dientes
COMMUNITY DENTAL

Word of Mouth

Fall 2024

Dignity through Dentistry

Dear Dientes Family,

As we welcome the fall season, I want to take a moment to personally thank you for the incredible impact you've had on the families we serve.

From launching our new workforce initiatives to expanding outreach services, together we continue to ensure that our neighbors have access to dental care.

The work highlighted here is a testament to supporters like you who believe in our mission.

We're rallying support for oral health here at home and across the nation. My team and I have been honored to speak at conferences coast-to-coast sharing our innovative workforce investments. We've also been hosting events to mobilize support for oral health locally.

Thanks to your generosity, we continue to transform lives by breaking barriers to dental care – one smile at a time.

Your partnership is the cornerstone of our success. Your commitment helps us bring comfort, health, and confidence to our patients—and for that, we are endlessly grateful.

It is thanks to you that more patients are getting the care they need to support their health and wellbeing. Together, we're creating a healthier community.

Thank you for helping our neighbors thrive.

Warm regards,

Laura Marcus,
Chief Executive Officer

Dientes' residents: Dr. Neetu Handa (left) and Dr. Sherese Brown (right)

Shaping the Future Workforce: A Full Circle Journey of Growth and Giving Back

Dientes continues to invest in the next generation of providers to ensure we provide top-tier care. We recently welcomed our third round of dental residents: Dr. Sherese Brown and Dr. Neetu Handa.

Dr. Handa has a particularly heartwarming story. About ten years ago, when Dr. Handa was an undergraduate at UC Santa Cruz, she interned at Dientes to get a closer look at community health centers. She was on a path to becoming a dentist herself and was inspired by Dientes' work. Years later, after finishing dental school at Tufts University, Dr. Handa is back helping our community.

"I chose to return to Dientes because I value the mission and wanted to give back to the Santa Cruz community that helped launch my career in dentistry. This experience allows me to grow as a dentist while making a real difference." – Dr. Handa

Her full-circle journey reflects Dientes' dedication to creating opportunities to grow careers and a commitment to developing a compassionate team that cares deeply about this community and the people we serve. In continuing to grow our team, we're also proud to announce the hiring of Dr. Natalie Montoya, who recently completed her residency at Dientes this past summer.

Dr. Neetu Handa, Resident

Leadership on Display:
Dientes Making Waves Across the Nation

From Phoenix to Atlanta to Baltimore and beyond, the Dientes leadership team has been invited to speak to hundreds of other prominent healthcare leaders about our successful clinical and workforce models. Our team has proudly presented on our trail-blazing programs in efforts to help other organizations build capacity.

Dientes is proud to be a national leader in oral health innovation and spread the word on the amazing things you make possible right here in Santa Cruz County!

CEO Laura Marcus presenting at the National Network for Oral Health Access Conference

Dientes patient smiling with his mom

Connor's Story:
How You Help Kids Shine

When Connor first arrived at Dientes, his bright smile was overshadowed. Like many children, Connor was scared to visit the dentist. Despite this, our pediatric team welcomed him with a gentle approach that put him at ease.

The team not only restored Connor's smile but also patiently helped him understand each step of his treatment, turning what was once a source of fear into a positive experience. By the end of his visit, Connor was no longer afraid of the dentist—in fact, he left with a newfound confidence and a big smile. Your support helps kids like Connor shine!

> ***"Dientes is a breath of fresh air. My son has never laughed so hard at the dentist. It was a wonderful antidote to my sons' dental anxieties. He says going to the dentist is fun now!"***
> – Connor's mother

**Names of patients in this document have been changed to protect privacy.*

Networking at the Women in Business event

Connecting the Community
During National Health Center Week

We are thrilled to use the plaza at our Capitola Road site to bring the community together! In partnership with the SC Chamber of Commerce and Santa Cruz Community Health, we hosted a Women in Business networking event to foster new connections while raising awareness of the critical role of community health centers.

Creative Collaboration:
Improving Oral Health Together

Eight years after Dientes founded Oral Health Access (OHA), tremendous collaborative work has improved oral health across the County. Earlier this year, we helped host the 2024 Oral Health Summit to promote a new OHA strategic plan, which will increase access to care for specialized populations in coordination with 24 partner organizations.

With your support, we fostered collaborative partnerships that continue to shape our region's approach to dental care. Many counties across the country are now looking to replicate our blueprint of success. We're excited to work together towards a healthier, brighter future for all.

OHA Leaders David Brody, Laura Marcus, Sheree Storm, Monica Nicholas, Dr. Sepi Taghvaei, County Supervisor Zach Friend

OHA Summit 2024

Pajaro Valley Shelter Services Patient with Dr. Kuo

Your Support Fuels Outreach Expansion

We know not everyone is able to get to the dentist. That's why we go to them. At a new outreach partner site, Pajaro Valley Shelter Services, we recently met a patient who had gone years without proper dental care. She came to us with multiple oral health issues that were affecting her ability to eat and speak comfortably. After her initial appointment, she was well on her way to restoring her smile and quality of life.

> ***I had given up on my teeth, but Dientes gave me hope again. I'm so thankful for their care and compassion.***

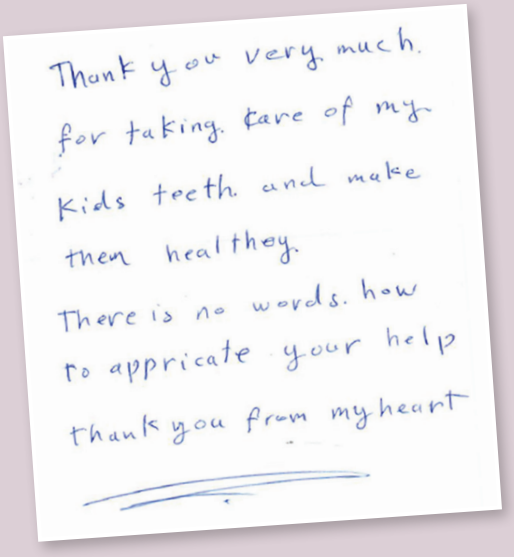
Thanks to people like you, Dientes continues to bring essential care to patients at shelters and other sites like this throughout the community.

Voices of Gratitude:
What People are Saying

> *I know nothing that does a better job of destroying morale than having your teeth & smile disrespected - hence my donation. Without morale there is no energy, no confidence.*
> – Margaret, donor

Dientes provides phenomenal care and has a compassionate staff. They got me in during an emergency, and I can't thank them enough for helping me through that trauma.
- Alyx, Patient

> *I've always believed in Dientes' mission. It is such an important part of our community's well-being.*
> – Thomas, donor



dientes
COMMUNITY DENTAL CARE

9000 Soquel Ave, Suite 101
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

Administration: 831.464.5410

dientes.org

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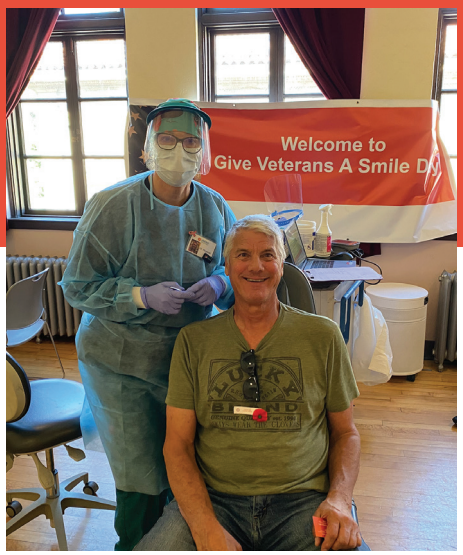
Dientes is on a mission to create lasting oral health for the underserved children and adults of Santa Cruz County and neighboring communities.



Your donations providing dignity through dentistry for patients like Dave

Legacy of Smiles Continue with You!

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**

> ***My husband 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

See your gifts in action and connect with us online for our latest updates

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