

# Pre-dental Digest

16 March 2006

UCSD Student-Run Free Dental Clinic Project  
University of California, San Diego Pre-Dental Society

vol. I.I

## A Thousand Smiles



PDS Student Volunteers L to R: Front Row: Elliot Kleiman, Jessica Nguyen, Julia Ng, Lindsay Godfrey, Kjeld Aamodt  
Back Row: Ujval Gummi, Ryan Reyes, Megan Tsakalos, Brian Lu, Kennie Kwok.

By Kjeld Aamodt

If you could ever judge a book by its cover (or title), it is with the Thousand Smiles Foundation. Conceived in 1985 by San Diego Rotarians, the project is dedicated to "making a difference, one smile

at a time."

The Foundation specializes in cleft lip and palate reconstruction and provides general dental care for those without access to care. With the professional efforts of general dentists, audiologists, maxillofacial surgeons, and physicians, the program is designed to serve approximately 150 children during each two-day session, which occurs every three months. The work is stripped down to the basics, no messing with

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## Mercy in New Orleans

By Jeffrey Tsai

From February 4th to 12th, volunteers from 38 states transformed the Audubon Zoo in New Orleans into one of the largest health outreach encampments ever seen in the United States. The destruction and health impact from Hurricane Katrina some 5 months earlier simply could not be ignored by the dental and medical health communities. Among the some 425 volunteers were four members of the UCSD Pre-dental Society, Janice Chou, Nick Marongiu, Nick Miner, and Philippe Sebrechts, each with the



Dozens of tents filled with dentists, volunteers, and patients

heartfelt desire to donate their time and skills to make a difference.

An unusually cold sky gripped New Orleans that week. "It was freezing cold," Janice Chou remembers, yet despite the icy weather, Chou recalls with

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## Director's Corner

Greetings from Dr. Irvin Silverstein

This is our first newsletter. Our purpose for having these newsletters is to keep you informed of the progress and activities of the UCSD Student-Run Free Dental Clinic Project and the UCSD Pre-Dental Society.

We have come a long way in the last three years. We have revitalized and modernized all three clinic sites, and got more students, more dentists and more laboratory owners and technicians involved with this project. Our program has become nationally recognized as a possible model for other cities that do not have dental schools. The American Dental Association awarded us the Access to Dental Care award and one of the 2005 Golden Apple Awards. Without the help of all of our volunteers and benefactors, this project would not have been so successful.

Many of our students have been accepted to dental school and understand how important it is to give back to the community as there is so much need. In the process of giving back to their fellow man, my students have learned how wonderful and diverse the dental profession is.

Our future plans are to open a free pediatric dental clinic and expand our programs to provide more services. We plan to increase our days, thus accommodating more patients and students. This can only be done with the help and cooperation of all our benefactors and volunteers. Another new part of our project is to start mentoring and helping high school and junior high school students to stay in school and possibly consider the dental profession as a career path.

Some of our Special Speakers for the spring quarter will include deans from the Dental Schools of Harvard, Loma Linda, UNLV, UCLA, and UCSF. In addition we will have some other very special, non-dental school people coming to talk. Don't miss out on these events. Please check our website for updates <http://acs.ucsd.edu/~ucsdfdc>.

If you have any suggestions for our programs or can offer any help, please contact me at (619) 466-6666.

Irvin B. Silverstein, D.D.S., M.S.Ed.  
Director/Advisor  
[dr.silverstein@sbcglobal.net](mailto:dr.silverstein@sbcglobal.net)



## Spotlight:

### Dr. Thompson

By Heather Hearon

Dr. James H. Thompson grew up in La Mesa, California and attended UCSD, as well as University of San Diego. He



graduated from Washington University School of Dental Medicine in St. Louis with a Doctor of Medical Dentistry in 1986. After graduation, he returned to San Diego where he joined his father's general practice for ten years.

Working at the Sharp's Grossmont Hospital for almost fifteen years, Dr. Thompson is heavily involved in hospital dentistry. Involvement in hospital dentistry gave him a means to provide care to those who normally would not have been seen in an average practice. It is a very different aspect of dentistry that he enjoys sharing with one of our shadowing students every other Friday. He is also extremely active in the UCSD free dental clinics, dedicating one Wednesday every month exclusively for us. Volunteering in the clinics, Dr. Thompson has gained a reputation as the go-to-guy regarding patient treatment plans, especially endodontics treatments.

When asked about his thoughts on what it means to be a successful dentist he emphasized that success comes when people discover the aspect of the profession they enjoy. Dentistry is extremely diverse, and it offers the opportunity to get involved in many different ways. It is also a responsibility as a professional to not only participate, but to try and improve the profession.

In addition to his involvement in hospital Dentistry and the UCSD Free Dental Clinics, Dr. Thompson was appointed to the California Dental Association Peer Review Committee and served as president of the California Academy of General Dentistry and the San Diego AGD. Currently he is a Fellow of the Peirre Fauchard Academy, American College of Dentists, International College of Dentists and the Academy of Dentistry International.

### Thousand Smiles cont.

payment or insurance companies; it's all about providing health care to those who need it.

Helping in such a pure form becomes an immensely gratifying experience for everyone involved. In line with its name, smiles not only exude from of the patients and their families as they leave the operatories, but also spill forth from the dentists and volunteers who all seem to share the joys of altruism.

After meeting in the early morning fog on Friday, one can expect a full day of work ahead at the Ensenada clinic. Volunteers set up the operatories for the weekend, start up the check-in computers, and make sure the x-ray machine is ready to function. In a short time, the patients and their families begin to arrive, filling up the taped-off street in front of the clinic. At this point, volunteers break off into smaller groups to work various parts of the operation: check-in, x-rays, patient charting, and chair-side assisting.

On the first day patients are screened to determine who will have surgery the following day. On the second day student volunteers assist the general dentists and endodontists performing an array of procedures ranging from root canals to extractions. Often groups of volunteers are allowed to visit the hospital where the surgeries are under

way. Viewing the cleft palate reconstruction surgeries is the highlight of many volunteers clinical experience. Although a case may take more than four hours of meticulous work between several oral surgeons, the result is astonishing when compared to the initial condition.

Through experiences with the Thousand Smiles Foundation in Ensenada Mexico, student volunteers discover how the burden of disease can be lessened by research and clinical outreach. They also see many fascinating and rare disorders to which they may not otherwise be exposed. I was particularly facinated by a case of Amelogenesis Imperfecta, a genetic disease caused by an autosomal dominant mutation and resulting in the absence of enamel formation during development. The genetics and cultural reasons for why the disorder has not been

selected out of the genetic pool so intrigued me that the first thing I did when I got back home to internet access was research it, even before I unpacked!

The Thousand Smiles Foundation affords a myriad of opportunities to its patients and volunteers. As members of the UCSD Pre-Dental Society, we have a peerless program established to witness firsthand the positive

influence of community outreach. A weekend with the Thousand Smiles Foundation surely shows that there is never a dull moment in dentistry.



Images of cleft lip and palate disorders in patients

## Profiles in PDS: Passing the Torch of Leadership

Come June, the UCSD Pre-dental Society bids farewell to its singular Student Director, Brock Lorenz, and embraces a new triad of co-directors. Malieka Johnson, Ricky Lugo, and Marc Toso will help to shape the future of PDS, so we might want to get to know them.

### Malieka Johnson

By Heather Hearon

Malieka Johnson, one of our future co-directors, grew up in Vancouver, Washington and graduated from UC San Diego in 2003 with a degree in Psychology. Following graduation she attended a UOP School of Dentistry seminar at career services and was introduced to the UCSD Pre-Dental Society. She was excited about the prospect of working in

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## Profiles cont.

the free dental clinics, and felt it was a great opportunity to expose herself to a career in dentistry. She has been actively involved since July 2003 and wants to become a dentist because she has been interested in the healthcare field for a long time, enjoys working with her hands, and most of all enjoys changing people's lives.

When Malieka first joined, the organization was still in its beginning stages. She was a part of a group of only fifteen students, who, under the leadership of Dr. Irvin B. Silverstein, created the momentum necessary to bring the organization to where it is today. She started out by volunteering at the clinics to familiarize herself with the club. She then took up the supply coordinator job which included stocking, and inventorying the clinics' storage facility. A year later, she became clinic manager on Monday nights at the downtown clinic. So far, she has been enthusiastically managing downtown for two years and feels an overwhelming sense of pride and joy with how much of an impact our clinics are having on the community as a whole.

As the new co-director, she will be taking on a range of responsibilities particularly those pertaining to running and increasing the efficiency of all three clinics. In the coming year, she would like to build on the solid foundation we have so far to continue to grow in a positive direction through creating consistency throughout the three clinics, making the clinics more efficient, and encouraging outreach programs. Under her leadership and in conjunction with Ricky and Marc, Brock can be rest-assured the organization is in good hands.

## Ricky Lugo

By Brian Huh

Ricky Lugo is currently a 2nd year majoring in Biochemistry/Cell-biology. Originally from Chino Hills, CA,

he has been in the club since learning of the club from flyers his freshman year. His interest in dentistry began because he found his own dentist and orthodontist's careers to be fascinating. In the coming year, he is excited to take on the role of being the UCSD PDS co-director.



Malieka Johnson



Ricky Lugo

Ricky believes one of the club's greatest strengths is its size. "The club is very large in size, but even though it is large, everyone in the club helps out as opposed to just a few people." However, he sees

the new size of the club to also be a drawback. "There isn't as much interaction between the new members and the old members of the club." He believes one way to improve this issue is that "there should be more interaction between the new and old members, so the new people don't feel like outcasts." He hopes to make PDS more comfortable for everyone who comes to be a member.

Besides the CDA parties, Ricky has many fond memories from his time with the club. He especially enjoyed driving Dean Dillenberg from Arizona around because they discussed numerous "random topics like arranged marriage, traffic light cameras, and other stuff." He found it fun to talk about non-dental related issues with Dean Dillenberg.

Although Ricky doesn't find much of his time free, when he can find it, he



Marc Toso

visiting Tijuana. In the coming year he encourages new members to start volunteering wherever they can. He suggests starting small, like flyering, but always stay involved.

## Marc Toso

By Diana Lin

This June we will be wishing our current student director, Brock Lorenz, good luck as he goes on to Arizona School of Dentistry and Oral Health and welcoming Marc Toso as one of our new three student co-directors. Responsibilities will be split among the three co-directors with Marc's main focus being in special projects, trips, and events. Marc proves to be deserving of this position as he has been committed to the club since the end of his freshman year in spring 2004 when he joined the Pre-Dental Society. He says he has his freshman RA to "thank/blame" for introducing him to the club.

While he is in office, he believes the main goal for the Pre-Dental Society should be to treat more patients this following year than in previous years. He says that "helping people in need and making a positive impact on the community should always be the foundation of the FDC [Free Dental Clinics]." On the other hand, his personal goal is to not make any big mistakes and not to stress, but he says he "doubts that's going to happen."

So what made Marc aspire to become a dentist? Sitting in a dentist's waiting room may make some people nervous; however Marc's experience inspired him to become a dentist. "I was sitting in the waiting room of my dentist's office the summer following high school graduation and was amazed by a folder full of before and after pictures of various procedures. I couldn't imagine what it would feel like to make these changes in another person's mouth/life every day and to call that your 'job'."

With people like Marc helping to lead our club the Pre-Dental Society will surely continue to be a success.



The UCSD Pre dental Society on January 26, 2006  
From L to R: Everyone

enjoys hanging out with his roommate and PDS members, playing poker, and

## Mercy cont.

amazement that patients lined up each day by the hundreds and thousands. Even with 73 chairs set up for dentistry, the demand for care was overwhelming. Some who arrived at 4:00 am were not able to be seen until 5:00 pm. Still, huddled in blankets donated by the American Red Cross, patients braved the weather and never seemed to lose their grateful spirit.

Nick Marongiu, a UCSD graduate and three year member of the UCSD Pre-dental Society, arrived on Feb. 5th for a week of volunteering. Nick found several different areas set up for triage, sterilization, and hygiene. Already a full-time dental assistant, Nick had many skills to offer and spent his first four days assisting endodontists and the remaining days assisting with X-rays, restorations, and oral surgery. He says one of the most memorable moments was "seeing the patients as I left clinic in the evening that were lining up the night before, so they

could be seen the next day."

Nick Miner and Philippe Sebrecchts both spent around a week volunteering at the Mission of Mercy in various dental areas as well. The skills they learned during their pre-dental education and in the UCSD Student-Run Free Dental Clinics were invaluable to them in being effective volunteers at the New Orleans site.

10,000 patients, over 4,000 specifically for dentistry, were seen over the week, and nearly \$2 million in dental care was provided. This achievement is an amazing testament to what organized dentistry and a giving community of dentists can accomplish with just a little effort in the face of disaster. Students from the UCSD



Nick Marongiu assists during an endodontic procedure

Pre-dental Society continually learn and relearn the importance of giving back to the community in times of disaster as well as in the day to day world. Volunteering at the Mission of Mercy to New Orleans was yet another manifestation of that dedication to volunteerism.

## Friendly Faces in the Predental Society

By Thanh T Tran



Ryan Reyes

**Name:**  
Ryan Reyes  
**School:**  
SDSU Class of 2006,  
Biology  
**Hometown:**  
Long Island Massapequa,  
NY  
**Hobbies:**  
Surfing, playing the guitar  
**Superpower I want:**  
Immortality  
**Place I would like to travel:**  
Israel



Nicole Chung

**Name:**  
Nicole Chung  
**School:**  
Marshall, 4th year,  
Human Biology  
**Hometown:**  
San Bernardino, CA  
**Hobbies/pets:**  
Sewing and Spaz (my white bunny)  
**Person I would like to have to dinner:**  
Dr. David Satcher  
**Place I would like to travel:**  
Africa



Maryam Meschi

**Name:**  
Maryam Meschi  
**School:**  
UCSD, Junior, Human Development  
**Hometown:**  
San Diego, CA  
**Hobbies/pets:**  
Scuba Diving and I have a chinchilla!  
**Person I would like to have to dinner:**  
Oprah  
**Superpower I want:**  
Power to heal the sick  
**Place I would like to travel:**  
Australia

## Events Calendar

**Thursday April 6, 2006**

**Kaplan Expert Speaker  
Personal Statement Writing**

Location TBA  
7:00pm - 9:00pm

**Thursday April 20, 2006**

**UCSD Student-Run Free Clinic  
Dinner and Awards Night**

Price Center Ballroom  
6:00pm - 9:00pm

**Friday April 21, 2006**

**Dr. Bruce Donoff, DMD, MD**

Dean of Harvard School of Dental Med.  
Location TBA  
4:30pm - 6:30pm

**Thursday April 27, 2006**

**Dr. Doug Young**

Business consultation and emotional intelligence  
Location TBA  
7:00pm - 9:30pm

**April 28-30, 2006**

**Southern CDA Conference**  
Anaheim, CA

A complete calander is available at  
<http://acs.ucsd.edu/~ucsdfdc>

Please send all questions, comments, or suggestions regarding newsletter to  
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