



PAJARO VALLEY

COMMUNITY HEALTH TRUST'S

Health Watch

Promoting a Healthy Future

Fomentando Buena Salud

FALL 2009

A Volunteer Effort by Our Dental Professionals

Dental Program Made for the Community

By Megan Willis, UCSC Health Sciences Intern

"I've been enjoying things that I haven't been able to eat for 20 years—roasted almonds, corn on the cob and apples—stuff that I wasn't able to chew before. I also smile a lot more and don't feel like I have to shy my face away." This patient of Dientes Community Dental Care would not have been able to get the extensive treatment needed without the assistance of the Dental Affinity Program.

The Dental Affinity Program (DAP) is a partnership between Dientes Community Dental Care, Salud Para La Gente, the Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust and members of the Monterey Bay Dental Society. These partners are working together to expand upon Dientes' successful Dental Affinity Program to offer free of charge dental care for low-income, uninsured patients in Santa Cruz County.



Dr. Gerald Kondo is a member of the Health Trust Board of Directors and serves on the Central Coast Oral Health Collaborative convened by the Health Trust. He is also an active participant in the Dental Affinity Program and has recruited many other community dentists to join as well.

The patients who are chosen for the program are screened at Dientes Community Dental Care and Salud Para La Gente before being referred to local volunteer dentists who treat them until the case has been completed. The patients are then directed back to the referring clinic for on-going care. The only charge for the treatment is lab fees, some of which the Trust funds. Tiffany Darden, another Dientes patient, said that "the Dental Affinity Program has been amazing. There's no way I would have been able to get even half of this work done on my own!"

To date, 27 local dentists have generously volunteered their services and 36 uninsured patients have been treated. Dr. Joseph Robb, a Watsonville dentist who has completed complex cases that involved fillings, crowns and bridges, recalls his experience with DAP patients—"Each patient was very appreciative of the services they received. It makes them feel special, and it makes me feel special, too."

Though the DAP is in the early stages of its implementation, it has been a success treating more than the expected number of patients. However, the need for affordable and quality dental care still persists. Some 19% of all of Santa Cruz County adults and 35% of Pajaro Valley adults have not visited a dentist within the last year. In fact, 10% of the Pajaro Valley residents have not visited a dentist, hygienist or orthodontist in more than five years.

In the wake of the adult Denti-Cal cuts, and rising levels of poverty and unemployment, the DAP is one of the few safety net services available to uninsured residents of Santa Cruz County with complex dental needs. Dr. Robb commented about the huge difference it would make "if every dentist participated in the program."

The DAP is one way to assist those in need in our community. We must also continue to examine other ways to ensure that our communities most vulnerable residents continue to have access to the dental care they need.

Private dentists interested in learning more or volunteering for the DAP should contact Kathleen McCarthy, Program and Grants Manager at the Pajaro Valley Community Health Trust, (831) 761-5695 or kmccarthy@pvhealthtrust.



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Plan to Attend 'An Evening of Wine and Roses' on Friday, November 6 The Event Supports 'Health Care Close to Home'

While we may not reach consensus on health care reform any time soon, we can all agree that tasting great wines and hors d'oeuvres at the Health Trust's 26th annual Evening of Wine and Roses on Friday, November 6 at the

Santa Cruz County Fairgrounds is a wonderful way to support health care needs right here in the Pajaro Valley.

As always, supporters of this festive annual event can look forward to tasting the finest wines made in the Santa Cruz Mountains appellation, enjoying gourmet hors d'oeuvres prepared by area restaurants and caterers and purchasing beautiful Pajaro Valley roses. In addition, this year's Wine and Roses event will feature two new elements for your enjoyment:

- ❁ Costume optional theme: We're so close to Halloween, feel free to dress in a costume that displays your favorite alter ego.
- ❁ Live Auction: In addition to our terrific silent auction, we are introducing a "short but sweet" live auction with several premium items for sale, led by award-winning auctioneer Rob Slawinski of the Slawinski Auction Company. Items to be auctioned include:
 - Gourmet wine cellar dinner for six in Lake Tahoe home, with a two-night stay in a nearby luxury condo
 - Firehouse BBQ for 20 with all the trimmings including firehouse tour and ride on a fire truck provided by Watsonville Fire Department
 - Burgers, Beer and Wine for 16 on the Patio of Bittersweet Bistro Restaurant
 - Valuable fine jewelry, original art work and more!



Rob Slawinski, winner of the 1995 California Auctioneer Championship, is one of the most respected auctioneers in the West. He and his family have guided dozens of charitable organizations through successful auctions, helping to raise more than \$5 million for local causes since 1980. The Slawinski Auction Company is a family business with a 40-year tradition of providing professional, high quality auctions (antiques, real estate, business and estate liquidations) and of supporting local charities.

Admission \$50 per person in advance, \$60 at the door.
For tickets and information, contact the Health Trust at (831) 761-5639.