Director’s Letter

The sun is out and there are causes for celebration!

This year marks 25 years of Dientes providing dental care to the underserved communities in Santa Cruz County. We are looking forward to celebrating with you, our community partners and friends, on October 5th!

Another reason to rejoice is opening a new 2-chair clinic in Santa Cruz City’s Beach Flats neighborhood. We hope to provide at least 1,000 visits our first year and to serve more than 800 patients. This clinic helps move us towards our Oral Health Access Strategic Plan goal of increasing access to dental care for those who are underserved.

Dientes hired our first CFO when Pauline Gebauer recently joined us. We are thrilled to have her as part of the management team and know her depth of experience will help guide us while we continue to grow.

A happy staff leads to happy patients. This was clear when we received the highest employee and patient satisfaction ratings ever!

To improve our care more, we are incorporating trauma informed care techniques in our practice. With this, we hope to build an even better understanding of how to serve our patients.

Now, that is a lot to smile about!

Thank you for helping us throughout the years provide high quality dental care to Santa Cruz County’s children, adults and seniors!

Laura Marcus, Executive Director

Dientes Welcomes New CFO
Pauline Gebauer

Pauline comes to Dientes from Lyndon Baines Johnson Tropical Medical Center, where she was the Chief Financial Officer (CFO) at American Samoa’s general hospital. Before that, Pauline worked in California as Kaiser Permanente Santa Rosa’s Finance Manager managing the organization’s budget for their 170,000 patients. Pauline says “I am excited and motivated to serve the Santa Cruz County community because I believe everyone deserves quality health care.” When she is not at work, you can find her strumming her ukulele.

Celebrating 25 Years of Care

Dientes first opened its doors in 1992 with volunteer dentists serving the low income community. Today, Dientes has grown to a staff of 60 who provide 35,000 dental visits to 10,000 patients a year. Our mission remains to create lasting oral health for the underserved children and adults of Santa Cruz County. We hope you can join us!

SAVE THE DATE: Thursday, Oct. 5, 5:30-7:30
Happy Staff!

In November 2016, Dientes our conducted our annual employee satisfaction survey. We gathered information on how we might best meet the needs of our employees and continue to build a positive culture within our organization.

In the 50-question survey, employees were asked to rate their satisfaction in topics ranging from confidence in senior management to the quality and upkeep of clinic equipment.

We are proud to announce an overall employee satisfaction rating of 91%! This high level of satisfaction is passed on to our patients and is evident in the smiles we see in our clinics every day.

Happy Patients!

Delivering high quality dental care is one of the pillars of our work at Dientes. Our annual patient satisfaction survey is an important way in which we monitor the quality of our care.

Conducted in March 2017, our patients took the survey on computer tablets in the waiting room when they finished their appointments. Questions were designed to assess various aspects of our care such as friendliness of staff, sensitivity to cultural and linguistic needs, wait time, quality of facilities, provider chairside manner, etc.

The survey was taken by 723 patients. We were extremely pleased to achieve a total 99.1% satisfaction rate!

The Dientes team at the annual staff retreat, sailing on Chardonnay!

Dientes patients Ana & Damian show off their smiles.

WHAT people are SAYING.

"Thank you for being a light in this community to all of us families who need quality dental care. It means a lot and is appreciated more than you can know!"

- Wendy, patient

"I’m looking forward to going back to finally finish my dental work. It’s a miracle, and I am very thankful."

- Eva, patient

"Kind, caring, full of compassion. Doctors like you make such a wonderful difference. thank you."

- Patricia, patient

"Tooth pain is hard to live with."

- Kent, donor
Strategic Plan Update

Dientes continues to lead the Oral Health Access steering committee efforts as we implement the county-wide Oral Health Strategic Plan released in December 2016. Work includes:

First Tooth First Birthday education campaign:
- Santa Cruz Community TV highlighted the campaign throughout May 2017 in a show that featured champions David Brody (First 5), Javier Carrillo (Central California Alliance for Health – CCAH) and Dr. Sepi Walthard (Dientes).

Taping the Santa Cruz Community TV show.
- In Fall 2017, fliers will be included in First 5’s Baby Gateway packets for all newborns in the County and be distributed to local pediatricians.
- Articles will appear in upcoming CCAH newsletters to all Medi-Cal providers and members this year.

Mandatory Kindergarten / 1st grade dental screenings:
- Dental screening forms were included in all new K/1st grade enrollment packets for the 17-18 school year thanks to champions Michael Watkins and Carole Mulford from the County Office of Education.

Increasing Capacity:
- In June 2017, Dientes’ opened the 2-chair Beach Flats Outreach clinic. We hope to serve an additional 800+ patients there.

Patient Compassion through Trauma Informed Care

“Dignity through dentistry” is more than just a motto at Dientes. We go above and beyond to show respect and compassion for the children, seniors and adults we serve every day. Recently our staff had the opportunity to be trained in Trauma Informed Care by Encompass Community Services as a way to better understand, recognize and address what our patients may be going through. For example, some patients fearfully react to the sound of a dental drill because it takes them back to a negative experience they had in childhood. Patient reactions can be due to past physical, psychological, and/or emotional pain.

Our plan is to integrate behavioral health with dental care to provide a supportive atmosphere for our patients and their care. This training is a great first step.

Check Out Our Latest Patient Stories

Go online to our YouTube channel at bit.ly/dientes-youtube to see our patients talk about what it means to have access to dental care and how coming to Dientes has had an impact on their health, and on their lives.
Beach Flats Dental Clinic Now Open!

Recently, Dientes collaborated with Salud Para La Gente to reopen the Beach Flats Dental Clinic previously operated by Salud. Opened June 1st, Dientes’ new 2-chair clinic operates as an Outreach location and is available for appointments two days a week.

Patient Mares Vega received dental care at the clinic as a Salud patient, and now continues his care with Dientes at the same location. He is grateful for his care from both Salud and Dientes. “Access to dental care on Medi-Cal can be hard,” Mares explains, “not many dentists accept it.”

Having a dental clinic located in Beach Flats is important for his family and the community. It is easy for him and his 5-year old daughter to ride their bikes to the clinic. “It helps me stay healthy,” says Mares with a smile.

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

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 or email: development@dientes.org