

■ **CEO's Letter**



It has been a busy summer for us at Dientes, and we have exciting news to share!

We're rallying local support for oral health access across the nation. Recently, we held a Senior Advocacy Day event to promote support of important legislation that increases access to care for seniors. We also welcomed a new Director of Operations to help us as we grow our organization and welcome new patients.

Our patients are so grateful for your help.

Without your gifts we wouldn't be able to provide care—free of cost—at events like our 16th annual Give Seniors a Smile Day or Santa Cruz Connect, which serves those experiencing homelessness.

While often times this care is urgent for our patients, we are striving to make prevention more common than treatment. With better access to routine dental care we can stop problems before they start.

Together, we can remove barriers and improve access to care for all of our Santa Cruz County neighbors.

It is only thanks to you that more patients, no matter their age, income, or ability to pay, are getting the care they need to support their overall health.

With healthy patients, comes a healthy community. Thank you for empowering our neighbors to thrive.

Laura Marcus, Chief Executive Officer



Dientes Welcomes New Director of Operations, Tiffany Turner

A California native, Tiffany joins Dientes with a background in public health, having worked for the Center for Oral Health in Pomona, CA. She holds an MBA and a Master of Public Health. *"I am at Dientes because of our mission and the large-scale impact we have on our patients' lives. As Director of Operations, I'm excited to be a part of the important conversation around oral health in Santa Cruz County."* Tiffany continues, *"My goal is to help Dientes continue to make a difference in our community every day!"*



Tiffany Turner,
Dientes' new Director
of Operations

**Prevention
for Kids**



United Way employee Ash Gonzales poses with 1,600 dental hygiene kits for Stuff the Bus put together by Dientes founded Oral Health Access Santa Cruz County. United Way's Stuff the Bus project provides backpacks to low-income children so they have the supplies they need to be ready for school!



Ash Gonzalez prepares to "Stuff the Bus"

Advocating for **Senior Oral Health Coverage**



Senior Advocacy Day

Nearly **20%** of seniors in the U.S. are missing all their teeth. Yet, the public health insurance (Medicare) we all get once we turn age 65 does not cover oral health. And, the cost of paying for dental care out of pocket is too expensive for most seniors living on a fixed income. This leaves seniors struggling with everyday activities like speaking, eating nutritiously, living without pain, and being self-confident—all of which can lead to social isolation. We believe something needs to be done.

“1 in 5 seniors have lost all their teeth in the United States.”

To raise awareness for senior oral health coverage, Dientes hosted an advocacy event to support two bills proposed to Congress. Patients and senior advocates reached out to Congressional Representatives urging them to vote to include oral health care benefits for seniors.

Medicare Dental Benefit Act of 2019; H.R. 2951 and S.22 will improve access to oral healthcare for seniors by finally covering prevention, treatment, and emergency dental care.

You can share your voice, go to:
dientes.org/seniors

“It’s a silent disease, you don’t notice anything today, right in this moment, but day after day, it adds up and eventually catches up with you ... after losing most of my teeth, I want to make sure that the teeth I still have are healthy.”

- **Gene**, Dientes patient

Don’t miss Dientes Patients at the MAH exhibit:

We’re Still Here: Stories of Seniors and Social Isolation

On view Now – January 12, 2020
(exhibit extended!)

Santa Cruz Museum of Art & History

Leave a Legacy of **Dental Care**

An easy way to contribute to the lasting oral health of future generations in our community is to include Dientes in your estate planning. How so? Simply make Dientes a beneficiary on your life insurance policy, retirement account, living trust, or will. Ask your agents or advisors 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

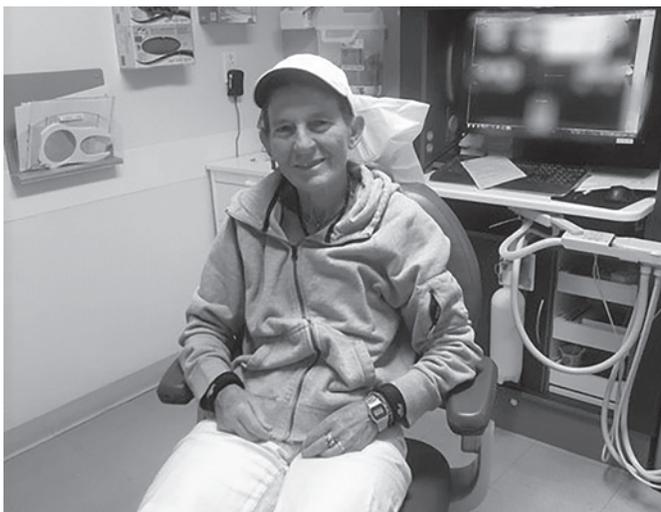


57 Seniors in Need Receive Free Care

Healthy smiles were plentiful on August 3rd at Dientes' annual Give Seniors A Smile Day, a day dedicated to providing free dental care to low-income, uninsured senior patients. Dientes partnered with 5 volunteer hygienists from the Monterey Bay Dental Hygienists' Association to provide 57 patients with preventative and restorative oral care. Thanks to Bay Federal Credit Union sponsorship, charitable donations, and help from from volunteers, Dientes was able to provide \$31,000 worth of free care.

Britta, a Dientes patient for more than 10 years who was seen at the event said, *"When I found Dientes, they made me feel welcome and that my health is in good hands. Dientes doesn't feel like a dentist to me—it feels like a home. The service I have received over the years has been so helpful—life can get so difficult and its days like today that make all the difference!"*

Dientes' partner, Santa Cruz Community Health Centers, was on-site to help sign up seniors for Medi-Cal.



Patient Story

Happy & Healthy After Heart Surgery

At just seven years old, Sally came to Dientes with a severe heart condition that needed surgery. Her cardiologist required Sally to get dental clearance before he could perform heart surgery. Unfortunately, when she came to her appointment, Dientes Pediatric Dentist Dr. Dennise Monroy found she had several large cavities and two abscessed teeth. Her heart surgery had to be delayed.

Dr. Monroy commented, *"Sally's parents are so grateful for the prompt care that we provided for their daughter before her heart surgery. Being decay-free is very important for surgery to reduce the risk of infection."*

Sally isn't the only patient in this situation. Dientes has many emergency patients that need clearance before major surgeries and who have delays because of poor oral health.

Dientes strives to address this by establishing a dental home for children, adults and seniors. By helping our patients have regular care at Dientes, we can make prevention more common than treatment and your support allows us to do this!

Today, Sally is healthy and happy! Her heart surgery was successful, and we see her twice a year for dental exams and routine cleanings.

WHAT people are **SAYING.**

"Dental health affects the rest of the body and dental problems cause pain. Just as important, healthy beautiful teeth give a person self-confidence."

- Ellen & David, donors

"I have been a patient of Dientes for over a year I feel that the quality of care I receive there is excellent. I give five stars to Dientes - thank you for helping our community and me!"

- Gail, patient

"I don't think people realize how big a smile helps your life and your self-esteem. It's pretty amazing Dientes is willing to help."

- Ricky, patient

Free Care at Santa Cruz Connect

Dientes' Outreach Team hustles when they are in the field providing care in their 2-chair portable clinic. Santa Cruz Connect is no different. It is there in June that 22 people experiencing homelessness received free dental care, including exams, x-rays, fillings, and extractions.

Dennis hadn't seen a dentist since 1990 and has been trying to get his life back on track after his newfound sobriety. A social worker referred him to Santa Cruz Connect, where he was excited to see a dentist.

Since being seen at our Outreach clinic, Dennis has regained a healthy smile. He says, "[this care] is important because I'm always smiling." he continued, "I worked in customer service and I want to get another full-time job. I want to smile with confidence, so I can get back on my feet."

This is the difference you make for our patients. It's about more than just the care we provide. It's about what that care means for our patients lives and for the transformations that can happen. For patients like Dennis, it means a lot.



You make transformations happen for patients like "Dennis".



5300 Soquel Avenue, Suite 103
Santa Cruz, CA 95062
831.464.5410

www.dientes.org



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

Make a Monthly Gift of a Healthy Smile

Your support is providing vital health services and changing lives! Interested in having an even greater impact on oral health for future generations? Become a Dientes Toothfairy and give the gift of a healthy smile each month!



Become a Dientes Toothfairy at:
dientes.org/donate or email:
development@dientes.org



Dientes is a proud partner of United Way.

