

Dear Dientes Family,

One year ago, you opened a new door. This fall, our Penny Lane clinic celebrates its first anniversary, and the story it tells is one this community built together. There are more chairs, shorter waits, and neighbors who had nowhere else to turn are now being seen.

You make more healthy smiles possible.

This year, part of caring for patients meant advocating for them. When Medi-Cal dental benefits came under threat, we showed up in Sacramento again and again with patient voices and hard numbers. That persistence protects care for thousands of families we serve, but the work continues.

Thanks to your support, we're also growing careers.

Our workforce investments provide opportunities for local residents, often from low income families themselves, to build a career in healthcare, which means enough skilled hands to meet the demand at our doors.

Then there are the quieter victories. A senior who can eat dinner without wincing. A teenager who stopped hiding her smile in photos. You will meet one of them in these pages, and their story shows how quality of life improves when dental care is within reach.

Dientes is approaching 35 years of care in this county.

We have treated grandparents and their grandchildren in the same chairs, and some of our patients have returned to us as doctors! We intend to be here for the generations still coming. That kind of legacy only holds because people like you keep choosing it.



Thank you for standing with us,



Laura Marcus
Chief Executive Officer

Celebrating One Year Of Penny Lane

This fall marks one full year since we opened the doors of our Penny Lane Clinic. Thanks to you, what a year it has been. Our second Watsonville location and fifth countywide, Penny Lane answered an urgent need. A 2022 assessment revealed that 35,000 South County residents couldn't access dental care.

Because of your generosity, we responded. At a time when health programs are facing difficult pressures, your support allowed us to step up, not retract, and meet the moment as the need for care continues to rise.



Penny Lane Team led by Clinic Manager Kassy Murillo and Lead Dentist Dr. David Wistrom

In twelve short months, the clinic you helped build has welcomed thousands of new patients. Everything from routine cleanings to specialized pediatric dentistry, delivered by a bilingual team that reflects the community it serves. Your support made nearly 8,000 visits possible this year. Since opening its doors, the team has worked steadily to grow operations and now serves four times as many patients as it did when the clinic first opened.

We are endlessly proud of the Penny Lane staff who built something extraordinary from day one. None of it would have been possible without you. And the impact is personal.

As patient Daniel shared, " With this care, I finally feel comfortable smiling around others again. It's so convenient to have the clinic here." Stories like Daniel's are your impact in action.

Beyond the Smile: Care That Reaches Further

Oral health shapes far more than a smile. It affects how you eat, sleep, think, and connect. The impact reaches every part of your life. Your generosity makes stories like Jay's possible, showing how life-changing dental care can be.

For decades, Jay lived with constant dental pain. "Pain takes up so much mental space," Jay shares. His immune system battled constant infection, and eating became so difficult that he developed an eating disorder. His physical, mental, and nutritional health were unraveling together.

Last summer, a broken tooth brought Jay to Dientes. Our team extracted the infected tooth, and the relief was immediate. His head cleared, the fixation on pain lifted, and he began working his way back to healthy eating and steadier well-being.

For Jay, affordable dental care restored a foundation of dignity. When you invest in oral health, you support more than treatment. It's about what oral health makes possible. For Jay, who's just one story of thousands we serve, that care can restore well-being and truly improve quality of life.

Thank you for making it possible.



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Restoring oral health lets people come back from a bad situation, engage with society, and feel decent in the world. - Jay, Grateful Patient

CEO Laura Marcus and EVP of Operations
Dr. Sepi Taghvaei with Speaker Robert Rivas



Your Support Powers Our Advocacy

Advocacy isn't separate from our mission. It's one of the ways we fulfill it. Our team consistently advocates for our local community both in Sacramento and Washington, D.C.

This year brought a meaningful victory: California delayed proposed cuts to Medi-Cal dental funding. With supporters like you behind us, we met with legislators, partnered statewide, and shared the human stories that demonstrate oral health as essential care. That win bought valuable time.

Still, thousands will lose coverage in January due to federal policy changes. Our advocacy must continue. Your partnership strengthens our ability to champion smart policy and protect access to care. Thank you for standing with us and with the patients we are privileged to serve.

Vote Yes on Measure E!

Federal cuts threaten the safety-net our patients rely on, and Measure E provides local funding to keep services available.



Growing Careers, Strengthening Care



Registered Apprentices Class of 2026

At Dientes, growing our people is core to how we operate. From promote-from-within pathways to hands-on mentorship, we invest in careers at every stage. The results show it: retention rates are well above industry standards at 85%. We're not just a workplace. We're a launchpad for healthcare leaders.

Now in its third year, we're happy to report that our plan to grow our own workforce is working! 67% of apprentice graduates are hired at Dientes, with new employees starting at over \$26 an hour. Our Registered Apprentice Program (RAP) creates paid career pathways, pays staff to mentor future dental professionals, strengthens our hiring pipeline, and helps protect patient access to care.

Take Wendy: Dientes supported Wendy as an apprentice in our inaugural cohort and hired her as a full-time Dental Assistant after she completed the program. With her sights set on becoming a Registered Dental Assistant, she is also mentoring the next class of apprentices through the same program that launched her career.

This year, thanks to your support, we're expanding the program opening the door for even more people. When you support Dientes, you're transforming lives and proving that great dental care starts with great people.

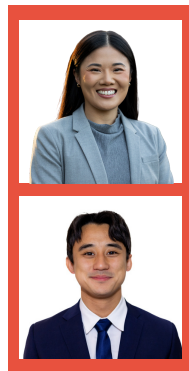
Two New Pediatric Specialists Instill Healthy Habits Early

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Dientes holds a special place in my heart because I was a patient here as a child, coming in for emergency dental visits. Having grown up in the Santa Cruz community, I feel a close connection with Dientes patients.

- Dr. Jody Chiang

Dr. Jody Chiang and Dr. Danny Do have joined our team, bringing years of specialized training, including for infants and children with special needs. That specialty matters. A dentist trained to work with children knows how to keep a nervous four-year-old calm and send a family home knowing what to do next. They help turn a first visit into a lifetime of healthy habits.



Earn While You Learn Model Opens Doors

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"Earning a paycheck while learning a new career is rare," she said. "The fact that Dientes was willing to pay us meant so much. I was able to work hard and still earn money that helps my family."

For Bridget, getting paid to train wasn't just a perk—it was what made the entire opportunity possible.

**-Bridget
RAP Graduate**



Now Accepting 
New Patients 0-18! 

Thanks to the addition of our pediatric dentists and recent clinical expansion, we're now accepting new pediatric patients. That means more Santa Cruz County kids get a dental home instead of a waiting list, thanks to supporters like you who helped make the room for them.



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Santa Cruz, CA 95065

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

Thank you for believing in our mission to create lasting oral health for the underserved children and adults of Santa Cruz County.



@dientescommunitydentalcare



Leave a Legacy of Healthy Smiles



Scan the QR code to
Donate today!

Some donors have found a quiet, powerful way to keep Dientes here for another 35 years and beyond. They name Dientes as a beneficiary on a retirement account, life insurance policy, living trust, or will. Naming a charity as an IRA beneficiary is one of several tax strategies your advisor can build into your estate plan.

This generous act means a child in Santa Cruz County today will still have a dental home for generations to come. That's your legacy, woven into ours.

You can identify us as: Dientes Community Dental Care,
1830 Commercial Way, Santa Cruz, CA 95065. Tax ID: 77-0311752.

Questions? Email development@dientes.org. Or if you've already named Dientes in your plans, or you're considering it, please let us know. We'd love the chance to thank you and welcome you into our community of legacy donors.