

## Director's Letter



**There is so much great news to share about Dientes ...**

We just completed the first-ever oral health needs assessment for Santa Cruz County. The study, generously underwritten by the Stanley & Audrey Goldstein

Foundation, will be key to engaging the broader health community in improving oral health for all. We are excited to share the results and our plans to address the needs in the coming months.

Dientes was awarded a grant from the Central California Alliance for Health to provide specialty care at our clinic and our patients could not be happier! An endodontist has been hired to provide root canal services, which can help our patients avoid extractions. In addition, this will provide a huge savings for our patients as the cost would be upwards of \$2,500 if they saw a private dentist.

We are excited to announce a new goal to add patients to our board of directors! Our first patient board member, Alexandra Navarro, offers a valuable perspective to improve the care we provide.

And finally, we have recently provided two free days of care through Give Kids a Smile Day in February and Watsonville's Project Homeless Connect in November. These events offer uninsured children and homeless adults free exams, cleanings and other services valued at over \$50,000.

What we do would not be possible without the support and generosity of you, our donors and partners.

**Thank you for believing that everyone deserves a healthy smile!**

**Laura Marcus**, Executive Director

## Adult Wing Renovations Complete

**In November 2014, Dientes completed completed our new Helen Webster Children's Dental Center** while keeping the adult half of the clinic open so that we could continue to provide care. This left us with a space that was half new and did not feel like one united, modern clinic.

We are happy to announce that the last of the renovations to the adult dental center are complete with the installation of new windows. Other upgrades included landscaping (tree removal, parking lot repairs and a new fence), roof repairs and replacement of 20 skylights, new painting and flooring, new furnishings for the adult lobby, operatories and offices, and sterilization lab upgrades. We are hearing rave reviews from staff and patients alike about the renovated wing!



**The last step in creating a united clinic for children and adults in Santa Cruz.**



**The Santa Cruz clinic front office team shares the beaming smiles they use to greet our patients. Christian Santa Cruz, Jeanette Gutierrez, Jessica Calsopa, Noemi Melendrez and Vanessa Torres (missing Nicole Mello)**

# Ode to Dientes

Frank is one of 10,000 patients we will serve this year due to the generosity of our community who enable the work we do. He is so inspired about his wonderful new smile that he wrote this for us:

.....  
*I thank you Dientes,  
I thank you, I do.  
Because of you  
I am a whistling fool.*

*Things I took for granted  
I am learning again  
and this whistling thing  
is just one of them.*

*You dropped a ton of  
confidence on my lap  
and I will now and  
forever remember that.*

*Words are not enough  
to express my happiness.  
I just want you all to know  
I wish you all the best!*

*I said it once  
I will say it twice,  
a million thank yous,  
Dientes, for giving me  
a brand new life!*

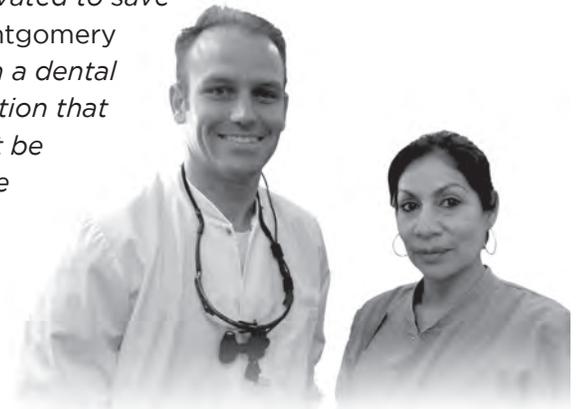
**- Patient Frank Olivarez**

## Addressing Dental Needs and More **in Watsonville**

**Dientes' newest clinic opened in August 2015 as part of the Watsonville Health & Dental Center.** So far, we have provided nearly 3,300 visits to over 1,500 patients in our 4-chair clinic. "Chris" is one such patient.

At 45 years old, Chris came to Dientes to finish some dental work he had started elsewhere, but could not finish because it was too expensive. Needing at least 10 visits to complete his treatment plan, his recent enrollment in Medi-Cal makes it much more affordable.

Chris is like a lot of our patients. Cost is definitely a barrier to care, but there is more to it as Dientes' RDA Sylvia Turner explains, "Chris needs a lot of care. When he came to us he was finally mentally ready and motivated to save his teeth." Dr. Quinn Montgomery continues, "Lying back in a dental chair is a vulnerable position that can be scary. There must be a lot of trust between the patient and the dental staff. It is important for us to provide the best care possible and, at the same time, be compassionate about what our patients are going through."



**Dr. Montgomery and Sylvia Turner, RDA are happy to help improve the lives of our patients.**



**Newest Dientes Boardmember  
Alexandra Navarro**

## New Board Member **Alexandra Navarro**

**We are thrilled to welcome Alexandra Navarro to Dientes' Board of Directors!**

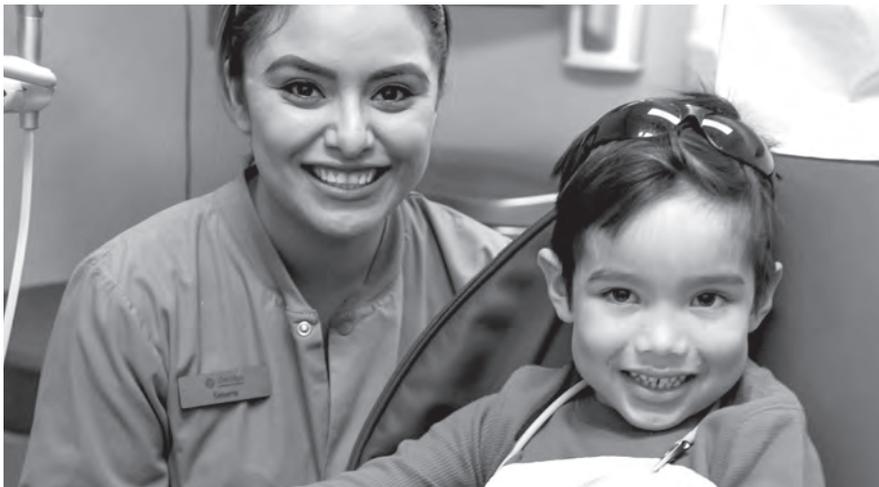
Alexandra works as a coach in the areas of corporate leadership, workplace/life balance and Latino social responsibility advocacy. She has always been passionate about oral healthcare as her father was a dentist in Colombia. Her children go to Dientes and she looks forward to further sharing the work of Dientes with our Latino community.

# 12th Annual Give Kids a Smile Day a Huge Success!

Smiles were everywhere, from the 46 uninsured children who received free care, to their grateful parents/guardians, to the staff and volunteer hygienists who made this year's Give Kids a Smile Day a great success. Dientes partnered with the Monterey Bay Dental Hygienists' Association to provide nearly \$29,000 of free dental services, including oral health exams, cleanings, fluoride treatments, sealants, extractions and restorative care.

Speaking with Elsy, mom of patient 5-year-old Alexia while she waited for her daughter's appointment to be done, she explains, "Today's event helps out so much—not to have to pay out of pocket! Alexia needs a lot of dental work. It would take half of our rent money to pay for the services she is getting at Dientes today for free."

Held on February 6th, the day of care is Dientes' 12th annual event and was part of National Children's Dental Health Month. Oral health is a vital component to overall health, especially for kids. We want to establish great oral health habits that carry children through life.



5-year-old Hunter Borden is ready to start his care dental visit with Lead RDA Selene Alvarez-Vega.

# Watsonville Homeless Connect

**Dientes is proud to have participated in the 2nd annual Project Homeless Connect in Watsonville on November 6th!**

This one-day event is aimed to help those struggling with homelessness in our community by providing much needed resources and services. Dientes converted the Watsonville Veterans Memorial Building's second floor into an impromptu dental office, serving 21 patients with care, including x-rays, exams, fillings and extractions.

Dientes Outreach Manager Tana Stragalinos commented, "We are so happy to be able to provide care to people who often fall between the cracks. We believe that everyone deserves a healthy smile."



**WHAT** people are **SAYING.**

*"Wonderful, skilled people, totally dedicated, warm and helpful to deal with. I can't think of enough good things to say about Dientes."*

– Alexander, patient

*"Best pediatric dental experience we have ever had."*

– Arden, patient

*"Thank you for making it possible for everyone to smile regardless of their pocket book."*

– Cassie, donor

# Creative Ways to Improve Local Oral Health Care

*“Dental caries (tooth decay) is the single most common chronic childhood disease”*

– U.S. Surgeon General Report

## This sobering fact is the driving force behind the first-ever Oral Health Forum entitled “The Hidden Epidemic: Early Childhood Caries”.

Held in February 2016 with more than 25 physicians, nurses and other health care community leaders in attendance, the crowd learned about the role that primary care providers can have in doing dental screenings. Discussion also covered how pediatricians can apply fluoride varnish as a great preventative tool that can be offered as part of a well-child visit.

Having medical doctors engaged in educating their patients about the importance of going to the dentist and taking a bigger role in oral health care as a part of overall health, makes combating this disease achievable.



Moderator Dientes Dental Director Sepi Walthard with presenter Dr. Jessica Ray and past Dientes Boardmember Lee Fitzsimmons, RN, PHN. (missing co-presenter Dr. Patrick Clyne)

## Leaving a Legacy of Healthy Smiles

### An easy way to support Dientes’ work far into the future is to include us in your estate planning.

Simply make Dientes a beneficiary on your life insurance policy, retirement account, will or living trust. Ask your life insurance agent, retirement plan administrator or other institution for a change of beneficiary form. Please identify Dientes on the form as follows:

Dientes Community Dental Care, 1830 Commercial Way, Santa Cruz, CA 95065, Tax ID: 77-0311752

Find out more: [dientes.org/donate](http://dientes.org/donate)



Dientes is a proud partner of United Way.



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**MISSION :** *Creating lasting oral health for the underserved children and adults of Santa Cruz County and neighboring communities.*

## PG&E Grant Improves Children’s Oral Health in Boulder Creek

Dientes is thrilled to partner with PG&E for a day of dental care at Boulder Creek Elementary, making life a little easier for working families. Nearly 30 low income kids benefited from x-rays, exams, cleanings and fluoride treatments. Those with more complex needs were referred to our clinic in order to establish a dental home.



Rob Morse sees PG&E’s impact on low income kids with Outreach Manager Tana Stragalinos.

PG&E Division Manager, Rob Morse, is enthusiastic about the partnership.

*“At PG&E, we look for opportunities to improve the lives of those who live in our community and Dientes provides a great way to have a long-term impact.”*