Albany SNUG (guns spelled backwards) is an exemplary community-driven and UAlbany-affiliated partnership providing an innovative, multi-faceted and evidence-based public health approach to addressing and preventing violence among Albany youth and young adults ages 16 to 25. SNUG works to stop the incidence of violence at its source through peer intervention and by providing educational supports to the community.

SNUG grew out of widespread public concern about gun violence in Albany. The City of Albany Gun Violence Task Force, the Gun Violence Prevention Implementation Team, and the Community Coalition to Prevent Violence—all identified the need for SNUG services which are based on the CeaseFire Chicago model. Asked by the Coalition to help secure funding, UAlbany’s School of Social Welfare (SSW) Dean Katharine Briar-Lawson, faculty and staff obtained an initial grant of $500,000 from the New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services to develop Albany SNUG. SSW faculty, Dr. Eric Hardiman and Dr. Lani Jones, were the Co-Principal Investigators, responsible for the implementation, management, oversight and evaluation of the SNUG program during the first year.

Since the beginning, the Trinity Alliance of the Capital Region has provided the services under the leadership of Chief Executive Officer Harris Oberlander. Trinity is a non-profit recognized for its dedicated work in addressing pressing social needs in the South End and Arbor Hill. Key partners are the the City of Albany Police Department, led by Chief Steven Krokoff, and Albany Medical Center with Kim Fine, a senior vice president, serving as the hospital liaison to Albany SNUG. The challenging work of violence interruption is provided by Albany SNUG staff currently led by Director Rahiem Jones.

Albany SNUG is truly a community-driven initiative. A wide array of stakeholders, community leaders and volunteers as well as the School of Social Welfare continue to provide support and assistance to sustain SNUG. Financial supporters have included: New York State, the City of Albany, the faith-based community, financial institutions and corporations.

Several key elements characterize this program’s public health approach. The Albany Police Department, for example, provides crime data and mapping and critical information on where interventions should occur. Albany Medical Center provides hospital-based violence intervention and trauma treatment. Based on the Chicago model, street-based violence interrupters and outreach workers who have life experiences similar to the youth they are trying to reach use their credibility to help stop violence before it occurs. They engage individuals involved in violent incidents in order to redirect them to more productive lifestyles.

Further, SNUG works to empower community members, building their capacity and collective efficacy to become involved. The program focuses on prevention and early intervention by obtaining meaningful community input, mobilizing community resources, and promoting positive youth development.
The evaluation conducted by SSW faculty during the first year suggested that Albany SNUG has had a positive impact on community safety and reducing crime in two neighborhoods (Arbor Hill and West Hill) with disproportionately high rates of violence.

Umaru Barrie, UAlbany Junior and founder and president of Sankofa Africa Organization, has helped lead UAlbany students in addressing many local and international humanitarian needs, connecting his academic goals to his service to the community. Inspired by his childhood experiences in Guinea, Mr. Barrie’s intention is to impact the lives of individuals in underdeveloped countries by becoming a neurosurgeon and biomedical researcher.

An exceptional student double majoring in Human Biology and Chemistry, Mr. Barrie has already begun to impact communities through the numerous fundraising and awareness-raising campaigns he has led on campus. In addition to founding the Sankofa Africa Organization, a service organization dedicated to improving the quality of life in Africa, Mr. Barrie has also founded UAlbany’s MALIK Fraternity chapter, an Afrikan fraternity working to inspire and train “change agents” for socially responsible causes.

Through these two organizations, along with local and global community partners, Mr. Barrie has raised awareness and funds for famine relief, homeless shelters, Hurricane Sandy relief, and the New Sudan Jonglei Orphans Foundation in South Sudan. His efforts have galvanized the campus community to address several social and humanitarian causes.

Mr. Barrie’s community engagement efforts include a number of community partners. He has worked with the local philanthropic organization Distributaries to help raise funds for famine relief. At the New Sudan Jonglei Orphans Foundation, formed by former child soldier Peter Garang Deng, Mr. Barrie serves as a fundraising board member, helping to support the educational pursuits of eight students orphaned by the conflict between North and South Sudan. He also traveled to Uganda with The Giving Circle, Inc., to help deliver workshops to elementary students and deliver medical supplies to clinics. Overall, Mr. Barrie is working with organizations to improve the living conditions of populations in need through a focus on self-sustainability.

Academically, Mr. Barrie has excelled, taking advantage of summer internships to conduct research on nanotechnology applications in neurosurgery, continuing his research in the field this summer to address minority health disparities.

The Center for Excellence in Aging & Community Wellness is a comprehensive collaborative Center at UAlbany involved in community-engaged research, teaching and service to improve the health outcomes of older adults and people managing chronic illnesses, including heart disease, diabetes/pre-diabetes, arthritis, and obesity. The Center works to develop the infrastructure that helps older adults and persons with disabilities to remain in their homes and communities. Another major focus is on improving the delivery and sustainability of evidence-based approaches addressing key aging and health concerns.

The Center’s approach over the last eight years has been multi-faceted, with its engaged research informed by the prevention and accountable care focus of the Affordable Care Act, the Multiple Chronic Conditions Framework, and the holistic approach to chronic conditions advocated by Wagner’s Chronic Care Model that together are changing the way health systems and depart-
ments are approaching the health of the nation. Involving community members and partners in designing needed innovative solutions to realize improved health care delivery is key.

Leaders of the initiatives include Co-directors Philip McCallion, Professor, School of Social Welfare (SSW) and Lisa Ferretti, Research Assistant Professor, SSW; staff of the Center and students completing internships and assistantships are all critical to its success. The Center also works with over 90 partner organizations including the New York State Office for the Aging, led by Greg Olsen MSW, Acting Director, county offices for the aging, faith-based institutions, advocacy groups, and community-based organizations statewide. Additional partners include: the New York State Department of Health’s Bureau of Community Chronic Disease Prevention directed by Patricia A. Waniewski, and the Healthy Hearts on the Hill Coalition co-led by Robert Paeglow, MD and Lisa Ferretti.

The Center has trained over 700 individuals across New York State to deliver health self-management programs, reaching 6,000 individuals with multiple chronic illnesses. With sites throughout the state, the Center’s programs are easily accessible to more than 30% of all New Yorkers and are expected to serve over 60,000 people in the next five years.

The Center has also helped develop the Healthy Hearts on the Hill Coalition, which brings together community residents in Albany’s West Hill neighborhood and health care, advocacy, faith-based, and community-based partners to improve health outcomes and reduce disparities. In addition, OASIS is a program helping to inspire older adults to enjoy vibrant, healthy, productive lives.

**CHATS – Center for Humanities, Arts and Technosciences** is a humanities initiative incorporating community-engaged teaching, research and service to enhance and enrich the intellectual and cultural life of UAlbany, the region and beyond. Since 2004, CHATS has developed partnerships with several of the region’s leading cultural, educational and performing arts organizations to create innovative interdisciplinary events and programs, with a particular focus on public humanities.

Building on University-wide theme semesters, CHATS worked collaboratively with The Albany Academies, the Albany Institute of History & Art (AIHA), the Metropolitan Museum and regional public libraries to develop Why Melville Matters Now, a three-day celebration of Herman Melville that received national attention. It included an international symposium generated through a call for papers, an art exhibition featuring Frank Stella, a 24-hour reading of Moby Dick and more. CHATS also organized the James Family Celebration and the Henry James Film Festival, bringing scholars in the social sciences and humanities to community audiences to explore the remarkable James brothers, Henry and William.

Dr. Mary Valentis, Department of English, directs CHATS in partnership with Carol Lee Anderson, University Libraries, and many other College of Arts and Science departments. Community partners on various projects include, besides AIHA and The Albany Academies, the Albany County Convention & Visitors Bureau, Capital Repertory Theater, the William K. Sanford Library, and WAMC. With support from the University at Albany Foundation (UAF), the Albany Film Commission, and the Governor’s Office for Motion Picture and Television Development, CHATS has developed a network of partners called Upstate New York SCREENS to promote film and film production as an economic driver for the region.
A first outcome is the recently screened documentary “Albany Mummies: Unraveling an Ancient Mystery,” co-written, directed and produced by Dr. Valentis and Dr. William Rainbolt, retired director of the journalism program. The project is a partnership of the AIHA, Albany Medical Center, CHATS, and UAF and incorporates historical information and new medical imaging results to advance understanding of the role science can play in researching history. CHATS’ next goal is to continue to engage film, educational and cultural communities in the development of a statewide film expo at UAlbany in 2014, further expanding its mission to bring public scholarship and active and creative practice to the region’s arts and cultural life.

Committee on University & Community Relations is an exemplary partnership providing sustained engaged service in addressing quality-of-life issues in Pine Hills and other areas where many students live off campus. This broad-based committee brings all parties together in regular communication focused on common goals.

Partners include among others: The College of Saint Rose, Albany Medical College, Hudson Valley Community College, Pine Hills Neighborhood Association, Eagle Hill Neighborhood Association, South West Neighborhood Watch, Middle Earth Peer Assistance Program—UAlbany, the City of Albany Police Department, the City’s Department of Fire & Emergency Services, the New York State Office of Fire Prevention and Control, First Lutheran Church and other stakeholders.

Galvanizing them all together for over 22 years is its highly respected chairperson, Thomas Gebhardt, Director of Personal Safety and Off-Campus Affairs for the University Police Department. The original goal of the committee was to improve town-gown relations. Since then the goals have been expanded to include improving safety off campus, developing alcohol and other drug prevention and education programs and improving the quality of life where a high concentration of students live.

Through committed relationships and trust developed over time, the committee is a forum for resolving common problems and dealing with issues as they are identified. In addition, proactive initiatives are regularly undertaken to address off-campus issues before they emerge through regular educational outreach and annual events.

As one Pine Hills leader noted, one of Mr. Gebhardt’s qualities is “Walking-the-Walk – he has literally walked hundreds of miles of Albany's streets to educate the community and UAlbany students....” This includes coordinating and patrolling with the local Midtown Neighborhood Watch to improve safety and going door to door with the Albany police and fire departments to welcome students back and provide pertinent information. The fall and spring cleanups by both students and long-term neighbors have become an annual tradition coordinated by UAlbany and the Pine Hills Neighborhood Association.

G3 – Going Green Globally is an exemplary engaged teaching, learning and service initiative in the School of Business in partnership with local organizations. Launched in 2006, G3 is a collaborative cornerstone project in the spring for all full-time first-year MBA students. They work in teams with local “clients” — along with faculty, other experts and policy makers— to develop strategies that address sustainability issues in the client organizations. An intensive 12-day experience, G3 both develops future
business leaders and helps to advance environmentally sustainable business practices that will benefit “people, planet and profit” in the 21st century.

G3’s “Managing Partners” are Dr. Linda Krzykowski, Assistant Vice Provost, and Dr. Paul Miesing, Associate Professor, Management Dept. Faculty from the School of Business work closely with G3 students, preparing and teaching them as well as evaluating presentations and papers. Additionally the Dept. of Atmospheric and Environmental Sciences (CAS), College of Nanoscale Science and Engineering, and the Dept. of Public Administration and Policy, Rockefeller College, provide expertise on science, technology and policy.

Battelle Memorial Institute, based in Columbus, Ohio, provides global sustainability expertise to the student teams. Over 30 local partners assist as well. Some prominent examples of local community partners include National Grid which provides a grant, has participated as a client and is now coaching a student team. The Golub Corporation – Price Chopper Supermarkets has assisted as a client, coach and industry expert. The New York State Department of Environmental Conservation will fund summer internships for G3 client companies and MBA students to continue their sustainability efforts. They will also provide internships for G3 MBAs to work with other New York State companies.

As one example of industry impact, Homewood Suites (a Hilton Company), in partnership with National Grid, announced last year it will install an electric vehicle charging station. Another student team created an energy efficiency marketing campaign for National Grid using social media, and MBAs worked with Atlas Copco to find non-toxic packaging materials for shipping their compressors. These are among other examples where G3 recommendations are being used by participating clients.

**SEED – Small Enterprise Economic Development** is a University-public-private partnership creating jobs through engaged teaching, service and research. The initiative enables low-income and jobless individuals, particularly the underserved, to start or expand a small business by access to capital in the form of character-based micro-loans. SEED also provides program supports and mentoring to remove barriers to success. The program was a 2012 winner of a Tribeca Disruptive Innovation Award, alongside MIT and Stanford.

SEED’s mission is to enhance the economic and social development of distressed communities in New York’s Capital Region with the goal of creating a replicable statewide model. The multi-faceted approach centers on fostering microenterprises through a $2.5M revolving loan fund that SEFCU, among the 50 largest U.S. credit unions, is capitalizing and managing. Success is predicated on a new loan methodology being tested based on character rather than cash, credit and collateral. Prospective business owners receive critical supports including one-on-one counseling, an 8-week training course, and mentorship and peer support both pre- and post-loan. Supporting SEED’s operations are Empire State Development (ESD) and its Capital Region Office as well as private sources.
Leaders of the initiative are: Katharine Briar-Lawson, Dean, UAlbany’s School of Social Welfare (SSW); Donald Siegel, Dean, School of Business; William Brigham, Director, Small Business Development Center (SBDC); Michael Castellana, President, SEFCU; John DeCelle, Chief Marketing Officer, SEFCU; Virginia Ruggiero, Senior Business Solutions Advisor, SEFCU; Jessica Gabriel, ESD Regional Director; Suzanne Pollard, an ESD Economic Development Specialist; and during start-up, Peter Wohl, former ESD Regional Director. Ryan Busch serves as the Project Coordinator for SEED which is a program of the Small Business Development Center. Faculty and students from both schools also participate along with some alumni. This initiative has led to new courses in social entrepreneurship in the School of Business. SEED also engages many business and community leaders.

The School of Social Welfare’s Center for Human Services Research is conducting the program evaluation which to date has focused primarily on the process of selecting, screening and training potential entrepreneurs. Although work is ongoing, initial findings suggest that SEED is successfully attracting and graduating a diverse pool of potential entrepreneurs, many of whom would likely not have received traditional loans.

In less than two years, SEED has invested $985,000 in micro-loans in the Capital District and created or retained 126 jobs. Many populations experiencing economic distress--veterans, victims of domestic violence and disasters, women and minorities, persons with disabilities--are now able to pioneer new micro-businesses, secure a new source of income and shape a new future.

**SOAR – Service Outcomes Action Research** is an exemplary partnership involving community-based participatory action research and engaged teaching to improve treatments and outcomes for high-need youth served by the LaSalle School and Saint Anne Institute in Albany. The agencies provide residential, day services/after-school, and community-based care to youth and families facing neglect, abuse, trauma, behavioral and mental health issues, and other challenges.

Initiated in 2000, this research-practice partnership began when the agencies asked for UAlbany faculty assistance in learning “what works best for which clients.” Agency administrators and staff and UAlbany faculty and students from the schools of Criminal Justice, Social Welfare, and Public Health collaborate on developing evidence-based practice through continual testing of practice theory. Together they develop an infrastructure for practitioner-generated data to determine effective treatments differentiated for client groups. All decisions are made collaboratively among the partners.

Agency leaders advancing this critical work are: LaSalle School Executive Director Bill Wolff, Associate Executive Director Anne Moscinski, and Assistant Executive Director for Continuous Quality Assurance Mark Silverbush; and Saint Anne Institute Chief Executive Officer Tony Cortese and Chief Operating Officer Terry Gabriel. UAlbany partners are: Co-Principal Investigator Dana Peterson, Associate Professor, School of Criminal Justice (SCJ); Co-PI Heather Larkin, Assistant Professor, School of Social Welfare (SSW); Co-PI David Duffee, SCJ Professor Emeritus; and Julia Hastings, Assistant Professor, School of Social Welfare and School of Public Health. The School of Education has been a contributor in the past.

With an evidence-based approach, both agencies are positioned to present themselves as cutting-edge service providers and the best place to help these youth and their families. Among the important findings from the initial residential treatment study were that (1) youth who struggled in their community schools
showed marked improvements in school commitment and performance in the agencies’ residential schools, and (2) youth in the agencies’ aftercare program called “Community Connections” had better outcomes (e.g., lower arrest and re-admission rates) than youth who did not receive aftercare services.

SOAR’s impacts include producing new knowledge on varied child welfare and juvenile justice issues disseminated in academic and practitioner conferences and journals, with agency staff as occasional co-presenters and co-authors. Dozens of UAlbany students, from undergraduates to doctoral candidates, have benefitted from this engaged learning opportunity such as by contributing their own research to the agencies and knowledge base through honors theses and dissertations.

**Women’s Health Project** is one of three major research projects sponsored by UAlbany’s Center for the Elimination of Minority Health Disparities (CEMHD) which focuses on disparities in New York’s smaller cities and towns. The WHP is a collaborative, community-engaged research project that has been working to address the significant disparities in reproductive health that African American women experience in comparison to other groups of women. African American women living in small towns and cities, who are also disproportionately likely to have low incomes, can face a number of economic and social barriers to seeking reproductive health care. Thus the project has concentrated on identifying successful strategies for overcoming barriers and encouraging the seeking of regular services.

The project has focused efforts on the City of Hudson, NY, a small urban area south of Albany. Since May 2009, the WHP has worked to strengthen connections between women and local health and human service organizations, heighten awareness of the benefits of preventive services, and provide transportation.

UAlbany’s primary partner is Upper Hudson Planned Parenthood (UHPP), led by Chelly Hegan, President and CEO. UAlbany leaders on the project are: Dr. Annis Golden, Associate Professor; Dr. Matthew Matsaganis, Assistant Professor; and Dr. Anita Pomerantz, Professor Emeritus, all from the Communication Department (CAS), with support from Dr. Jennifer Manganello, School of Public Health. The Project’s staff includes a team of Peer Outreach Assistants who are Hudson residents and led by Jeanette Johnson. CEMHD has funded the project through a federal grant and provides administrative support and guidance. The Center is directed by Dr. Lawrence Schell, Professor of Anthropology and of Epidemiology and Biostatistics.

Local organizations have collaborated with the WHP on bi-monthly community health education events where women and their families could easily meet with organization representatives, learn more about services, and receive transportation vouchers.

In 2011, building on the spontaneous involvement of residents who encouraged friends and neighbors to participate, the Project began a peer outreach assistant initiative in collaboration with UHPP and community residents. Seven women have been trained as outreach assistants, and they perform weekly outreach and help promote and carry out regular health education events.

The project’s peer initiative has proved a particularly successful strategy for ongoing engagement with the community. The WHP now seeks to continue this outreach through additional funding with researchers involved in an advisory capacity. The project will also explore the transferability of the project’s strategies to other settings.