

FACTS



San Diego County
DENTAL SOCIETY

SPECIAL ISSUE: MENTORSHIP

**May
2022**

May 19
BLS Renewal

June 11
Oral Pathology

June 16
New Dentist Seminar

June 23
Practice Lifecycle

July 10
Day at the Ballpark

July 14
BLS renewal

July 28
New DDS Social



Bonfire on Fiesta Island

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2018 Newsletter Award,
2017 Newsletter Award,
Honorable Mention
2016 Outstanding Cover

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On the cover...New dentists laughed and networked, played cornhole, roasted marshmallows and enjoyed a drink at our first Bonfire event on Fiesta Island.



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2022 GKAS: see more about this event on page 14



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Mentorship

It's important to never stop learning and be humble enough to ask for help when needed. I was never one to enjoy learning from my own mistakes, especially when some sage advice from an experienced voice can help me avoid problems altogether. Why struggle when you can benefit from the wisdom and experience of others to avoid mistakes in the first place?

As a new mom, I am figuring out how to raise this new tiny human. If there ever was something I didn't want to mess up, it is bringing up my child. Everyone says you'll figure it out, but she just seems so fragile! I am fortunate enough to have a great network of friends with younger children to turn to and question how they got by, discuss tactics and share their success stories. However, I have some great role models and mentors in my parents, as I think they raised a pretty great kid. 😊 Their advice and guidance, and that of friends, was very much appreciated, reassuring, and provided me with confidence moving forward. From recommendations for particular types of baby gear when traveling to the store, to advice on getting her to sleep, to calming a crying baby, it's all helpful and much more practical than going at it alone with trial and error(s).

Within our profession, I've had the luxury of multiple great mentors throughout my career. As an early associate, I learned

clinical tips, efficiencies and protocols via the owner doctors at offices where I started my dental journey, including the office of our own Facets editor! Having a solid base of knowledge got me through the door, but these doctors gave me polish clinically. I observed how they ran their businesses and became successful as owners. I still utilize some of their demonstrated clinical and managerial gems week to week in running my practice.

In private practice, our individual professional bubbles can become smaller and



Your last 2 presidents and I at a local function representing SDCDS. I consider these 2 my mentors too!

smaller unless you become involved in groups. Through the encouragement and recommendation of a trusted friend, I became more involved in our tripartite and applied for leadership positions not only at the local level but also at the state level. At the local level, I became a mem-

ber, and later chaired the **Recruitment and Retention Committee**, and ran for a seat on the Board of Directors at our San Diego County Dental Society. At the state level, I was granted a seat on the New Dentist Committee, participated on the **New Dentist Task Force**, and on the **Committee on Membership**, eventually serving as Chair. Without these experiences, I wouldn't have fully appreciated the power of organized dentistry to help our profession as a whole. And without the mentorship of many, I most likely would have taken longer to get involved as a new young dentist. Some of my greatest sources of professional satisfaction are contributing back to dentistry, creating a welcoming atmosphere for colleagues & leaving the future in good hands.

Our local society developed a program to make it that much easier for all interested dentists to seek the guidance and encouragement I was lucky enough to have, the mentorship program. My husband, doctor Brian Fabb, has mentored several new dentists through this program and found it very rewarding and satisfying. He has enjoyed this program as a mentor and has watched new dentists grow their careers and purchase practices and succeed without having to stumble through avoidable obstacles by reaching out to peers. Please reach out to the dental society if you're interested in becoming a mentor or mentee through this program. •



My first time as a CDA delegate at the 2016 ADA House of Delegates.



Representing San Diego at the ADA Retention and Recruitment Conference.



And of course my favorite and original mentors, Mom and Dad.

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3. Enter the same email address you use to log in to sdcds.org.
4. You will then receive an email with a verification code.
5. Enter the 6 digit code in the app when prompted.
6. Explore all the great features this app has to offer.





My Early Mentors: Profiles in Humanity

The year was 2005. I was a new grad, a very “wet behind the ears” new dentist. After a series of temp jobs and hygiene jobs, where I rarely held a handpiece and mostly did hygiene, I had landed my first official job as a bona fide dentist. I would be working in a group practice mostly serving HMO patients, taking over the treating doctor position from a classmate of mine who was leaving for an Endodontic residency. From my classmate I knew it was going to be a fast-paced environment in which to work, but I was ready to work hard and learn.

The way that this group of practices was situated, there was a diagnosing doctor and a treating doctor. I would end up working in this practice for a little bit more than a year, leaving to take over my own practice a few miles away. I enjoyed the experience immensely, even if the fast pace proved a bit taxing over time.

Though I would be remiss if I didn't stress that the best thing about working in this office was the women I worked with.

In this office I worked hard among women who treated each other like family, who would drop everything to lend a helping hand to another colleague. Fridays were often potlucks of sorts. It was this spirit of collegiality that I took with me to my own practice, as a former employee of mine reminded me of recently. And that feeling of collegiality was demonstrated and stemmed from 2 women in particular, Shatha and Ana.

Shatha was the diagnosing dentist, who had gone to dental school in Iraq. She moved to the United States after the first gulf war. She had worked for a time as a dental assistant during the time it took to pass her National Boards and take the Bench test and Clinical Boards to become licensed in this country. (For new grads reading, this is no longer possible in California, as internationally trained dentists must take a 2-year course to even be considered for taking the Clinical Boards in California) As this was 2005 and the second Iraq war was in full swing, for much of the time we worked together, she spent a lot of time and effort in getting her family to safety in this country, all while working full time and managing her family of 5.

Ana was a dentist from Mexico, having just completed the National Boards part 1 and 2 and was in the process of taking the bench exam. She had 2 daughters, and she too, had the responsibility of juggling a full-time job, family, along with the added stress of preparing for her life as a dentist in the United States.

Aside from teaching me the myriad of clinical technique shortcuts that they didn't teach us in school (hello triple trays and 1:50,000 epi!), or “hacks” as my 9-year-old would call them, the art of “when in doubt refer it out”, I learned something else entirely: how to treat your staff and patients as family. I don't mean this to say that I wanted all my patients to come home with me, but it was the notion of caring and nurturing of those around us, a rather maternal notion, as it were. I learned the simple art of ordering a pizza if we all had to work through lunch. I learned to never judge a patient by their anger, which is often camouflaged fear. I learned to let a patient vent their frustrations, as 9 times out of 10 it had nothing to do with me and everything to do with themselves. I learned to recognize when an assistant just needed a break. It was from these lessons that I learned that loyalty among staff and patients is earned, mostly through showing humanity and simple kindness.

It was these qualities that I took to my own practice, and I hope those lessons were instilled in those I have mentored over the years. And I remembered them on those days when I was utterly exhausted, juggling a busy practice with my other job as a mom to 2 toddlers, knowing that these women did it and then some, so could I.

After I left, Shatha would go on to buy that same practice from the owners, and still owns it to this day. Ana would soon pass the bench test and the clinical boards, buy a practice (or 2?) of her own, and her daughters would go on to attend dental school themselves. I am exceedingly proud of them and am grateful for their leadership in those early years. •

Welcome NEW *San Diego County Dental Society* Members

Sally Akrawe, DDS: University of Detroit Mercy, 2008

Meryam Rassool, DDS: University of Michigan, 2018

Stephanie Bauman, DDS: UCLA, 2020

Calvin Truong, DDS: University of Detroit, Mercy, 2021

Brandon Maroon, DDS: International, 2022

Delaram Salamati, DDS: UCLA, 2020

Sarah Chilmeran, DDS: University of Texas, 2014



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.....some memories from the last 14 years.....awards.....galas.....costume parties.....presidents.....





On To My Next Chapter

It's time for me to hitch up my wagon and move on out. Back at the beginning of 2008 I was looking for a new job opportunity when a friend let me know that the dental society was looking for a director. I took my resume to meet with Dr. Lester Machado, then president of SDCDS, and a few weeks and several interviews later, I was sitting at this desk wondering what I needed to learn to run a dental association and its affiliated foundation.

My graduate degree is in non-profit administration, and yes, I had managed large divisions of non-profits before, but they were in the field of international education. Associations and foundations, I found, are completely different animals. Not knowing whether I would like this gig, I told myself I would give it a year and then decide whether to stay. I'm sure the presiding board was thinking the very same thing. They took a big chance on me, hoping that I'd figure things out quickly.

Some of you have leaned into volunteer leadership at this association or perhaps another one. I had not, and I found that there was a lot to learn. Governance is complex, and strategic planning for a

professional organization is something to which I had never given any thought. The job entails everything from financial management to event planning; from fundraising to property management. I had jumped into a big job, and I was determined to make it work.

My saving grace was the dentists themselves. Early on, I met and became friends with several members of the leadership team. A few key individuals spent many hours showing me the ropes. They were invested in my success and kept me from making major blunders. Their guidance was critical to my success, and I'll never be able to thank them enough. In fact, my favorite part of this job by a great measure has been the exceptional people I've had the privilege to work with.

You should know that your dental society and foundation are in very capable hands because of a group of dedicated leaders. They serve as committee members, board members and in some cases officers. None of them are paid, and yet they care about this organization as if it were their own practice. Each year, we welcome a new group of individuals who want to give something back to the orga-

nization that sets high standards for the profession. They become our leaders. I let the board know in January that my husband and I plan to retire in June this year. They jumped into action by forming a search committee for my replacement and hiring a professional search firm to do the heavy lifting. While my last day is still a month away, I'd like to take this opportunity to let you know what an extraordinary pleasure it has been for me to serve as your Executive Director. I never imagined I would end up in association/foundation work, and I certainly never expected to derive from it so much joy and satisfaction. I hope that somehow along the way I've helped to make your organizations a little bit better than they were before.

Andy and I have sold our home in San Diego and will be splitting our time between Spain and Palm Springs. We look forward to more free time, and we have lots of plans for travel, hobbies and maybe even some consulting along the way. As much as I know I'll enjoy retirement, I will always remember those more than 2000 dentists in San Diego and Imperial Counties who made my tenure here so special. Thank you for a great fourteen years!•

....CDA.....ADA.....board meetings.....social events.....we will miss you Mike.....thank you.....



MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

The Dental Society prides itself in helping its members succeed in many ways. One of those is through our mentorship program! This month, participants in our **Mentorship program** were interviewed about their experience with the program and offered some words of wisdom to those who may be interested in finding out further information.

First, for those who are new to the program or have not participated in it, here's how it works: members complete the mentor or mentee application form on the SDCDS website. Once complete, our staff matches mentees with a mentor who has the knowledge and experience that best fits their needs. There are one on one pairings all the way up to 5+ mentees to one mentor. The great part about the program is it allows each participant the ability to tailor the relationship to meet their needs and expertise. Communication methods, meetings and agendas are set by the pairing or group and encompass various topics, most often related to the business side of dentistry, but not always. Often the meetings begin with some follow up from the previous meeting, any changes that the mentees have been able to make in their practice of dentistry along with questions or comments about the previous month's material. The program encourages incremental change, as the practice of making too many changes at once is daunting and often the process fails, leaving the dentist frustrated. New material is covered, and the next meeting is scheduled

BENEFITS

1. The rookie dentists participating gain a small community that some are experiencing for the first time, in an environment where they can solve problems and ask for help. Emails are exchanged. In one case, a dentist wanted a referral to an Invisalign dentist and another said she would love to see their referral.
2. Since most participants are single practitioners, being in the program supplies a readily available group of individuals who can provide emergency coverage when members take vacations.
3. After every meeting, there is a sense that one comes away making their office better. All the material has been introduced, and even if the mentee can't use it that day, there will come a time later in their career that they could.
4. The mentees learn that their dental practice is a real business and needs to be treated as such.
5. The mentees are introduced to concepts that they didn't know that they didn't know.

MENTEE



Geraldine O'Mara, DDS

Dr. O'Mara attended the University of Michigan School of Dentistry and graduated in 2020. Following graduation, she completed a hospital based GPR at Michigan Medicine (2020-2021). She has been working as an associate at a private practice in San Diego since July 2021 after moving from Michigan. She is originally from the Bay Area.

What led you to seek out a mentor/mentee?

I firmly believe that I would not have made it this far in my education and career if it wasn't for all my mentors throughout the years. As a first-generation college/graduate student, I sought out multiple mentors to help me through my undergraduate and dental school career. In my first year of private practice, it was second nature for me to seek out a mentor to guide me through the ups and downs that come with.

What goals were you hoping to achieve?

Being that I am a recent grad, I was hoping to find a mentor to share their knowledge and experience not only from a clinical standpoint, but also from a business standpoint (the things they don't teach you in dental school!). Also being that I am new to the San Diego area, I was hoping that the mentorship program would facilitate opportunities for networking and professional contacts.

How often do you meet/communicate?

My mentor, Dr. Larin, and I communicate about 1-2 times per month. With the constant changes of Covid-19, many of our meetings have been over the phone or through Zoom. We most recently saw each other in person while attending the same CE

course (Emergency Medicine in Dentistry by Dr. Malamed)! In the coming weeks we plan to grab dinner together and tour Dr. Larin's office.

What words of advice do you have for those who are new to the mentoring program so that they get the most out of the program?

My first piece of advice would be to start the program by discussing with your mentor your big picture goals and what you hope to gain from the program, to ensure that you are both on the same page. My second piece of advice is to be open with your mentor. Don't be afraid to share your challenges, as your mentor has most likely gone through the same set of challenges at some point in their career and can provide you with words of wisdom.

How have you seen your ability to practice enhanced by having a mentor/mentee?

Having a mentor has enhanced my confidence when it comes to making clinical decisions. I have had the opportunity to discuss challenging cases/situations with my mentor which has allowed me to think outside the box when it comes to treatment planning. I believe this type of collaboration has helped me grow as a clinician and provide my patients with the best possible care.



Dr. Eric Shapira, Mentor

Dr. Shapira has been in practice for nearly 47 years, having graduated from Temple University School of Dentistry with a DDS in 1975. He completed a GPR in Dentistry and Medicine at Mt. Zion Hospital and Medical Center in San Francisco. He worked as an associate dentist in several practices for about three years and then opened his own practice on the Half Moon Bay, CA Coastside which he maintained for over 30 years. In addition he was an Assistant Clinical Professor at the University of the Pacific School of Dentistry for five years in the 1980's and taught at the University of California, San Francisco School of Dentistry for several years in the Occlusion and TMJ clinic.

What led you to seek out a mentor/mentee?

I had several mentors over the years. When I was a dental student, I met an upper classman, who became my mentor. He assisted me a great deal and made me comfortable doing it. I had to learn about being an associate the hard way, trial and error, and was taken advantage of in the process by several of the people I had worked for. I wanted to have personal relationships with my patients predicated on mutual respect and admiration for the patient. I then found a job with an Endodontist, who had been a mentor of mine in my residency. He was an older, father figure of a man and an excellent practitioner. He had #32 on his license and was grandfathered into endodontics. He gave me a job and taught me much about private practice, endodontics, and dentistry. He had a hidden motive and later asked me to buy him out. I told him I was grateful, but I wanted to do general dentistry and not specialize. I wanted to do it all! We remained friends and colleagues until his death. I will never forget his kindness and his sharing his knowledge with me.

I had many years of good and not-so-good experiences in practice and many people have told me that I should share my knowledge with other dentists who are beginning their careers so they would not make the same "mistakes" that I did. I teach my students that "there are no mistakes, only experience. Good judgment comes from experience, and experience comes from bad judgment!" We learn from everything we do. When I saw the ad in Facets about being a mentor, I jumped at the opportunity. I was given three mentees (all women who are recent graduates) to work with over this past year. Two of them have been working out of San Diego County and the third dentist is here in San Diego.

What goals were you hoping to achieve?

My goals were: **a)** to be there for them when they had an issue that they did not know how to cope with; **b)** to allow them to feel secure in the knowledge that there was someone they could depend on who was watching their back, so to speak; **c)** to give them information about my experiences in relation to their issues at hand, without lecturing to them or telling them what they should do directly. **d)** I wanted to make them think and discover their feelings about the unmet needs that they brought to me.

The goal was simple: teach them to think in an honest and open way about their issues, coupled with their knowledge and the information I would give them from my past experiences, melded with their gut emotions in making decisions that will effectively make them excellent practitioners and more caring people (not that they were not already).

How often do you meet/communicate?

We meet when they ask me to meet. The ladies who practice elsewhere call me to discuss cases and treatment planning. I sent one mentee a chapter on treatment planning for a geriatric patient as she was having difficulty trying to process the information she had. She hadn't realized there was a lot more information she needed before she could present her case to her patient. One mentee I do not hear from, but I do call all of them from time to time to see if they are all doing ok.

The last mentee I have seen several times and have worked with her in her desire to have me read a contract she received from a potential employer. It was very lengthy and involved as well as one sided. I have had a fair amount of experience with these types of contracts, and I asked her to acknowledge her gut feelings overall in making her decision after we discussed every nuance of the contract. I think she made the right decision for herself. I only affirmed what her fears and frustrations were telling her.

I have met with them all over lunch to introduce myself and my wife, who was my office administrator for 25 years- an added source of information for these mentees. It is nice to get to know them this way and for them to know me in a non-work environment. We have some laughs and good personal talks about dentistry and life in general. I could see that it was difficult for all of them trying to make their own ways in the world on their own. I was glad that I had volunteered to assist them. They all know that I am available 24/7 to them and I think this has reassured them that they are not alone in their quest to be independent in dentistry and have a practice of their own someday. They all know they need more clinical hands-on experience and that is what they are doing now.

What words of advice do you have for those who are new to the mentoring program so that they get the most out of the program?

Mentors need to be open-minded and not tell the mentees what they should or should not do. Rather, they discuss the issues, their feelings, and mostly the frustration and fear the mentee might have that plays on their insecurities of not knowing enough, whatever that may be. Reinforce their strengths and challenge their weaknesses. Give them your experiences and let them compare. Give them hope and encouragement. I always told my patients that I don't give advice because no one wants advice. I gave and still give information. And the same goes for my mentees. I give them information so they can come to their own conclusions about things, not mine. The mentee needs to

continued on next page

Mentorship continued (Dr. Eric Shapira) ...

trust the mentor, but at the same time, if they feel they are not getting what it is they expect, they need to talk about this in an open and honest way. I do not want to talk about myself, per se. I want to talk about the experiences I learned from with respect to the issues the mentee brings to me.

How have you seen your ability to practice enhanced by having a mentor/mentee?

I just feel-good knowing that I am imparting my wisdom and information upon another dentist who may need it. If they don't ask, I don't tell. So, it is a two-way street of communicating. This will break any barrier of fear in doing so. I feel good that I can share myself with my mentees and my knowledge. I feel somewhat humbled that they would allow me to do this

with them and I hope that they will remember me when I am gone, for the wisdom I will have imparted upon them. Just like the Endodontist, Bert Wolfsohn, did for me. A person I will not soon forget. He gave me his knowledge, friendship, care and concern for many years, which in turn kindled my own inner-strength and ability to go on in life feeling that I could make something of myself in Dentistry, assisting others in the process; as I still do to this day on many fronts: local, national and international. I cannot say that having a mentee or being a mentor has enhanced my practice of dentistry, but it gives me some insight into how I do dentistry and the end result: a satisfied and healthy patient, as well as a more confident and happier dental practitioner.

MENTOR



Dr. David De Rosier

Dr. De Rosier graduated from UCLA in 1987. He has practiced as a solo practitioner in his own practice in the Point Loma area for over 31 years.

What led you to seek out a mentor/mentee?

I was fortunate to meet a mentor more than 20 years ago through the Pankey Institute. He helped me to develop greatly as a dentist, but perhaps even more as a person. A couple of years ago he told me it was time for me to give back. "To whom much is given, much is expected".

What goals were you hoping to achieve?

To answer any of the questions I was able to. My practice is very occlusion/TMD oriented. That is an area not taught well in school and I have been studying it for a long time. The mentees have wanted to talk about that a great deal.

How often do you meet/communicate?

It has varied depending on the group or person. We have done in-office, email, and phone meetings.

What words of advice do you have for those who are new to the mentoring program so that they get the most out of the program?

Be transparent, both as a mentor and mentee. Never be afraid of saying "I don't know".

How have you seen your ability to practice enhanced by having a mentor/mentee?

I have always suffered from impostor syndrome. Never feeling that I know enough. As a mentor, I am reminded that I have been on this 30+ year journey and that I have picked up a few skills along the way. I still have much to learn though.

MENTEE



Dr. Tian Yuan

Dr. Yuan graduated from Duke University with her bachelor's in 2012, and from Tufts Univ. in 2017 with her DMD. She was a practice associate (running the practice with her fiancé) for 4 years and now owns a practice with her fiancé, Dr. Michael Ho.

What led you to seek out a mentor/mentee?

I'm always interested in learning more. I never was able to find that perfect mentor-mentee relationship when I was first looking for an associateship position, so I've been trying ever since to connect with other practice owners as much as I can. Ever since we bought our practice, it's been wonderful to connect with experienced dentists and find those tips and tricks that can make practice ownership more efficient and fun.

What goals were you hoping to achieve?

Treatment planning advice, practice management advice, general tips & tricks.

How often do you meet/communicate?

We've been meeting approximately twice a month since we were placed together.

What words of advice do you have for those who are new to the mentoring program so that they get the most out of the program?

Be proactive. Your mentor may be willing to help but they may not know what you're interested in achieving. Always ask questions. Go to their office and meet in person if you can – see what materials they are using, how their office is set up, etc. Every office is unique, and I always find that I learn something extra just by looking around (with permission, of course!)

How have you seen your ability to practice enhanced by having a mentor/mentee?

My mentor runs a high quality, high functioning, slow-paced, fee-for-service office. While I love my office, it is hectic, fast-paced, and much higher volume due to my insurance company contracts. By observing and learning how my mentor runs his office, I have a very clear example and goal for how I want to evolve my practice in the future!

Mentors & Mentees



MENTORSHIP PROGRAM

Join SDCDS's Mentorship Program which aims to connect seasoned and experienced dentists with new dentists.

*"I am learning more from them than they are from me. They have such energy.
I have had a mentor for 20 years and it is my time to pay it forward. Very rewarding."*

The San Diego County Dental Society's Mentorship Program, launched in 2018. We are so proud of how our members have come together to share their wisdom and skills with the upcoming generation. So far, over 100 members have participated as either mentors or mentees. All members are welcome to participate in this program. If you are interested in being matched with someone or want to learn more, please visit: sdcds.org/mentorship-program/ or email Meg Hamrick, Membership Coordinator at membership@sdcds.org or call (619) 275-7189.



- Build and cultivate relationships with fresh faces
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Give Kids A Smile brought smiles AND sealant to children all over San Diego County: *more than 40 offices saw patients!*



Give Kids A Smile Adapts to a Changing Landscape

By Marissa Kristy

One Day. Seven Federally Qualified Health Centers. 300 Children. This was the pattern for many years of Give Kids A Smile. Times have changed, and Give Kids A Smile is changing with them. The nationwide program, sponsored by the American Dental Association and coinciding with Children's Dental Health month, provides no-cost oral health care services to approximately 320,000 children at 2,000 sites. Each year, some 50,000 dental professionals donate their services to provide screenings, cleanings, restorative care, and oral health education to underserved children. The San Diego County Dental Foundation partners with University of California San Diego Division of Child and Community Health-Dental Health Initiative/Share the Care, First 5 San Diego, and the County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency to host our region's Give Kids A Smile Event(s). The 2020 event was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and a committee of the partners discussed ways to safely host Give Kids A Smile during 2021. A new model was created in which providers generously agreed to open their offices to GKAS patients on specific days or fit GKAS appointments in alongside their regularly scheduled patients. Providers were able to treat the same number of patients as in previous years, and the community reported liking this model as it provided a larger time frame for scheduling and more accessible locations for services. In 2022,

the model turned hybrid. The original FQHC locations accepted patients, and volunteer providers continued to open their offices. Dr. Rana Isaqi of Dentistry of Old Town hosted one of this year's most successful events, providing screenings, fluoride varnish, and sealant to 25 children. "I really enjoy participating in this community tradition and I think this sealant and varnish program will reduce oral disease and improve oral health. It has helped make a positive impact on the kids by motivating patients to maintain good oral hygiene habits. I love to see their smiles when they hear that I didn't find any 'sugar bugs' (cavities) in their mouth." This year, enterprising dental providers found a new way to reach even more children: bring the treatment directly to them! Dr. Anu Rajasekaran of Poway Smiles Dentistry hosted two events at local preschools and brought oral screenings, fluoride varnish, and oral health discussions straight to 29 patients.

As SDCDF enters its 30th year of existence, we are doing our best to grow and change with the times. A big component of that is facilitating community partnerships. Who knows what 2023 will throw our way? What we do know is that San Diego County Dental Foundation, our generous members, and our creative community partners will adapt to bring as many smiles to our community as we can.





Mentorship

Most of us may have been lucky to have a mentor in our lives, that person we can turn to for guidance on our professional paths, or someone who provides the kind of evaluation into our performances that only a seasoned person in our field can comfortably bestow on us. Some of us had mentors in dental school, others after we graduated, in our residencies or once we got our first jobs as licensed dentists. They critiqued our work, supported our career choices, encouraged us to expand our skills and perhaps push us beyond our comfort zones. They supported us in our moments of self-doubt while showing us the possibilities for our future successes.

Like many of us, this past year, I was faced with both clinical and non-clinical challenges that made me remember the wise words of my mentors, both past and present. But interestingly, something odd happened – I also recalled feedback given to me by those I had not considered mentors at all, and even more surprising, those who had disagreed with me. Mentorship isn't entirely a dentist telling another dentist how to be a better dentist. That's because not all our challenges are simply about difficult patient cases or practice management.

As a young dentist, I had previously assumed that feedback on my career and practice management should come only from dentists. I wrongly presumed, after all, if someone weren't a dentist, they wouldn't "understand my situation". As it turns out, some of the most valuable advice in my career came from non-dentists. Some happened to be in the dental field but were office managers and hygienists; others in professions such as business management or real estate, but the least surprising of all – my very own patients.

Over the course of my years in practice, patients have given me sincere and open feedback to how they felt in my care and my style of practice management. A patient's firsthand experience is second to none when it comes to dentistry. But aside from the dental aspect, patients also have careers of their own or life experiences that can be so enriching and to be fortunate enough to learn about them, can shed light on our own challenges as humans first, then dentists. I know it did for me.

When patients shared their knowledge or experiences with me, I gained perspective on my own professional and personal dilemmas. As it turns out, my very first patient in dental school, some 18 years ago, said the most encouraging and supportive words I will never forget. She wasn't a dentist or a mentor, but she somehow keyed into my abilities and offered her candid opinion on my chair side skills and advice on life in general considering her struggles with physical ailments. She said I was "inherently a patient person", that I took the time to "really" listen to her, and took "sincere interest" in her life (she had led a difficult life). Her comfort and trust in me allowed me to improve her dental care.

Since she was also very medically compromised, she was appreciative of my thorough work-up of her medical conditions, and asked me to remember to always keep being that thorough. She was a very dear and caring person and told me to "never stop caring" about my patients, "stay sincere and to remember that patients aren't simply exams to pass your boards on or to graduate, we have lives and sometimes challenges with dental care". After corresponding with her even after dental school, unfortunately I lost touch with her but her words have never left me since then.


What this past year has taught me, is that sometimes the best advice in trying times or when at a crossroads comes from those who were not dentists at all. Surprisingly simple yet straightforward objective advice coming from those in other fields or those from whom I least expected it had a lasting impact. In fact, sometimes that advice came from those I had disagreed with. To mentor is to support, encourage and advise us in our field. But I've learned to heed those who may seem like the most unlikely to shed light on life's challenges and career paths. •

Dr. Barakat graduated from Boston Univ. School of Dental Medicine, completed an AEGD residency in Detroit and practiced in New England before moving to San Diego. She is currently in private practice and is the Pres. of the San Diego AGD component. She is a regular contributor to the AGD's Daily Grind blog.


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An interview with Malieka Johnson, DDS

Let me introduce... is a new column featured in Facets as a way to introduce us to the many members that make up the depth and breadth of the San Diego County Dental Society. We hope you enjoy getting to know your colleagues better.

LET ME INTRODUCE...

Dr. Michele Yamada

Dr. Michelle Yamada at Ocean Beach



Humanitarian mission in Nepal



I met Dr. Yamada over 5 years ago at a San Diego County Dental Society event. I bonded with her down-to-earth personality and our shared love of living in OB (Ocean Beach). I have had the privilege of learning about her, conversing with her, and from being cared for by her (as her patient). Dr. Yamada is holistic in her approach to dental treatment and in her approach to life. She is a humanitarian who cares deeply about her patients, as well as her local and international community. As always, after speaking with Dr. Yamada, I learned something and felt impelled to go after life and I hope that you will also feel inspired after learning more about her.

Without further ado, please meet Dr. Michele Yamada.

So, tell us a little about yourself. Where are you from originally? Where did you grow up?

I grew up in Lake Arrowhead, California. It is a small mountain community in the San Bernardino Mountains, near Big Bear. Being outdoors and active was a big part of growing up. We waterskied, rode horseback, hiked and fished in the summer, and skied in the winter. If it was snowing, we would sit by the radio praying for those days when school was cancelled so we could ski. We may have been snowed in but we could always manage to make it to the ski slopes. Other days, I would busy myself with arts and crafts, baking, and board games. Being outdoors and enjoying activities remains important to me. It is a source of rejuvenation and inspiration.

Are you from a big, medium-sized, or small family?

All of the above. My immediate family is small – my parents, me, and my younger brother. I have a large extended family, starting with aunts and uncles, that keeps getting bigger with births and weddings. We get together fairly routinely for the holidays and birthdays. My big family meets semi-annually at our family reunion. Hundreds of us get together. It's amazing to me that we all have the same roots and such different experiences. I always look forward to the reunions.

What was one of your favorite childhood memories or activities?

The Oregon Circuit. The Oregon Circuit is a series of dog

shows during the summer. We would rent a camper and go up and down the coast from one KOA campground to the next. When we weren't at the dog shows, we would go camping, pick blueberries in Washington, visit National Parks, and take hikes. I loved those times.

Where did you complete your undergraduate studies? What did you major in?

I started off at USC and then transferred to UOP where I graduated. I majored in Biology.

What was your “aha” coming to dentistry moment? How did you choose this fine profession?

Pure luck. I was pre-med and one of my friends was a pre-dental student volunteering at the free dental clinic. They were short staffed at the clinic and she asked me to help out. I said yes and that one word changed my life. I got to see dentistry from a whole different point of view and fell in love. There are so many things that I can do as a general dentist and the field is always changing and growing. I am a CE junkie. Dentistry and health are my vocation, passion and hobby.

Where did you attend dental school?

What year did you graduate? Did you do residency?

I went to UCSF and graduated in 1989. No residency. I was planning on it but I got talked out of it. One of my professor's saw a distinct opportunity and a challenge. He had a female classmate, the only woman in all 4 years of her dental school,

who was looking for a female dentist to take over her practice. Instead of a residency, I had 3 professors work with me and got me ready to jump into private practice straight out of school. The dentist whose practice I bought, was a pioneer. It was a privilege to work with and learn from an incredible woman and an amazing dentist. She graduated at the top of her class. She endured and overcame every obstacle put before her. She mastered every aspect of dentistry because all eyes were on her. She was expected to fail but she wasn't going to let that happen. It's crazy to think that she opened her own practice because no male would hire her. I was very blessed to have her as a role model and mentor.

What do you love most about dentistry?

At this point in my career, with over 30 years of practicing, just about everything. I look at dentistry differently now than I did when I started. Now, I see it as getting paid to socialize, create and educate. I have a ton of dental 'toys' that I get to do fun and amazing things with while changing lives. I used to do a lot of cosmetic cases, but now my practice is more health focused. I enjoy helping patients overcome their dental health challenges which often times has more to do with their overall health than just their teeth. This holistic health approach is my most recent passion. My husband is a functional nutritionist, he provides an additional level of expertise. He focuses on creating individualized therapies tailored to treat the underlying causes of illness and improve overall wellness.

Do you own your own practice?

Yes, Ocean Care Dental in Ocean Beach.

Are you married? Have Kids?

Yes. Happily to my husband, Steve. No kids. We have a dog and four cats. Hannah is a retired show dog. Bart, Olivia, Samadhi and Joy are all rescue cats.

What do you enjoy doing outside of dentistry?

– Family, Hobbies, Talents, volunteers, etc.

I like to travel, immersing myself in different cultures. I like that I can combine dentistry and travel through my humanitarian trips. I have practiced and taught dentistry in Nepal, Peru, Bolivia, Dominican Republic, Haiti, Mexico, and Guatemala. I love seeing animals in their natural habitats. I'm always learning a new craft from members of my team or a patient. We are deeply involved in our local community events from the Christmas parade to the Chili Cookoff.

What is one thing on your life bucket list that you have fulfilled and one thing yet to be fulfilled?

Biggest bucket list fulfilled was dropping all insurance plans including Delta Dental. I have been 100% insurance free since 1998 – one of the best and scariest decisions I ever made. It's given me freedoms I wouldn't otherwise have had. Bucket list to be fulfilled: Finding someone with the same love and passion for dentistry to entrust my practice to. My patients and team are family and I want them well taken care of.

Do you volunteer in dentistry?

Are you involved in the dental society or other form of organized dentistry or dental missions?

Yes. I do as much volunteer work locally and abroad as I can fit into my life. I continue to be moved by the graciousness of the people we aid on our dental missions. I used to do peer review with the dental society and volunteer at Veteran's Village but both have been suspended.

Do you have any advice for the newer dentists coming out of school or wanting to own their own practice?

Follow your passion. Mine has changed over time, be open to change. Farm out what you don't like. Be sure you are working with team members and patients that are in alignment with your vision and goals. Don't let fear stop you. Working hard for something that you don't care about is called stress. It may eventually dampen your love of dentistry. Working hard for something you love is called passion.

Do you have a favorite quote or life saying?

'This too shall pass.' When things are bad, remember: It won't always be this way. Take one day at a time. When things are good, remember: It won't always be this way. Enjoy every wonderful moment.

If a fellow dentist wants to reach out to you... can they email you?

Yes, they can email me at myamadadds@msn.com.

The more we learn about one another and the more we come together around our commonalities and our diversities the more we grow and thrive as a community. That's how we build not only our collegial network but it is one way we can build friendships. We hope you like this new series. Enjoy getting to know someone new each issue. We are indeed better together!



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SAN DIEGO COUNTY
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How I Met My Mentor

The first time I collided with my mentor was in 2017. I was the chief resident and a natural leader among my perio pack. I had completely fallen in love with perio. Perio surgery was such an artistic dance. I loved the ebb and flow of the scalpel as it did a choreographed pirouette around the soft tissues that surround both teeth and dental implants. Unexpectedly, I also enjoyed the more technical, and digital side of implant dentistry. Digital planning, and how exactly precise surgery could be with the use of guides, software, and planning ahead. For a “type A” person, this specialty was totally heaven.

In the fall of 2017, I took it upon myself to call all perio alumni and ask for a donation directly over the phone. For what, you ask? I wanted to raise the clinical care to the next level; that would be done by purchasing a department 3D printer to utilize for printing surgical guides, models and much, much more!

I started my 3D printer fund by cold calling a long list of alumni, beginning with the ones that were more recently involved. Number 3 targeted alumni on my list was my now mentor. He answered the phone almost immediately. Now, it was probably the SoCal area code sprinkled with a little bit of fate.

Once he answered, I explained who I was, what I was looking for and how to send the donation. As quickly as he answered, he hung up the phone, but not before he said to call back. I could

tell that he was answering on the car speaker, and his kids were in the background. I made a note and moved down the list. A few months later, I had found enough alumni donations and purchased a brand-new 3D printer.

A few months after that, at our annual perio meeting I had an in-person chance encounter and official introduction. In all honesty I was very embarrassed to meet him, as that first meeting was me asking for money (thankfully he forgot about the intrusive phone call) and him trying to hang up on me like the telemarketer that I was. We started communicating shortly after when I was seeking guidance on a professional crossroads. I knew myself; I knew the path I wanted to take but had not met someone who traveled that road until I got to know my mentor. The mentorship eventually evolved into a mutual friendship, and the rest is history. I could have never anticipated that such great guidance, advice, and mentorship would have materialized from cold calling that long list of alumni asking for donations. It just goes to show how chance encounters can go such a long way. I'll let you (the reader) guess if he ever donated to my 3D printer fund or not... •

Yvette Carrillo DDS, MS graduated from Loma Linda Univ. School of Dentistry 2015 & 2018 respectively. She is a diplomate of the American Academy of Periodontics. In addition to private practice, she is an adjunct faculty member at various teaching institutions. Dr. Carrillo enjoys blogging, working out, cooking, and spending time with her fiancé, Dr. Riley Garrett, a medical anesthesiologist practicing in San Diego.



Women in Leadership Seminar/ 7th Annual Afternoon Tea Party

Our women members gathered again on a beautiful spring Sunday afternoon for the 7th Annual Afternoon Tea | Women in Leadership Seminar. We enjoyed a cup of tea while learning how to craft our own authentic personal brand from our Keynote speaker, Mrs. Lani Grass of *Wave of Women*. SDCDS wishes to thank our sponsors for their generous support of this event.

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units****BLS Renewal
for Healthcare
Providers***FREE CE****Summary:** Register early if your CPR card is expiring; limited spaces available.**Time:** 5:30 – 9:30pm (5pm check-in)**Location:** SDCDS Office
1275 W Morena Blvd. Ste. B
San Diego, 92110**Register:** sdcds.org | (619) 275-7188
| admin@sdcds.org**Pricing:** member \$50... *(or use your 1 free member benefit CE for 2022). nonmember \$70, member staff \$60**Includes:** Dinner & refreshments provided during registration (please indicate special dietary needs when registering).

SATURDAY

**JUNE
11****3CE
units****An Update on
Oral Cancer &
Approach to
Clinical Oral
Pathology****Summary:** This talk gives an oral cancer update and discussion on triaging clinical pathology. The presentation will introduce the provider to the clinical pathway when faced with a clinically detectable lesion.**Time:** 9am – 12:30pm (8am check-in)**Location:** Handlery Hotel,
950 Hotel Cir N., San Diego, 92108**Register:** sdcds.org | (619) 275-7188
| admin@sdcds.org**Pricing:** \$48 member/member staff
| \$75 nonmember**Includes:** Breakfast and light refreshments (please indicate special dietary needs when registering).**Sponsors:** California Dentists' Guild, Fortune Management, Garfield Refining, Ken Rubin Practice Sales, Union Bank**Speakers:**Austin Davies, DDS
and Allan Dovigi,
DDS, MS

SUNDAY

**JULY
10****Day at the
Ballpark****Summary:** SD Padres vs. SF Giants**Time:** First Pitch 1:10 PM**Location:** Pacifico Porch inside
Petco Park**Register:** sdcds.org | (619) 275-7188
| membership@sdcds.org**Pricing:** \$100, TICKETS LIMITED
to 2 per member *All guests must be
accompanied by member dentist***Includes:** "Baja" Menu, domestic &
craft beer options**Sponsored by:** First Choice Business
Brokers, Union Bank

THURSDAY

**JULY
14****4CE
units****BLS Renewal
for Healthcare
Providers***FREE CE****Summary:** Register early if your CPR card is expiring; limited spaces available.**Time:** 5:30-9:30pm (5pm check-in)**Location:** SDCDS Office
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THURSDAY

JUNE
162.5CE
units

New Dentist Seminar: Making Smart Decisions with your Student Loans



Speaker:
Wes Read,
CPA, CFP of
PracticeCFO



Summary: This course will give recent grads a basic understanding of the various IDR's (IBR, PAYE, REPAYE, ICR). Attendees will learn when to consolidate or refinance loans and considerations relating to the purchase of a dental practice and the PSLF Program.

Time: 6 - 8:30pm (5:30pm check-in)

Location: SDCDS Office
1275 W Morena Blvd. Ste. B
San Diego, 92110

Register: sdcds.org | (619) 275-7188
| membership@sdcds.org

Pricing: Free

Includes: Dinner

Sponsored by: Henry Schein

THURSDAY

JUNE
23

Practice Lifecycle



Summary: This presentation will outline what the future holds for private practices, how you can best be prepared, run a successful practice, and increase the value of your business and sell for a maximum profit when the time is right.

Time: 6pm - 8:30pm (check-in 5:30pm)

Location: SDCDS Office, 1275 W Morena Blvd. Ste. B San Diego, 92110

Register: sdcds.org | (619) 275-7188
| admin@sdcds.org

Price: Free

Includes: Dinner & refreshments provided during registration (please indicate special dietary needs when registering).

Hosted by: Menlo Dental Transitions

Speaker:
David Haynes,
MBA



THURSDAY

July
28

New DDS Social



Summary: Talk, toast and make new friends. Hang with old friends. It's nice to network with local Doctors.

Time: 6-8:30pm

Location: TBD

Register: sdcds.org | (619) 275-7188
| membership@sdcds.org

Price: Free

Includes: light refreshments

Sponsor: Patterson Dental



THURSDAY

AUG
184CE
units

BLS Renewal for Healthcare Providers

FREE CE*



Summary: Register early if your CPR card is expiring; limited spaces available.

Time: 5:30-9:30pm (5pm check-in)

Location: SDCDS Office
1275 W Morena Blvd. Ste. B
San Diego, 92110

Register: sdcds.org | (619) 275-7188
| admin@sdcds.org

Pricing: member \$50 *(or use your 1 free member benefit CE for 2022). nonmember \$70, member staff \$60

Includes: Dinner & refreshments provided during registration (please indicate special dietary needs when registering).





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DENTAL SOCIETY

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