



**Champlain Senior Center Executive Director Holly Sullivan and Program Outreach Coordinator Mur DiBenedetto have planned three multicultural dinners at the center with funds awarded to them from an AARP Community Action Grant.**

LYNN MONTY, Free Press

## community helper

# Grant helps seniors host multicultural dinners in Burlington

If you're looking for a global experience close to home, head to the Champlain Senior Center.

Champlain Senior Center Executive Director Holly Sullivan and AmeriCorps State Program Outreach Coordinator Mur DiBenedetto have planned three multicultural dinners at the center with money awarded to them from an AARP Community Action Grant. Throughout the year, the center will invite members of Burlington's new American community of Bhutanese, Nepalese, Vietnamese, Bosnian and Somali Bantus to share a meal with seniors.

"Our goal is to increase tolerance and understanding," Sullivan said.

DiBenedetto said the AARP grant application was her first. "I was really nervous because I had never written a grant before, but I plan on staying in the nonprofit world, so I jumped at the opportunity. Thankfully I had a lot of help from the board."

Sullivan said that she and DiBenedetto had talked about starting multicultural dinners for a while, but were unsure

of how they could make it happen with their limited staff and resources.

"We are so pleased to have received this grant," she said. "It's going to help enormously in being able to reach out. These dinners will break the ice, and my hope is they will be just the beginning of an infusion of art, craft, dance and song that can be shared. It gives us a chance to tap into the rich cultures in our community. We are very enthusiastic."

Three local projects were selected to receive \$2,000 each from AARP, Burlington K.I.N. (see story, Page 17), Champlain Senior Center and 127 Bike Path Entrance Improvement Group.

For more information about the Champlain Senior Center visit 241 N. Winooski Ave. in Burlington or [www.champlainseniorcenter.org](http://www.champlainseniorcenter.org), call 658-3585 or e-mail [holly@champsenior.org](mailto:holly@champsenior.org).

— Lynn Monty, Free Press