**Press Release**

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**Dientes Relaunches Outreach Program at Radcliff Elementary**

(Santa Cruz, CA) Radcliff Elementary is the first of fifteen schools so far where Dientes is providing preventative care as part of their Outreach Program. According to the Oral Health Access Santa Cruz County 2021 Report Card, 30% of Santa County children aged 3-9 did not go to the dentist in 2018.

Dental decay is one of the most common chronic childhood diseases. In fact, children with poor oral health are three times more likely to miss school because of dental pain. With schools back in session, Dientes is working to eliminate barriers to care—such as transportation—by bringing preventative services directly to local schools.

The program offers oral health evaluations on-site, including x-rays, and procedures such as cleanings, topical fluoride application, and sealants. For many students seen through the program, this will be their first visit to the dentist. Today, they saw 23 children.

“There are thousands of children in our community living in poverty who don’t have access to high quality, affordable dental care,” said Dientes CEO, Laura Marcus. “Our goal is to make prevention more common than treatment by ensuring all children have a regular, ongoing source of dental care and understand the importance of taking care of their teeth.”

Last Spring, due to the pandemic, Dientes modified its program by providing care outdoors to 55 children at four schools. With the return of in-person instruction, they hope to serve even more students by offering indoor care with COVID-19 safety protocols.

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*Photos:  Abby, 5th grader pauses for a photo after a good checkup; Jhoanna,  5th grader getting sealants applied by Adriana Ortiz, Dientes RDA; Nathan, 5th grader smiles after getting a good checkup; 1st grader with dental kit to take home (Ismael, don’t use name)*

*Dientes Community Dental Care’s mission is to create lasting oral health for the underserved children and adults in Santa Cruz County and neighboring communities. 96% of Dientes’ patients live at or below the poverty level. Dientes accepts Medi-Cal and offers sliding scale fees for uninsured patients. To learn more or support our work, visit dientes.org.*