



Word of Mouth

Fall 2023

Dignity
through
Dentistry

Dear Dientes Family,

As the crisp autumn air rolls in, we are filled with gratitude for your unwavering support.

Thanks to you, we're in a season of growth and continue to find innovative ways to serve our community.

We're moving the needle on oral health by implementing our plan to expand, partner, teach, and invest in our workforce.

As we look towards the future, your role cannot be overstated.

Your support has been a cornerstone in our success opening two new clinics in the past year. Our newest site in the Harvey West neighborhood and our clinic in Live Oak's health and housing hub have collectively provided over 9,000 visits to date.

Together, we are substantially increasing access to care—none of it would be possible without your generosity.

Your partnership gives us the courage to dream big and aim higher because everyone deserves healthcare that enables them to thrive. But without your continued support, our endeavors would merely be aspirations, far removed from reality.

From all of us here, thank you for being a part of our journey. We couldn't do it without you.

Warm regards,

Laura Marcus, CEO



Dientes' general dentist residents for 2023-2024, Dr. Samira Mukkamala (left) and Dr. Natalie Montoya (right)

Investing in the Workforce: Growing Compassionate Providers

Exceptional care comes from an exceptional team. Attracting, retaining, and developing top talent ensures we can offer unparalleled dental care.

This year, in addition to efforts to grow dental assistants and hygienists, we warmly welcomed two new general dentist residents. They join us as part of our flourishing partnership with NYU Langone Health, now in its second year.

By investing in the workforce, we offer opportunities for staff to grow careers within Dientes and build a pipeline of great candidates as the organization expands. That's why it's heartwarming to announce that we've hired one of our inaugural residents to work at the new Capitola Road clinic.

This speaks volumes about the positive work environment and meaningful impact we're creating—a testament to what your support enables us to achieve.

Pediatric Spotlight:

Making Prevention More Common Than Treatment

Our littlest patients play a vital role in our pursuit to make prevention more common than treatment. Your support helps establish regular care and healthy habits early on in life. This means down the road, these patients will maintain good oral health and need far less expensive treatment.

Dientes has had a pediatric specialist on staff since 2004, but with recent growth, we've expanded our roster to three pediatric dentists. This year, we welcomed Dr. Leri Lipumano-Picazo, Dr. Kimi Abtahi, and Dr. Fatima Khan to the team.

Did you know children should go to the dentist by their first tooth or first birthday?

In an upstream approach, we help incentivize families to come in for oral health milestones, like a child's first tooth or first birthday visit, annual exams, and sealants, by contributing up to \$200 per child towards their Semillitas college savings accounts (facilitated by our partner Ventures).

Thanks to your generosity, we're creating positive dental experiences that lay the foundation for a lifetime of positive oral health outcomes.



The State of Oral Health: CA Dental Director Visits Santa Cruz

This past August, Dr. Jaynath Kumar, the California State Dental Director met with local public health leadership, including the Dientes Executive team, and presented at a 'State of Oral Health' event, which took place outside our Capitola Road clinic.

His visit illuminated the significant strides we have achieved and addressed the enormous need around the state, urging that Dientes and our collaborative work with Oral Health Access (OHA) be a model for others.

Founded by Dientes, OHA builds cross-sector partnerships to address oral health. After making massive improvements in access for children, OHA is now planning to focus on pregnant people, diabetes patients, teens, and seniors.

Your community support is the driving force of our progress - thank you!



Dr. Sepi Taghvaei, Dientes EVP of Operations, speaks at the 'State of Oral Health' event

Dientes CEO Laura Marcus and State Dental Director Dr. Kumar



“

“I see a huge success story here in Santa Cruz.”
— Dr. Kumar, CA Dental Director

”

Expanding Clinical Capacity: Pioneer Street Clinic Opens

This summer, Dientes opened a new 5-chair clinic in the Harvey West neighborhood after our Beach Flats clinic closed due to flooding. The Pioneer Street clinic is bright and inviting, with upgraded equipment and more space to serve patients like Kevin.

Kevin had not received any dental care since 2011. With the opening of our Pioneer Street clinic, Kevin found an opportunity to reclaim his dental health. After years of deferred care, he needed dentures. Since the clinic's opening, Kevin has had several appointments to restore his smile.

"I've always struggled with dental issues, and it was hard to find a place that made me feel welcome and cared for," Kevin shares. "But Dientes and the Pioneer Street clinic is different. They make me feel like I'm not just another patient but a part of their family. After years of neglecting my dental health, they've given me a reason to smile again."

Your support provides Kevin and many more like him with the dignity that comes with a healthy smile.



Pioneer Street clinic staff celebrate opening day



Dientes patient Kevin shows off his new smile



Dientes Day Flashback: A Testament to our Longevity

Back in 1994, then Santa Cruz Mayor Scott Kennedy proclaimed October 27th "Dientes Community Dental Day."

We've come a long way from our founding in 1992 and are on track to serve 16,000 patients this year. We couldn't do it without you backing us. Thanks for believing in the importance of oral health!

What people are saying:

“

"Healthy teeth are critical for all aspects of our well-being."
— Mari, donor

"You have allowed me to keep smiling."
— Anonymous patient

"I was worried about coming to the dentist but was welcomed with open arms. They made me feel safe and comfortable"
— Jennifer, patient

"Dientes has been so helpful financially. Otherwise I could never afford the treatment I needed. Dientes is the best!"
— Paul, patient

"Finding dental care can be difficult to non-existent. Dientes was a game changer. They helped me improve my overall health and pursue my goals without being in any pain."
— Amber, patient

”



dientes

COMMUNITY DENTAL CARE

9000 Soquel Ave, Suite 101
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Administration: 831.464.5410

dientes.org

NON-PROFIT ORG
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
SANTA CRUZ, CA
PERMIT NO. 322

Leave a Legacy of Smiles

One of the most profound ways to make a lasting impact is through planned giving. When you include Dientes in your estate plans, you're not just donating... each life touched by better oral health would be a living testament to your compassion and foresight.

Your gift would provide resources to continue essential dental services and help shape the long-term well-being of our community.

You can leave a mark written in the smiles of countless individuals, improving lives for generations to come. Join those leaving a legacy of healthy smiles with a planned gift today!

How to Get Started: Making a planned gift is easier than you think, and we're here to help! Visit the 'Ways to Give' section on **dientes.org/donate** or contact us at **development@dientes.org**



Your donations providing dignity through dentistry for patients like Russ

“

“My husband Joop, my daughter Charlotte, and I included Dientes in our estate plan based on the undeniable truth that healthy smiles can transform lives. With a gift to Dientes, we're honored to know our legacies will have a positive impact into the future.”

— Laura Marcus, Dientes CEO

”

Dientes is on a mission to create lasting oral health for the underserved children and adults of Santa Cruz County and neighboring communities.

Connect with us online for our latest updates and to see your gifts in action.



Follow us on Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram
@dientescommunitydentalcare

