS's Dr. James AuBuchon told the *Wall Street Journal*. One of the first U.S. hospitals to diversify its blood sources, DHMC began its own blood donor program in 1996.



## HERE COMES A CLOWN



**P**atch Adams taught me that joking around at the bedside to help distract and relieve the suffering of a patient is a way to show that you really care about that person," says second-year medical student Jonathan Strutt. Adams, a noted comedian-doctor, runs the Gesundheit! Institute, where Strutt recently spent three days learning about topics ranging from relief of suffering through clowning to equal access to health care.

Strutt felt that Adams "said it best when he mentioned, 'Entertaining is not my primary goal. I am looking to relieve suffering.'" Strutt's own efforts in that regard include playing the mascot of the Children's Hospital at Dartmouth (CHaD)—a friendly blue dinosaur known as the CHaD-a-saurus.

Strutt would love to one day work in a "hospital designed by children," he says. "It will be a place where kids can learn about their illness through interactive exhibits [and] get distracted from their pain and suffering by having themed inpatient rooms, amusement rides, and fun activities." L.S.C.

## SEED MONEY FOR SCIENCE



**S**everal budding scientists at Dartmouth got a boost this spring, thanks to a \$1.5-million four-year grant from the Howard Hughes Medical Institute (HHMI). The grant is funding up to 25 paid research internships for sophomores at Dartmouth College; 8 of the 15 HHMI interns chosen so far are working with members of the DMS faculty.

The grant is allowing science education to bloom at Dartmouth in other ways, too, by funding nine new teacher-training fellowships for postdoctoral scientists and an outreach program for third- to sixth-grade students. This past winter, with the help of the Montshire Museum of Science, Dartmouth undergraduate and graduate students—including three from the Medical School—conducted weekly in-school "science camps" in the nearby Rivendell School District.

"Our students will gain as much as the Rivendell students," predicts Nancy Serrell, associate director for outreach at Dartmouth's Center for Environmental Health Sciences, as well as the coordinator of the HHMI program at Dartmouth. "This is the way outreach is supposed to work. There's a balance of benefit that goes in both directions. . . . Students who apply their science in outreach are more likely to stay in science." J.D.

## Students win grants and honors for free clinic

**F**or the past four years, Dartmouth medical students have been doing the usual—going to class, doing lab work, hitting the books. And running a free medical clinic for uninsured residents of New Hampshire towns along the Mascoma River.

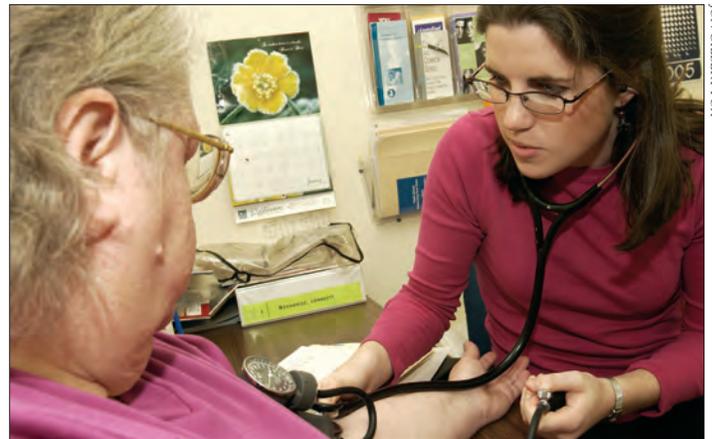
Twice a month, in donated space in Canaan, the Mascoma Valley Free Health Clinic provides primary care to those in need. The idea originated as a 2003 Schweitzer Fellowship proposal by Amy Noack '05. Ever since, DMS second-year students and DHMC residents have kept the clinic going. Over 50% of the current second-years helped at the clinic this year, and more than 60% of first-years plan to volunteer next year.

**Time:** Working at the clinic gives students an early chance to apply classroom knowledge. They learn how to relate to patients as they gather medical histories so the resident in charge can make treatment decisions.

"Students do not have the same time constraints as do full-fledged doctors," says fourth-year student Matthew Laquer, "enabling them to have longer interactions with patients."

**Care:** Kristen Yurkerwicz, a second-year, recalls a teenaged patient who came in for a pregnancy test. "The second-year student that evening got to have a very thorough and thoughtful conversation with the girl and her mother," says Yurkerwicz. The student "and the teen really bonded that night, and both left with a very positive clinical experience." The teen was then referred to DHMC for further testing and prenatal care.

The clinic, a satellite of the free Good Neighbor Health Clinic in White River Junction, Vt., also introduces students to the realities of providing care to uninsured patients with chronic conditions. For patients with high blood pressure, high cholesterol, or diabetes, the cost of



JON GILBERT FOX

Medical student Jessica Hayward, volunteering here in the Mascoma Free Clinic, is learning not just how to take a blood pressure, but how to connect with patients.

medications can be daunting. “One pill can be so expensive that it wipes out an entire month’s income,” says fourth-year Theodore Yuo, who has helped raise money for the clinic. Now, a local pharmacy provides medications to the clinic for one dollar above wholesale. And, Yuo adds, students are learning that “there are other ways of treating these illnesses than the most expensive.”

Coordinators hope to expand the clinic’s services and offer counseling on diabetes, tobacco, and healthy lifestyle choices. “A patient’s health-care needs [go] well beyond their visit to a provider’s office,” says second-year James Town. “We’ve helped them identify lifestyle issues they can target, such as diet, exercise, and smoking cessation.” The students have also set up a website containing health tips (see [www.dartmouth.edu/~mascoma](http://www.dartmouth.edu/~mascoma)).

**Money:** The “growth-limiting factor” in the clinic is funding, says Laquer. Yet students find innovative ways to raise money, holding raffles, talent shows, and even a triathlon. The clinic has also been supported by grants—including a \$20,000 “Caring for Community” award from the Association of American Medical Colleges.

The clinic’s latest honor was Dartmouth’s 2007 Martin Luther King, Jr., Social Justice Award, in the student organization category. The “Mascoma Clinic’s success,” says M.D.-M.B.A. student Jessica Morgan, “is indicative that community service is an integral part of life here at DMS.”

DANIELLE THOMAS

## INVESTIGATOR INSIGHT



In this section, we highlight the human side of biomedical investigation, putting a few questions to a researcher at DMS-DHMC.

**Lisa Sutherland, Ph.D.**

**Research Assistant Professor of Pediatrics**

*Sutherland, a nutrition scientist, studies environmental influences on childhood obesity. Her research focuses on the impact of media—such as advertising and product placement in movies—on kids’ food and beverage choices. She joined the faculty in 2006.*

**How did you get interested in your area of research?**

I have a complete fascination with pop culture. Having the opportunity to combine that with nutrition and health trends is a win-win for me.

**What misconceptions do people have about your field?**

Most people still think of nutrition professionals as “lunch ladies.” Most of nutrition science training is actually basic science, with an emphasis on chemistry and metabolic pathways.

**What’s your favorite nonwork activity?**

I like to cook and travel. Any combination of the two is just a bonus.

**If you could travel anywhere, where would it be?**

I would like to travel Africa—from Morocco to Madagascar—and while there volunteer with USAID or the Hunger Project.



**What about you would surprise most people?**

I am quite shy and scared to death of large crowds. You won’t catch me at a mall or department store during the holidays.

**Of what professional accomplishment are you most proud?**

My work as one of the lead scientists on a nutrition rating system for Hannaford supermarkets. The work started out with a very specific purpose but has ended up creating national and

international discussion on flimsy nutrition and health-claim labeling standards and the need for a standardized rating system. We did what many said was impossible. I am very proud of our work.

**What is the greatest frustration in your work?**

How fast nutrition science continually changes and the confusion that causes for consumers.

**And the greatest joy?**

How fast nutrition science continually changes and the rapid advances in medicine, pharmaceuticals, and policy because of these changes. Nutrition is still a relatively new science. Vitamin C wasn’t isolated until 1928, and we didn’t have a health and nutrition monitoring system in the U.S. until the late 1960s. It’s bound to cause some conflict and confusion.

**What historical event would you most like to have been present at in person?**

The Last Supper. There’s got to have been good food, wine, and conversation, right?

**What websites do you use most often?**

J. Crew, Ann Taylor, Nordstrom’s, Pottery Barn, Williams-Sonoma . . . You see the trend.

**What do you ultimately want to discover?**

How to end world hunger. There is enough food produced to adequately nourish everyone in this world; the problem is inequitable distribution.

**What do you admire most in other people?**

Patience. I am lacking in this area but working on it constantly.

**What’s the hardest lesson you ever had to learn?**

How to live without my mom after she died when I was 18. I am a much stronger person from the experience, though.

**What is your idea of earthly happiness?**

Wine and dark chocolate.

**Do you have a treasured possession?**

Yes. My children, Parker, 14, and Samantha, 6.