

ANNUAL  
REPORT  
2024

# Reflecting on Your Impact

and Inspiring Tomorrow



**dientes**  
COMMUNITY DENTAL

Dear Dientes Family,

With you by our side, Dientes has made incredible strides in moving our mission forward. As we close our 2022–2024 strategic plan, we reflect on the remarkable growth, new partnerships, and expanded reach that have allowed us to serve our community better.

**We could not have accomplished these goals without you.**

Last year, we served more patients than ever, nearly 15,000. This access to care means being able to bite into an apple or eat your favorite meal. It's relief from a toothache and the confidence that comes with a restored smile.

**Our care not only improves oral health, but quality of life—that's the impact we make together every single day.**

Our incredible staff make it happen. We've doubled down on workforce investments, launching new innovative programs to train local talent and provide job opportunities. This includes our Registered Apprenticeship Program for Dental Assistants, which enables participants to build careers while strengthening the community's healthcare workforce.

**Thank you for bringing smiles and hope to thousands each year.**

Together, we're inspiring a tomorrow where income doesn't define how hard it is to go to the dentist. Thank you for being a vital part of this journey.

With heartfelt gratitude,



*L. Marcus*

Laura Marcus,  
CEO



*Gary Bencomo*

Gary Bencomo,  
Board President

# About Dientes

## MISSION

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

## VISION

We envision a community where children can focus on school instead of a toothache, adults can make good first impressions and get a job because they have a healthy smile, and seniors can comfortably eat nutritious foods.

## VALUES

TREAT EVERYONE WITH DIGNITY AND COMPASSION

STRIVE FOR EXCELLENCE

COMMUNICATE OPENLY

FOSTER TEAMWORK AND COLLABORATION

CULTIVATE LEARNING

USE RESOURCES WISELY

DARE TO LEAD

CHAMPION EQUITY

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS (FISCAL YEAR 23–24)

Gary Bencomo,  
*President*

Janis Bolt

Alicia Moody

Camille Smith-Ballon,  
*Vice President*

Bob Davidson

Michael Moore

Masina Hunnicutt,  
*Secretary*

Brian Del Core, DDS

Steven Robins

Ben Kromnick,  
*Treasurer*

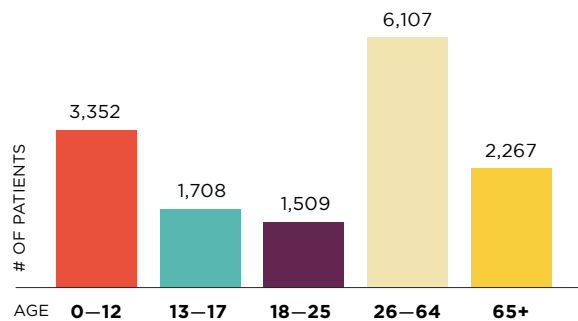
Jennifer Martinez

Marco Martinez-Galarce

# Impact & Community

Our commitment to community-centered care has fueled growth across Santa Cruz County. From babies welcoming their first tooth to seniors celebrating their 100th birthday, Dientes served 14,943 patients last year alone.

CARING FOR PATIENTS OF ALL AGES



# Financial Health

Dientes is committed to long-term financial health to continue serving our community far into the future. Our ability to grow sustainably is a testament to the unwavering support of people like you—thank you.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES  
JUNE 30, 2024

INCOME	\$16,572,241
EXPENSES	\$15,497,201
NET INCOME*	\$1,075,040

\*includes fundraising for new clinic at 1500 Capitola Road

841

PATIENTS SERVED BEYOND CLINIC WALLS (OUTREACH PROGRAM)

59,174

TOTAL VISITS

1,107

PATIENTS WHO ARE CURRENTLY UNHOUSED

\$743,592

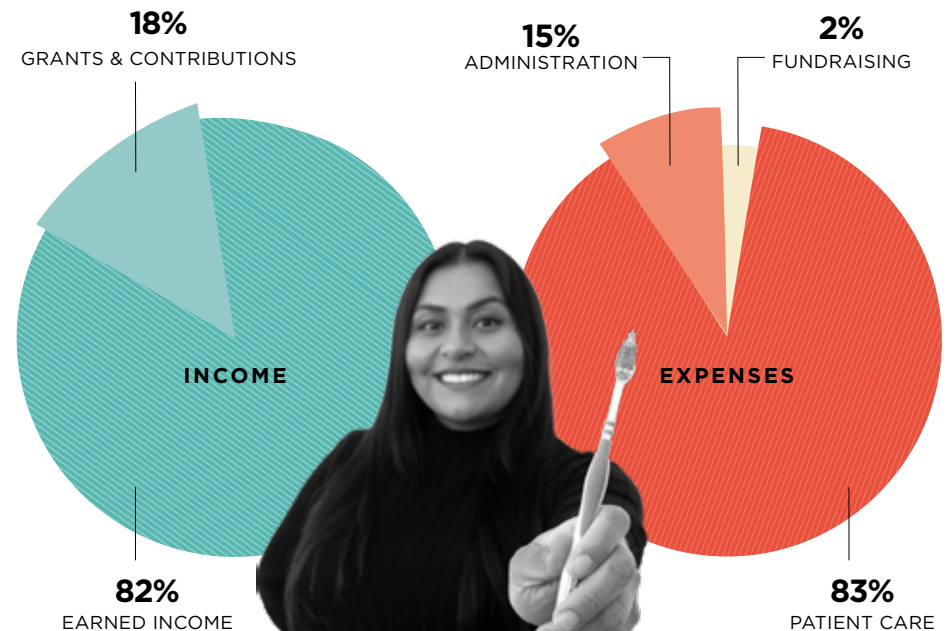
VALUE OF FREE CARE PROVIDED

94%

PERCENTAGE OF PATIENTS RECEIVING PREVENTATIVE CARE

8,065

SPECIALTY CARE VISITS (ENDODONTIST, ORAL SURGEON, PEDIATRIC DENTISTS)



# Carving New Career Pathways

Our strategic plan (see page 8) uniquely focuses on the people who make our work happen, including teaching the next generation and investing in staff. Through our workforce development initiatives, we're creating pathways to meaningful careers. One of our proudest achievements is the launch of our Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) for Dental Assistants.

“

Working at Dientes has been life changing. I'm building skills while making a difference in our community. I love my smile and want others to love theirs too.”

**WENDY, APPRENTICE**

In Fall 2024, RAP participants began their hands-on training, where they work closely with experienced mentors. Apprentices earn wages while training on the job, with periodic increases tied to their progress. The program also provides opportunities for Dientes' current staff to become mentors, receive a stipend for their guidance, and gain leadership skills.



In partnership with the SC County Office of Education and Workforce Development Board, this program increases the number of dental assistants graduating each year, creating a pipeline of qualified candidates for Dientes and other providers.

It also creates an opportunity for people, specifically people from historically under-resourced communities, to learn professional skills and pursue an exciting healthcare career—one that has many available living wage job openings in our community.

In addition to this groundbreaking program, our other teaching and investing initiatives help proactively build the workforce. Our scholarship and residency programs continue to support staff in pursuing further certifications, providing upward mobility in healthcare.

Our workforce investments are about more than training—they're about empowering individuals to serve their community with compassion and expertise.



# Reflecting on Progress

Our 2022—2024 Strategic Plan laid the foundation for a brighter future for oral health care on the Central Coast. It focused on four pillars:

**Teaching, Investing, Partnering, and Expanding.**

This work has been a catalyst for transformative change. With bold goals, we set out to address the most pressing needs in our community. As we reflect on these accomplishments, we celebrate our growth in capacity, innovation, and partnerships.

This work is thanks to you. Here's how you helped make a BIG impact over the last few years:



## EXPANDING

### Increasing Access to Care

- Opened two new clinics, Capitola Road and Pioneer Street
- Increased patients served by 33% and provided 20,000 more annual visits since 2022
- Expanded outreach sites to over 35 schools and community partners to provide care beyond clinic walls and meet people where they are
- Invested deeper in providing specialty care by hiring a full-time endodontist and more pediatric dentists

## INVESTING

### Supporting Our Team

- Increased staff satisfaction with competitive wages starting at \$25/hr, family-friendly policies, and generous benefits
- Enhanced diversity, equity, inclusion and belonging efforts through staff training
- Provided scholarships supporting staff to become RDAs, RDA-EFs and Hygienists
- Continued culture of promoting from within, creating promotional opportunities and career pathways

## PARTNERING

### Strengthening Collaborations

- Collaborated with over 20 local organizations through leadership in Oral Health Access Santa Cruz County
- Deepened partnership with Santa Cruz Community Health thanks to co-located clinics in Live Oak and with Salud Para La Gente on systemically improving oral health for seniors with support from \$5M Delta Dental grant
- Established new partnership with Santa Cruz County Office of Education and SC Workforce Development Board to start apprentice program

## TEACHING

### Creating a Pipeline for New Professionals

- Launched Santa Cruz County's first residency program, training new dentists
- Initiated a Registered Apprenticeship Program for Dental Assistants, giving local residents a pathway to pursue rewarding careers in dentistry
- Provided externships and internships for dental assistant and hygiene students

YOUR IMPACT AT WORK

# Stories from Our Patients

Dave, a longtime Santa Cruz County resident, was entering his 70s without any source of income and facing housing insecurity for the first time. His dental health was in peril when minor dental issues became severe. Fortunately, Dave found relief at Dientes. Since his first visit, he has received extensive treatments, including deep cleanings, several filled cavities, and new crowns.



I'm diabetic, and my disease may become worse because of my dental health. This care means the world knowing I can prevent serious complications. It really has changed my life knowing what could happen."

DAVE



Dave's story is a testament to the vital role of accessible healthcare in our lives. Your support ensures patients like Dave can continue receiving the highest quality of care possible.

*\*Patient names & information have been changed to protect privacy*

CLINIC RENOVATIONS

# Revitalizing Facilities for Elevated Care



At Dientes, we are committed to making a visit to the dentist a positive experience. Our clinics are modern, warm, and welcoming. We have state-of-the-art equipment that improves the quality of our care and enhances patient experience. However, our largest and oldest clinic on Commercial Way sees over 100 patients daily, and it was time to address wear and tear from the high volume of traffic it sees.

Dientes has invested in renovating this clinic, including updates like new dental chairs, renovated waiting rooms, fresh paint, and new equipment.

The new space will transform the patient experience. It's brighter, more comfortable, and allows us to provide care more efficiently. Thank you to all who made this transformation possible!

YOUR SUPPORT FUELS OUR MISSION

# There are many ways to give:



**MONTHLY**

Consistent support that gives the gift of a healthy smile each month!

**MATCHING**

If your employer offers a matching gift, you can make an even bigger impact! This may extend to retirees and spouses.

**RETIREMENT**

If you are aged 70.5+, you can make pre-tax distributions from your IRA to Dientes and reduce your taxable income.

**LEGACY**

Contribute to future generations by including Dientes in your estate planning.

► Questions? Email us at [development@dientes.org](mailto:development@dientes.org)



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We are so grateful for your partnership in creating lasting oral health here in Santa Cruz County. Scan the QR code to hear from our staff how your support makes a difference!