



From Banking to Kids' Dentistry



Dental work is not the first thing that comes to mind when we think of social services. Ever been stalled by a broken or decayed tooth? It's not only an uncomfortable problem but very unhealthy. It follows, healthy teeth in growing children have long-term health consequences, Kids Community Dental Clinic provides services.

"My hope was to really sink [the importance of dentistry] into kids at the earliest ages. I'm one of five kids, I come from a low-income family, and I didn't get good dental care until I was 7-8 years old, and then I had a mouth full of cavities- just like these kids. So, teaching them to prevent decay is going to save them a lifetime of grief and expenses."

Dale Gorman, Executive Director, KCDC

Kids' Community Dental Clinic is a small non-profit based in Burbank that has no geographic limits, people come from all over Southern California for dental treatments that are free or low-cost for children. KCDC helps over 14,000 children per year with access to dentistry through education and free screenings, and in the neighborhood of 2,000 kids per year with clinical dental care, all provided by predominately volunteer health educators, hygienists and dentists.

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Kids' Community Dental Clinic



We at **City Data Services** love Dale's story and so will you:

I started 12 years ago, in 2008. At that time, the clinic was a struggling entity, like all non-profits it's a tough balance to keep income flowing and minimal staff to keep things going. You have to fundraise, it's a constant push and pull of being able to stay ahead of everything and then to try to establish some sustainability.

[Prior to that], my career was mainly in the financial institution human resources, I've been in banking many years and after a closure, I went to work as a consultant for Disney. I was writing a job description for a friend of mine, one of the board members and I made some comment about how it seems like a pretty good job, and that I could probably do the job, and the board member asked me if I wanted to do it. I said I would try it for a while, and that was 12 years ago. I took over as the executive director, with one employee. To this day, there is still only 2 full time people, me and that same employee, Ana Gomez, RDA.

What I bring, to Kids Community Dental, what my motivation was, was to bring a different perspective from a non-dental worker, I'm not a dentist, I'm not a dental hygienist, but I could bring a different business perspective on what we could and should be doing, and how we could possibly sustain the clinic. I bring other skills in terms of compliance, policy, marketing, volunteer recruiting, and logic... that's what I bring to the table.

We're a predominately volunteer based organization, [located in Burbank]. The dentists are wonderful, that come and help us help children. Most of our dentists are volunteers that either have their own private practices or work in some sort of capacity in the dental field. They come from all over Southern California, as far as San Diego, and Simi Valley, Ventura County and as far north as Bakersfield area



I love the City of Burbank, [our home base], it is a fantastic city! It is unique in that the employees are very good to the non-profits, by being very good, I don't mean monetarily, although there is some of that available, but they are very supportive. we have a unique thing in that the City is always open to hear what they can help us with... and what they can do to support us. We're very fortunate to be in that kind of environment.

KCDC has a successful partnership program for college students studying dental hygiene and dentistry. We began with mainly in-clinic treatments, before I took over, they had already established clinical rotations for students from dental hygiene schools Pasadena City College and West Los Angeles College. By 2009, those schools provided rotations of dental hygiene students, providing preventative care treatments to children. Pasadena City College continues to this day and in 2018, UCLA's 4th year dental students were added to the rotation.

What we found was that there's very little oral health education in schools... not enough. We were already providing dental programs in about 8 schools, so in 2009, we started expanding that circle, in and around Burbank, schools throughout the valley and up through Santa Clarita and Antelope Valley, we now go to over 100 locations in a year.

We try to go where there are access issues, where there is little, or very few

dental access points for people, to offer free dental screenings, preventative treatment and education. We're a true safety net in that we don't really turn anybody away. We try to figure out a way to help families that seek help with dental needs.

When we go into schools and do screenings, we find kids in really bad shape with rampant decay... this means that they have no access to care. Why are they not going? We have to figure out why they're not going to see anybody... We want to take those cases and work on them and restore their health, and then keep them on a regular cleaning basis so that they never get into that situation again.

We all love what we do because we do see instant change. You can take a child that's crying from pain and flip it around and help them out immediately by relieving that pain. We have several families that started off with one child with a lot of decay, and then they start bringing their siblings, and then they end up getting fully restored [and see the dentist] on a regular basis. We teach them the importance of coming [to the dentist] regularly and then taking care of their teeth in more of a preventative manner instead of emergency based.

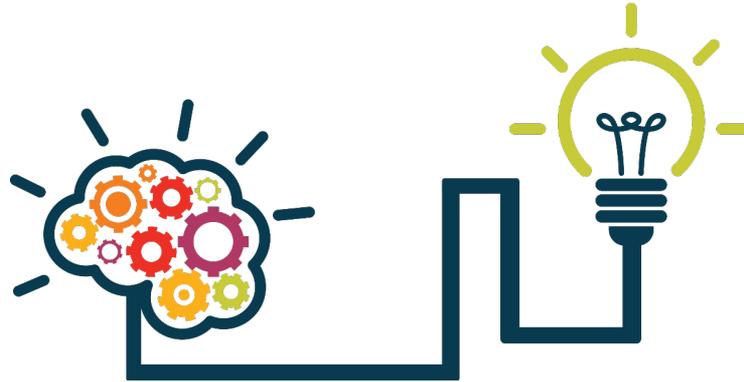
We have a partnership with a children's burn organization... Often times when people are burned in the face, they cannot close their lips, so their teeth are compromised. We helped a patient that had severe facial burns, her teeth needed restoring. During surgery, we took time to fix her first six front teeth on the top and the bottom that were destroyed by decay. We were able to fully restore those teeth.

The front teeth are so important, not only to bite and chew but to smile. Fortunately, we have a premiere cosmetic dentist who takes some of our cases helping children in need. This young lady was around 14 at the time with severe facial burns, and we were able to fix her whole mouth. She did not smile before her teeth were fixed, but was smiling and grateful when it was completed. Our surgeon did a beautiful job!

In cases like this the visual aspect is important, but oral health care goes beyond the visual aspect of our smiles; it also addresses the health of the whole body. Untreated problems in the mouth can lead to heart disease, and other health issues. So, by restoring the health of our teeth, we restore the health of our bodies and prevent health problems from developing later in life.

Dale Gorman
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Kids' Community Dental Clinic



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