

Dientes opens new dental clinic for children



Emily Rose Murphy, great-granddaughter of Helen Webster, cuts the ribbon at the Helen Webster Children's Dental Center in Santa Cruz. (Contributed)

By

Sentinel staff report

SANTA CRUZ >> Parents looking for affordable dental care for their children need look no further than Dientes Community Dental Care, the nonprofit that opened the Helen Webster Children's Dental Center Thursday night.

Emily Rose Murphy, great-granddaughter of Helen Webster, cut the ribbon for the new seven-chair wing at 1830 Commercial Way, near Toys R Us.

The event featured remarks by county Supervisor John Leopold, Dr. Nanette Mickiewicz, president of Dignity Health Dominican Hospital, and Alec and Claudia Webster from the Helen and Will Webster Foundation, a major donor.

The \$3 million two-story building completed by Bogard Construction expanded the clinic by 2,400 square feet, adding child-sized toothbrushing stations and a kid-friendly waiting room.

"We wanted to make going to the dentist a positive experience for kids, so that they look forward to coming back," said Laura Marcus, Dientes' executive director.

Dientes is one of the few resources for people who cannot afford dental care, being one of 10 dental providers

in the county that accepts Medi-Cal.

For those without dental insurance, Dientes offers sliding-scale fees. About 96 percent of Dientes' patients live at or below the poverty level.

The new addition is expected to make possible 8,800 more dental visits a year for children and adults missing out on dental care.

"We couldn't be more excited about providing additional space for so many of those in our community who have no other way to see the dentist," said Marcus. "By consolidating all of our children's services in one wing, we have doubled the number of chairs for our adult patients."

The project was supported by the county of Santa Cruz through a federal Community Development block grant, The California Wellness Foundation, Monterey Peninsula Foundation, Ow Family Properties, and others.

To make an appointment at Dientes call 831-464-5409.

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