

Fall 2014

# Lasting Impressions, Fall 2014

College of Dental Medicine

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# lasting Impressions

NOVA SOUTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY COLLEGE OF DENTAL MEDICINE



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# lasting Impressions

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## Unleashing the Potential to Lead



What do an oral surgery resident, a class president, a general dentist turned orthodontics resident, and the American Student Dental Association vice president have in common? They are all profiled in this issue of *Lasting Impressions*.

These individuals represent dentistry's next generation of leaders. The best predictor of future leadership is current leadership. So, it is critical that Nova Southeastern University and the College of Dental Medicine provide sufficient opportunities for our students to develop their leadership skills.

During the annual NSU/CDM alumni reception at the Florida National Dental Congress, I asked several former students what they believed contributed most to shaping their success as clinicians, scientists, educators, and leaders.

Our alumni identified three key issues. First, the collegial relationships between faculty members and students helped them develop confidence in both their dental and leadership skills. Second, the many dental student organizations provided them with experiences to practice their leadership skills and required them to work together as a team to accomplish a shared goal. Third, the many community service opportunities offered perspective on the great need for oral health care that exists in our community and the world. The Give Kids A Smile Day, the NSU Day for Children, the foreign and domestic mission trips, and the Special Smiles-Special Olympics, all contributed to changing their perspective on the importance of giving back. They recognized their professional responsibility to reach out to those who do not come to their dental offices, but still need dental care.

We are pleased to share the stories of just a few of our amazing students and alumni and how NSU's College of Dental Medicine contributed to developing and nurturing their professional dreams, aspirations, and leadership.

Linda C. Niessen, D.M.D., M.P.H.

Dean and Professor

College of Dental Medicine

Nova Southeastern University

FOLLOW NSU





**CDM Researchers Dream**

**BIG**

## **About the Center for Collaborative Research**

BY MICHELLE F. SOLOMON

For Richard Singer, D.M.D., M.S., the new Center for Collaborative Research (CCR), a 215,000-square-foot, \$80-million facility, will add greater resources for students engaged in the College of Dental Medicine's (CDM) master's degree program to collaborate and interact with an active research community. For Cristina Garcia-Godoy, D.D.S., the new center will expose the predoctoral student research committee that she co-mentors to other disciplines and new research ideas and help them broaden their scope outside of the usual research topics in dentistry. For Umadevi Kandalam, Ph.D., the CCR will provide her with the expertise from various disciplines to further her research in bone regeneration using stem cells.





The three researchers at the CDM represent a number of research experts at the college who are anticipating the opportunity of sharing knowledge for the sake of furthering science and improving dental health when the CCR opens in 2016.

“The thing about research, and particularly human biology, is that science doesn’t know any disciplines,” said Linda Niessen, D.M.D., M.P.H., M.P.P., dean of NSU’s College of Dental Medicine. “What the CCR offers is opportunity.”

The dean uses a hypothetical example of the kind of interaction that she envisions for her researchers. “Perhaps one of our researchers is working on an oral health study and someone from another discipline is steeped in studies on diabetic health, and they are able to come together to discover similarities that wouldn’t have been possible had they been working separately,” she said.

The center will house the Rumbaugh-Goodwin Institute for Cancer Research, where, Kandalam

said, experts from the cancer field could collaborate on head and neck cancers, an important area of study at the CDM because of its link to oral health disease. Cancers of the head and neck account for about 3 to 5 percent of all cancers in the United States, according to the researcher. “With an incidence of more than 40,000 new cases a year nationwide, head and neck cancer remains a major public health problem,” said Kandalam, assistant professor, Department of Pediatric Dentistry. “In this context, the expertise from those studying cancers would benefit us for future collaboration.”

Kandalam’s primary area of research focuses on regeneration of bone using stem cells. “Our long-term goal is to repair cleft palate,” she said. Her research team is investigating different biomaterials for stem cell growth and differentiation. “Reconstruction of hard palate is important to preserve normal growth. Our research team has established isolation procedures of stem cells from various tissues



The Center for Collaborative Research will have an impact on the College of Dental Medicine's researchers such as, far left, Richard Singer.

At left, researcher Umadevi Kandalam (center) works with dental students Shruthi Lakshmana and Anna Purna Bondalapati (right).

Below, Cristina Garcia-Godoy is also part of the research CDM team.



including dental tissues. This is a multidisciplinary research project that requires expertise from various disciplines," she said, adding that the CCR will provide a forum for her team to initiate collaborative research projects.

During the past five years, Garcia-Godoy, assistant professor and

director of clinical research, has conducted 15 clinical trials to evaluate the safety and efficacy of oral hygiene products for industry sponsors and has secured external funding in excess of \$1 million.

Garcia-Godoy's studies in oral hygiene and teeth whitening could benefit, she believes, from those involved in other areas of medicine too. From her experience in clinical research, she maintains that external funding companies such as Procter & Gamble, Colgate, and other large companies will be attracted by the multidisciplinary approach that the CCR will foster. "This can definitely be a selling point to these kinds of sponsors," she said.

Singer, the director of the CDM's master's degree program and interim director for post-graduate orthodontics, envisions clinical facilities with dental patients "that would open the door for greater scientific resources and collaborative interactions." Plus, he said, the center could provide the environment for long-term clinical studies on wide-ranging topics that have not been considered previously.

The idea he's most enthralled by, however, is what scientific curiosities the facility could cultivate. "It's very interesting and exciting, yet difficult to predict where those paths might lead."

NSU is funding the center using a combination of its own reserves and tax-exempt financing. Niessen doesn't mind sharing her piece of the dream for the College of Dental Medicine's alignment within the CCR. "Theoretically, we'd love to have a wing of the facility devoted entirely to dental research. Nothing is in concrete, but we're only a donor away," she said.

Niessen would be only too happy to name the wing in the potential donor's honor. "For someone who would love to be aligned with the cutting-edge research in the field of dentistry that we're already doing here, and which will grow even more with the addition of the CCR, it's a perfect fit." ♦





# CLASS ACTS

**THE COLLEGE OF DENTAL MEDICINE'S 2014 GRADUATES  
ARE READY FOR CAREERS, LEADERSHIP.**

BY MARY HLADKY

Whitney Howard always knew she wanted to be a doctor, but she was unsure which field she wanted to pursue.

After her mother suggested dentistry, Howard, then an undergraduate at the University of Florida, researched the field. The more she learned, the more she liked the idea. Her career choice was made during a campus visit when she “just fell in love” with NSU’s College of Dental Medicine.

Four years later, Howard, one of 123 graduates in the college’s class of 2014, is planning to put her Doctor of Dental Medicine degree to work as a general dentist. She will join a family practice in Florida.

“I really like multiple things—root canals, extractions, working with children and families,” she said. “I like general dentistry because you can do it all.”

*continued on page 8*





"They have great hearts, and they will be great leaders," she said.

They also are among the best qualified students in the college's 17-year history. The quality of applicants has risen significantly as the college's reputation has grown, allowing the college to become more selective about which applicants to choose, said Hal Lippman, D.D.S., executive associate dean and assistant professor.



While they pursued their degrees, many members of the class of 2014 worked to improve their school by holding student leadership positions and donating their time and



new skills to treat members of the community who couldn't afford a dentist.

While Howard is launching her career, many of her classmates chose to enter programs to become dental specialists. Keren Castellucci is now a couple of months into an NSU two-year, residency program—affiliated with Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital—to become a pediatric dentist. "I have always wanted to be a children's dentist," she said.

As president of the class of 2014, Howard also was very active with student-led initiatives. "Being involved has helped me shape my experience here, and that of my classmates," said Howard, 26, who previously had served as class vice president and treasurer. "It has been extremely important for my success in the dental school."

One of her initiatives was creating a student ambassador program to insure that pre dental students have a good experience during campus visits. As part of the visits, dental students are paired with newcomers to show them the campus, provide information, and answer questions. She then worked to improve that program by proposing the even better organized system that is now in place in which ambassadors are voted into the volunteer job by their peers, approved by faculty members, and then receive training.

Castellucci, 27, was co-organizer of this year's Give Kids A Smile day, which was held in March on NSU's main campus. The event was featured in the American Dental Association's *ADA News* magazine.

More than 200 volunteer dental students and faculty members provided free treatment valued

"I love everything about it."

The class of 2014 holds a special place for Linda Niessen, D.M.D., M.P.H., M.P.P., who celebrates her first year as the college's dean in October, after serving most recently as a clinical professor in the Department of Restorative Dentistry at Texas A&M University's Baylor College of Dentistry. "This is my first class. This is the class that broke me in," said Niessen. "These students helped me understand what being a dean at a dental school is all about."

Niessen got to know the class members by holding dinner meetings with groups of 10 to 12.

Members of the class of 2014 share memorable moments just before the graduation ceremony. Clockwise, from top, are Gary Cardoso; Blerta Abdi, left, Amir Akhavan Malayeri, and Ryan Harris; and Whitney Howard takes a photograph of herself with classmates (from left) Janet Maloney, Gargi Gajera, and Samantha Steiner.



at more than \$100,000 to about 325 children—the most in the program’s 11-year history. “We opened the entire clinic to uninsured children and those at need in the community,” Castellucci said. “A lot of the younger children had never seen a dentist before.”

According to Castellucci, the key to this year’s success was getting the word out to the community about the program, including using social media. At the CDM, “there are so many opportunities to be involved in the community,” she added.

Amir Akhavan Malayeri, who has begun a three-year orthodontics residency at the University of Maryland, served this year as the president of the college’s Student Government Association, after being secretary and vice president.

“It was one of the greatest decisions I ever made,” said Malayeri, 30. “I tell everyone, ‘you need to be involved.’ That is what makes the experience of dental school even more valuable. I saw the potential of what you can do as a leader, to be able to make changes and do something that is great for other people.”

Malayeri considers that his biggest accomplishment during his last year as a student was trying to streamline the national board examination, a do-or-die patient treatment exam that students must pass to become a licensed dentist. A committee coordinated with the college’s administration to iron out a host of issues with the intent of easing some of the unnecessary pressures on the students.

“I think we did a pretty good job of it,” said Malayeri, who came to the CDM from the University of California, Irvine. “We made it more organized so it functioned better. I have had a lot of people thank me for it.”

Konstantine Lagos, 26, now in Brooklyn for a one-year general practice residency at Lutheran Medical Center, was part of the NSU Dual Admission Program—which reserves a seat for highly qualified undergraduates in one of NSU’s master’s and professional degree programs.

If he can’t make it as an actor in New York City (one of his passions is theater), he plans to have a family practice, inspired by his own family dentist, who allowed Lagos to shadow him

one summer while he was in high school.

“He really inspired me in the way he was able to treat patients as individuals and welcomed the whole family. He had a way of dealing with his patients that made them comfortable and happy to be there,” said Lagos.

One of the most fulfilling experiences during his four years at the college was helping organize an NSU Dental Mission trip to Nicaragua, where students treated patients in community clinics. “As second-year students, it was the first interaction we had with patients. It prepared us [for working in the college’s dental clinic as third-year students]. It is one of my brightest memories,” added Lagos.

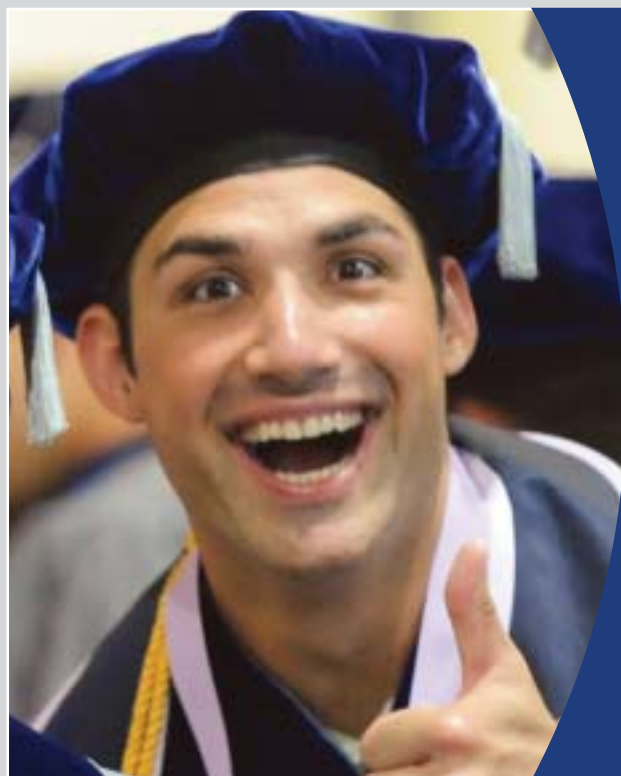
## A DUAL DEGREE

Brittanie Dillon, 28, was accepted into another innovative NSU program that is the only one of its kind in the U.S.—a joint Doctor of Osteopathic Medicine/Doctor of Dental Medicine degree to meet the needs of rural and medically underserved patients. The idea appealed to her because she is from Wichita, Kansas, and is familiar with the problem of the lack of doctors in rural areas.

The six-year joint degree program gives “a lot of options,” she said. “I like that.” She is considering practicing dentistry in a hospital emergency room. “There is a need in the ER for dentists,” Dillon said. Patients “don’t have access to a dentist, and they are in pain.”

In June, she began a rotating internship in internal, family, and emergency medicine at Manatee Memorial Hospital in Sarasota, Florida. After that, she will pursue a residency, possibly in hospital dentistry.

Maria Liliana Bernal, 31, thought she wanted to pursue a dental career but wanted to learn



Adam Best shows his enthusiasm before commencement.

**“We are ready for them to go ahead and take our good name out into the community and be our ambassadors for good dental health.”  
— Hal Lippman**



more about what that entailed before committing. So she applied for a nonmedical job checking in patients at the college's dental clinic.

She eventually left that job to concentrate on completing her undergraduate degree, but her former boss asked her to return as a dental clinic patient care coordinator. That experience was the deciding factor. She learned she could handle patients who were upset or didn't want to be there, communicate well with them, and establish a good relationship.

“That is when I knew that [being a dentist] is what I wanted to do,” she said. “I knew I could do this.” Now Bernal, a native of Colombia, has begun to work on an advanced degree in periodontics at the University of Tennessee. “A periodontist is responsible for helping you save your teeth,” she said. “Being able to do that is very gratifying.”

Being a dental student became astonishing good luck for Uyen Nguyen, who began a nearly three-year orthodontics program at West Virginia University a month after graduating from the CDM.

She was part of an NSU class that was learning how to conduct oral cancer screenings when a classmate examining her spotted a lesion on her palate. An NSU pathologist diagnosed a carcinoma, and two NSU oral surgeons removed it in 2012. She then underwent radiation treatment.

Nguyen, 31, said the oral screening spotted the cancer while it could still be treated successfully. “It was so far back in my mouth, I never would have seen it for myself,” she said. The surgery and radiation “set me back a lot,” she said. “I was weak. There were times I could not attend school.”

But her classmates rallied to her side. They took notes for her in class, visited,





*Students take one last photograph before the commencement ceremony.  
From left are Ning Chi, Victoria Jones, Keren Castellucci, Margaret Matthews, and Kristina Marklin.*

and helped out however they could. “I felt very supported,” she said. “Everyone is like a family to me, and with them, I am able to graduate without any delay.”

Saili Ruiz has transcended political upheaval to become a dentist for the second time in her life. Born in Cuba, Ruiz and her family faced political persecution because her grandfather was involved in efforts to overthrow Fidel Castro. He was killed by the regime in 1962, she said.

She and her father, mother, and brother were able to get to the Dominican Republic in 1995, where Ruiz and her brother eventually graduated from dental college in Santo Domingo. She practiced as a dentist before coming to Florida.

Without a license to practice here, Ruiz had to start over. The first hurdle was learning English. About six months after arriving, she was hired as a dental assistant by a West Palm Beach dentist who is an NSU graduate, and she later was licensed as a dental hygienist.

Her brother, Eliseo Ruiz, was accepted to NSU’s dental college, and urged her to follow suit. “My brother was an inspiration to me,” she said. “He said, ‘you can do it.’ ”

Even with her background, the need to know medical terminology in English made classes difficult for Ruiz. Also, being the mother of two young children and going to school full time was challenging.

Now that she has prevailed, Ruiz plans to go into practice with her brother in Miami-Dade County. “God put me on this planet to take care of people and make them smile,” said Ruiz, 39.

The CDM faculty is sending the graduates out into the world knowing they will do well, Lippman said.

“I know we have provided them with the opportunities to grow and flourish as dental professionals,” he said. “We are ready for them to go ahead and take our good name out into the community and be our ambassadors for good dental health.” ♦



# CDM's Class of 2018 Takes Its Place



*Jusemmy Arce, who graduated from NSU with a bachelor's degree in biology, is a proud member of the CDM's Class of 2018.*

BY MARY HLADKY

As members of the class of 2014 begin the next step in their careers, the 125 students of the class of 2018 are ready for the next phase in their education.

Jusemmy Arce, 24, is coming home. She graduated from NSU with a bachelor's degree in biology before starting a master's program in biomedical science at Barry University.

She knows several students in the College of Dental Medicine (CDM) who have praised the education they are receiving, and one of her best friends will be in her class.

Arce's interest in dentistry started early. She was enrolled in a dental assistant program in high school. As an undergraduate, she worked in dental offices and was able to shadow a dentist. "I am so excited," she said. "This has been my dream forever. I am glad to finally be on the path to getting there."

Latoya Luke, 21, first learned about NSU from a guidance counselor while attending high school in Brooklyn. After three years at Barry University, she had enough credits to be accepted at NSU after completing her junior year. She has a strong interest in public health, and NSU's emphasis on community outreach and service convinced her that the CDM is the right school for her.

Medicine is a big part of Luke's life story in her native Guyana. Her grandmother administered a hospital there and her mother

was a nurse. But it was the plight of her two younger brothers that propelled her into dentistry, she said.

"They never used to smile for pictures or be outgoing. When they finally got their braces, they completely changed. Now you can't stop them from taking selfies, and they are not shy anymore because of having a positive dental experience," she said.

When Ashley Beck interviewed at the CDM, "it immediately felt like home. It gave me a glimpse that my relationships with the professors would be friendly, personable, and relatable," she said.

And then there was Florida's climate. "I didn't pick the school because of the warm weather, but it definitely is a plus," said Beck, who graduated with a major in biochemistry from Eastern University near Philadelphia.

Like Arce, Beck was propelled into dentistry after shadowing her dentist, orthodontist, and an oral surgeon during her junior year of high school. "As soon as I started, I knew it was the field I would pursue," said Beck, 22.

While she likes the science that underpins the degree, "what attracts me the most is the relationships you build with your patient. Whatever career I was going into, I wanted it to be patient-oriented. I don't want it to be about a patient coming to the office, getting work done, and then leaving." ♦

## Message From the Chancellor: A Community Leader



Nova Southeastern University commemorates its 50th anniversary with a diverse array of celebratory activities. As I reflect on this milestone, I recognize that this would not be possible without the leaders of the past and present.

I am currently in my 28th year as a pioneer administrator from Southeastern University of the Health Sciences, the precursor to what is now known as the NSU Health Professions Division. My 20 years as a state legislator also give me a unique perspective. When I look back at what has transpired at NSU through the years, I am filled with a true sense of wonderment in regard to how prominent and vast our educational influence has become in a relatively short 50-year time frame.

NSU's far-reaching achievements are a consequence of some amazing individuals who served as the pioneers throughout its evolution. I could list a multitude of names, but some specific examples that immediately spring to mind are Morton Terry, Abraham Fischler, Robert Steele, Hamilton C. Forman, and Royal Flagg Jonas. None of

these individuals, with the exception of Fischler, were in the field of formal education. Yet, they possessed the instinctive, humanistic, and community-driven values needed to establish and then build a unified institution that continues to be enhanced on a daily basis—true leaders.

As we view the university's highlights during the past 50 years, I am confident that NSU will forge ahead to prominence with today's leadership. Our forward-thinking president and chief executive officer, George Hanbury, has recruited a strong executive leadership team that shares the NSU community's vision: Jackie Travisano, executive vice president and chief operating officer; Ralph Rogers, executive vice president for Academic Affairs and provost; and Linda Niessen, dean of the College of Dental Medicine. These, among other new members of our NSU family, complement our existing faculty and staff members, who are all leaders in their own right.

Fred Lippman R.Ph., Ed.D.  
Chancellor, Health Professions Division



### **DATELINE HEALTH A WINNER IN THE TELLY AWARDS**

The Telly Awards has named *Dateline Health* as a People's Telly Silver winner in the 35th Annual Telly Awards for its piece titled "Joint Preservation and Pain Management." This is *Dateline Health's* fourth Telly Award, having received two in 2008 and another in 2012. This year's Telly Awards received nearly 12,000 entries from all 50 states and numerous countries.

The Telly Awards was founded in 1979 and is the premier award honoring outstanding local, regional, and cable TV commercials and programs. It also honors the finest video and film productions and online commercials, video, and films.

The winning episode featured host Fred Lippman, R.Ph., Ed.D., chancellor of NSU's Health Professions Division, interviewing Francis M. McCormick, M.D., an orthopedic specialist, and W. Porter McRoberts, M.D., an interventional spine and pain management specialist, both from Holy Cross Hospital in Fort Lauderdale.

"This Telly Award is a great opportunity for us to thank the many experts who have donated their time and expertise over the past several years," said Lippman.

*Dateline Health* is a 30-minute service program that covers a wide range of contemporary health care issues through interviews with health care experts, researchers, and policy makers. It airs on Broward Education Communication Network (BECON). It is also carried by COMCAST and AT&T U-verse cable providers, Direct TV, Dish Network satellite, and over air signals seven days a week throughout the tricity area. It reaches 4.3 million households in the South Florida community.

For more information about *Dateline Health*, visit [www.nova.edu/datelinehealth](http://www.nova.edu/datelinehealth). ♦

Fred Lippman is filmed for Dateline Health.







# Educating Congress for Dental Education

BY LINNETTE DOBBS-FULLER

**M**ark S. Schweizer, D.D.S., M.P.H., spent 22 years as a dentist in private practice before becoming an educator at NSU's College of Dental Medicine (CDM). In both roles, he worked as an advocate for public health issues centered on access to dental care for HIV/AIDS patients. But this past year, Schweizer, an assistant professor and director of Development and Special Projects at the CDM, was able to educate Congress on dental education.

Schweizer was the recipient of the ADEA/Sunstar Americas, Inc./Harry W. Bruce, Jr. Legislative Fellowship. This fellowship affords a dental educator the opportunity to spend three months in Washington, D.C., working with the American Dental Educators Association (ADEA) on Capitol Hill, educating on issues that affect dental education.

The professor's area of special interest and expertise focused on the dental funding component of the national Ryan White HIV/AIDS Program. Of particular relevance to dental education, Schweizer said, is the funding allotted to community-based dental partnerships and the dental reimbursement program.

"Continued funding is contingent on the federal budget," said Schweizer, adding that money for the Ryan White program is secured from discretionary spending. A current issue in front of Congress that could jeopardize continued funding is the Affordable Care Act. "Should there be a shortfall in the budget; the fear is that funds from programs like Ryan White will be moved to overcome the shortfall," he said.

Currently, 19 dental schools receive Ryan White Part F funding. NSU's College of Dental Medicine receives \$219,950 a year for five years. This valuable source of funding is used to establish community-based partnerships that serve as educational sites for den-

tal students. "This is a great learning experience; it increases awareness, cultural competency, and dealings with underserved populations," he said.

The dental educator also was able to work with Florida legislators—Senators Marco Rubio and Bill Nelson and U.S. Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz. ADEA's legislative group was very significant in bringing attention to its issues, he said. One of his proudest accomplishments, he added, was having the ADEA lobbyists cite his paper on Ryan White Dental Reimbursement. Schweizer's paper explains why dental schools are unable to utilize the reimbursement to its fullest. "Both the paperwork and the process are too cumbersome for dental schools, which do not have the infrastructure, as a result dental schools are losing out to hospitals."

Another highlight was showing Casey Lynn, Vince Napoli, and Jason Watts, then third-year CDM students, how the advocacy process works as they accompanied him to various legislators' offices. "It is important that they do advocacy for the dental profession. As dentistry changes, they have to be involved in the process," said Schweizer. (A profile on Watts is on page 28.)

Summing up his time on the Hill, Schweizer said his months were quite challenging, yet rewarding. He said he now has a greater comfort level with the political system and found it valuable to "see the process." He also added that it was enlightening to listen to the budget hearings.

But the bottom line is that "it's very difficult in this climate, everybody is fighting for dollars and there is only so much to go around," Schweizer said. "Securing more funding would be ideal; however, at this point, the goal is to maintain funding." ♦

# Alumni Impressions

Her career is steeped  
in compassion.



*Elizabeth Feldman sees cancer patients during all phases of their treatment to ensure proper oral care.*

BY JOHN DOLEN

There are many paths one can take after the College of Dental Medicine (CDM). Alumna **Elizabeth Feldman**, D.M.D., took one of the rarest.

The 2005 graduate leads the dental section of the Thoracic/Head and Neck Cancers Department at UF Health Cancer Center—Orlando Health. This is one of the few hospital-based cancer clinics in the United States in which the practice is devoted to maxillofacial prosthodontics—treating cancer patients whose disease has caused defects of the head or neck. This includes intraoral as well as extraoral defects, those inside and outside of the mouth. In this program, patients are seen before they start treatment, during, and after treatment to ensure proper oral care. Although the program is centered on head and neck cancer patients, Feldman sees many patients who are battling other types of cancer.

Feldman calls this work richly rewarding, but it took some serious graduate work and dedication to get to this point.

In her third year at CDM, she applied for a postgraduate program in prosthodontics. As part of an honors prosthetics program, Feldman worked with the graduate students, participated in their journal club, and learned how the latest technology is applied to prosthodontics. Later, Feldman was accepted to the University of Florida's postgraduate prosthodontics program, where she had a rotation in maxillofacial prosthodontics. This was followed by a fellowship at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center. During her fellowship, she was hired by Orlando Health to start up a maxillofacial prosthodontics/dental oncology department in its cancer center, which is now known as the UF Health Cancer Center—Orlando Health.

*A portion of this story originally ran in the Orlando Medical News.*

Feldman recalls that her days studying at the CDM were among her happiest, and she learned so much from her professors.

“Every professor I encountered there made a difference in my life. I loved going to dental school. Every day for me was exciting. I wanted to learn everything about giving people a smile,” said Feldman. Her fondest memory took place in her third year when she was called upon to make a denture for a young man. Although his case was emotional and challenging, it was a success. The patient returned to the clinic as a changed man, smiling. Feldman realized the importance of a smile and how teeth can make a significant difference in people’s lives.

Getting to NSU—which honored Feldman with a distinguished alumni award in 2010—was also

noticing things most people would not,” Feldman said. She also had a fascination with her own dentist’s work, wanting to know all about the processes, and often venturing into the backroom lab to inspect the lab work.

It still took a while for her parents’ suggestion to gain traction. Feldman studied psychology at the University of Illinois—Chicago. After earning her bachelor’s degree, she pursued a master’s degree in medical radiation physics.

“I was looking for a career path,” she said. After completing her master’s degree at the Chicago Medical School, she was disappointed that she spent more time with computers than people. It was then that she joined NSU’s Biomedical Sciences program, eventually earning her D.M.D. at the College of Dental Medicine.

**“Every [CDM] professor...made a difference in my life.”**

—Elizabeth Feldman

something of a journey for Feldman. It started in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, in the former Soviet Union.

Yes, Feldman was born there, but she points out, “I was raised in Chicago.” Religious reasons prompted her family to immigrate to the United States, where her parents knew there would be better opportunities for her and her sister. (Feldman didn’t know she was Jewish while in Tashkent.) After a long immigration process, which included residing in both Austria and Italy, the family made it to the United States.

Before she left Uzbekistan, Feldman spent a lot of time with her role model, her great-grandmother, who was a physician. “She would always discuss her work and patients with me as if I were her colleague, making me feel like an adult. She had patience for all my questions,” Feldman said.

#### **EARLY INTEREST IN DENTISTRY**

After they arrived in suburban Chicago in 1979, Feldman’s parents set about reeducating themselves. Her father became a real estate appraiser, and her mother became a mortgage broker. It wasn’t long until her parents began to tell her she would be a good dentist. “I had a fine eye for detail,

At the UF Health Cancer Center in Orlando, she is part of a team that includes a head and neck surgeon, plastic surgeon, a medical oncologist, and speech pathologists. They usually confer on each case, and Feldman participates in many of the surgical cases as well as prosthodontic rehabilitation of the head and neck cancer cases.

One of her past cases involved working with an anaplastologist in designing a prosthetic ear. An informative video on the Orlando Health YouTube channel shows a patient receiving a prosthetic ear after extensive cancer surgery. In the video, the man receives the newly crafted ear via a magnet retention attached to craniofacial implants that were placed by Feldman during an earlier surgery. The patient is wonderfully genuine in his gratitude, knowing how much more comfortable he’ll now feel when around other people, and the fact that he can now wear his glasses, something most people take for granted, but is very important for someone missing a part of his face.

So, what does it take to get into this field? Feldman replies without hesitation: “Compassion—and patience.” And she laughs heartily. It’s clear that for her, those are not just words. ♦



# Alumni Impressions

Alumnus melds  
dental practice with  
business acumen.



*Chris Phelps, who was a member of the CDM's third graduating class, is president of the CDM Alumni Society Advisory Board.*

BY JODI NODING

**Chris Phelps** ('03), D.M.D., is a busy dental practitioner, seeing patients four days a week and overseeing 2 offices with 6 dentists and 40 employees in Matthews (outside of Charlotte), North Carolina. But his entrepreneurial spirit—nurtured at NSU's College of Dental Medicine (CDM)—also has led him to start two supporting businesses that help create success for him and fellow business owners.

Phelps was a newlywed when he applied to NSU, and was excited about what he saw during his visit. Unlike other outdated facilities, "I found the school was brand new with state-of-the-art technology," said Phelps, who became part of the CDM's third graduating class.

As class president three out of his four years, Phelps got to know the faculty well, working with Seymour Oliet, D.D.S., the CDM's founding dean, and Robert Uchin, D.D.S., who recently retired as dean, among others. "Dr. Tim Hottel [D.D.S.] was a professor who stands out. He was an important business mentor for me. On Saturdays, he had speakers come to talk with the students. He gave us insight about the business side," Phelps said.

Phelps said he learned that new graduates and established dentists often had the same lament. “They would say ‘I felt like my school prepped me to care for my patients, but not to run my business.’ The fact that dentists are most often small business owners is too often skipped over,” he said.

“I’m a planner, and I wanted to plan for that. Dr. Hottel helped me think outside of the box. I thought, ‘My class needs to hear this.’ I made it my mission to provide those opportunities,” Phelps added.

Another opportunity came when Douglas Rolfe, D.D.S., an NSU clinical professor, asked Phelps to join his private practice as a dental assistant. This gave Phelps a chance to observe all parts of a dental practice in action. “You have to know all your positions,” said Phelps. “I saw how dentists should interact and bond with their patients. But I also saw how important staff interaction is with the patient.”

Finding the right personnel led Phelps to turn recruiting strategies into a business called The Hiring System, which he says “almost guarantees me a superstar employee. I sell other doctors my system of hiring. They all tell me it brings them the best employees.”

After college, Phelps returned to his native North Carolina and joined the practice of his wife’s dentist. As he tried to grow the practice, Phelps discovered the pitfalls of business ownership, despite doubling their revenue the first year. He learned that he was spending a lot of money each month on marketing, but not getting a return. “Dentists don’t spend much on marketing, but marketing is the catalyst of growth,” Phelps said.

People were calling the office in response to advertisements they had seen placed in local publications—but they weren’t making appointments. So Phelps hired a team of program developers, as well as individuals to listen to the phone calls, which lead to another business, Call Tracker ROI.

“We were missing about 200 calls from patients who received voice mail or a busy signal. Of the calls that were picked up, we were only converting 24 percent into an appointment. So we invested time in telephone training. Now we convert 86 percent of calls into new patients,” he said.

Now he has expanded Call Tracker ROI to show other dentists, as well as other doctors and lawyers, how to increase their practices and better serve their patients and clients.

“I show [clients] the opportunities they are missing out on each month and how they can receive a thousand percent return on an advertisement,” Phelps said. “I work with professionals all over the country to help them identify the problems in

their marketing systems and provide solutions. I tailor my system for their needs.”

A regular guest on the *Charlotte Today Show* (on NBC) to discuss current topics in

**“We’re planning to organize events that bring the alumni together...”**

**—Chris Phelps**

dentistry, Phelps believes in giving back to the community, including participating in his local Dentistry from the Heart program. “Every year, we provide a free day of dental care in the community. I wanted to serve 1,000 people and donate \$500,000 in dental care back to the community,” he said. In two years, Phelps is halfway to his initial goal, serving 500 people and donating \$250,000.

Phelps, who has been married for 16 years and has two sons, ages 7 and 4, also stays connected to the College of Dental Medicine. He helped organize his 10-year class reunion and is president of the CDM Alumni Society Advisory Board.

“We’re planning to organize events that bring the alumni together for reunions and fellowship, all while providing continuing education that can benefit all our practices,” said Phelps, who shares his practice with, among others, another CDM alumni, Henry Ernst (’05), D.D.M. “Our alumni committee is actively looking for volunteers from all classes to assist us with future events. It’s important to network with other alumni from NSU,” he said. ♦





# Special Dentists, Special Needs



BY MICHELLE F. SOLOMON

**B**ig ideas are coming from the small, one-room dental clinic inside NSU's Mailman Segal Center for Human Development (MSC). This compact space could change the way dentists deliver services to children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Now entering its last year of a five-year, \$2.5 million Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) federal grant, the clinic has provided hundreds of children who have been diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) with free dental services. But what dental residents say they've learned will make a difference in their professional careers and make a positive impact on their future patients.

"As dentists, we don't get enough training on relationships and behaviors. Being exposed to, and working with, the behavior analysts from the Mailman Segal Center made an impact on me as a professional and will be useful in my career," said Don Do, D.D.S., a second-year resident in NSU's College of Dental Medicine Pediatric Dentistry program. CDM dentists and behavior analysts from the MSC have collaborated to develop a treatment plan specific to children with autism by using the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). In this instance, the objective of ABA is to modify behavior for treatment.

"One of the main goals in the collaboration is not just to have the clinic at the Mailman Segal Center, but to bring different elements to the behavior management of children with ASD when it comes to their dental care ... to not use typical behavior management or guidance protocol," said Oscar Padilla, D.D.S., associate professor of clinical dentistry in the department of pediatric dentistry. Padilla, who heads up the pediatric clinic inside MSC, explains that the usual teaching technique for pediatric dentists, and the most popular technique for managing ASD behavior in dentists' offices, is being reevaluated using the interdisciplinary knowledge of the dentists, dental residents, and the behavior analysts.

One of the most universal techniques, known as "tell-show-do," involves verbal explanations of procedures in phrases appropriate to the developmental level of the patient (tell); demonstrations for the patient of the visual, auditory, olfactory, and tactile aspects of the procedure in a carefully defined, nonthreatening setting (show); and then, without deviating from the explanation and demonstration, completion of the procedure (do). The tell-show-do technique is used with communication skills (verbal and nonverbal) and positive reinforcement, according to the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry.

*continued on page 24*

Young patients at the dental clinic inside NSU's Mailman Segal Center for Human Development are shown a task strip that illustrates what will happen during their treatments.



Oscar Padilla, left, who heads the pediatric clinic inside MSC, and Sirisha Giovindaiah, a pediatric dental resident, show their patient, four-year-old Silas Golubchik, that going to the dentist can be fun.









Oscar Padilla uses behavioral techniques to help treat his young patients.

*continued from page 21*

“What we are doing is finding new ways to educate dentists on how to treat children with ASD and also providing a service for children on the autism spectrum,” said Padilla.

### HOW IT WORKS

Padilla says that the approach at the clinic, with the expertise of the behavior analysts, uses techniques that fall more in line with what works better across the board for children with autism. In the clinic, ABA students have created a “task strip” that displays the steps of treatment, from beginning to end, to show children that their dental care involves a routine that has an ending. “We go through the first block on the strip, and when we complete that task the child turns it over,” he said. The last strip shows a treasure chest, where the child picks out a prize.

“They know when the treatment is completed they can get a reward,” said Padilla. The techniques involved are a way to make the child comfortable, plus, gradual desensitization is utilized. “We do everything at a very slow pace here; there is no specific goal in one visit,” he added.

The university facility, of course, has an educational-research component. “We have children who have been coming here for two or more years, therefore, we can quantify what is working, and also what might not be working,” Padilla said.

### A GROWING NEED

It is highly likely that the dental residents going through the CDM program will encounter a patient with special needs in their professional

practice. According to the Centers for Disease Control, autism affects 1 in every 68 children, and 1 in every 42 boys in the United States.

Experts say that there is a growing demand for dentists with this specialized training. Research shows that children with special needs have higher rates of poor oral hygiene, gingivitis, and periodontal disease than the general public, according to the National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research, Practical Oral Care for People with Developmental Disabilities. The same research also showed that medications and special diets can cause oral health problems for many children with special needs. Increasing the number of providers who can care for children on the autism spectrum is an important objective of the HRSA grant, according to Padilla.

To be eligible to use the MSC dental clinic, children must be enrolled in one of the programs for children with autism at MSC, either Baudhuin Preschool or the Starting Right program.

Rachel Golubchik, of Fort Lauderdale, said that the dental clinic inside her son’s school made the first trip to the dentist easier than it might have been for four-year-old Silas. “People from the dental clinic would come to his class at Baudhuin and talk about teeth and what it was like to go to the dentist. Then, when we took him to the clinic, the dentist talked to him and explained things the same way that they did in class,” said Golubchik.

There are many potential sensory challenges for children with autism at a dentist’s office—tastes, smells, textures, sounds, lights, and the closeness required to perform even the simplest procedures, such as a checkup.

“Silas doesn’t like a lot of touching—although he has gotten better with that. I was happy this clinic was available to us because I don’t think he would have been able to handle going to a dentist’s office that would not have understood children with ASD. With children with autism, you have to be aware of what their triggers are going to be,” she said.

### CRITICALLY IMPORTANT

Paola Pellerano, D.D.S., another second-year pediatric dentistry resident, says she learned about working with special needs children during her rotation at the clinic. That experience, she said, “carries over to working with typically developing children. At the clinic, it’s about patience and

trying to get the children to feel comfortable in their surroundings. That will be beneficial for me with all of my patients. I don't know of any clinic that offers this kind of opportunity for students and for families of children with autism. And I know I would not have been exposed to this kind of setting at another university."

Padilla agrees. "Rotations through special needs clinics are very typical in pediatric dentistry residency programs, but what is not typical is for our residents to rotate through a special needs clinic that has a multi or interdisciplinary aspect. This behavioral guidance protocol is something very rare."

And just as essential as it is to the CDM, the collaboration is "critically important" to the Mailman Segal Center for Human Development, according to Roni Cohen Leiderman, Ph.D., dean of MSC. "One of our very strong mission goals is to continually train and educate anyone who works with children, and the population of children with special needs, and to provide these educational experiences on campus. With the statistics of children on the autism spectrum, every dental practice is going to have someone with special needs in their dental chairs."

"The ripple effect of this clinic is huge, and it doesn't just benefit children here, but thousands of children who will be served by these dentists when they go out into the world and are practicing professionals," she added. ♦



*Sirisha Giovindaiah spent her last day as a CDM student working with young patients at the Mailman Segal Center clinic.*

## ABOUT THE GRANT: MOVING FORWARD

The dental clinic at the Mailman Segal Center for Human Development (MSC) is funded through a \$2.5 million grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA).

This HRSA grant is designed to develop and implement a collaborative oral health education and training program between NSU's College of Dental Medicine, MSC, the NSU-CDM Pediatric Special Needs Dental Clinic at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital in Hollywood, and South Florida Autism Charter School in Hialeah.

"This initiative offers pediatric dentistry residents education and training, focusing on children and adolescents with special health care needs, specifically Autism Spectrum Disorder," said Romer Ocanto, D.D.S., associate professor and chair in the CDM's Department of Pediatric Dentistry.

According to Ocanto, the dental clinic at MSC and the other projects associated with the five-year HRSA grant have helped to develop an

oral health curriculum for pediatric dental residents, and have allowed for multidisciplinary collaboration with other providers in managing treatment for children and adolescents with special needs.

The grant ends on June 30, 2015. Ocanto says that there are plans to reapply to HRSA, but "for a different award that will expand on what we already have accomplished. However, comprehensive dental services to these children will continue to be offered at MSC and at our Joe DiMaggio dental clinic."

A new grant, whether from HRSA or from other sources, will have different goals. "One of the goals is to expand on our interprofessional activities and include other dental disciplines. We also want to focus on training general dentists (and predoctoral dental students) in the same behavioral principles our residents are using to treat these children, then applying them in their practice so children with autism spectrum have more access to care," he said. ♦



# Student Impressions

Return to dental school puts a new career in focus.



*Glenn Krieger concentrates on his patient, Michael Gigliotti, 18.*

BY ARNIE ROSENBERG

**Glenn Krieger**, D.D.S., FAGD, admits his journey from being a successful dentist to a dental student at the CDM is a bit unusual.

What began as a career working in his father's insurance-driven dental practice in West Babylon, New York, finds him 22 years later at Nova Southeastern University's College of Dental Medicine, perhaps the oldest orthodontics resident in the United States. His "true" dental education began when he moved to Seattle, Washington, from Long Island in 1997, although he had graduated five years earlier from the University of Buffalo School of Dental Medicine.

"People who today are among the biggest names in continuing education in the United States were growing their names back then—John Kois, Frank Spear, Dave Matthews, Vincent Kokich, Roger West, John West. Seattle was becoming the mecca of dental education in the United States," said Krieger, 46. But before he left New York, Krieger made a phone call that would change his life.

People he knew told him to contact Michael Cohen, D.D.S., M.S.D., a periodontist and founder of the Seattle Study Club, which was a small organization of dentists committed to continuing education. When Krieger came to Seattle, Cohen took him for coffee and asked, "Where do you see yourself in dentistry?" Krieger told Cohen, "I've been out of school about five years and know most of what I need to know," looking back on himself as a "brash New Yorker."

The two men still look back at that first meeting and laugh. "I probably was as good as the average Joe, but I didn't know what I needed to learn if I wanted to be where I wanted to be," Krieger said. "Here's this leader in dental education, and I'm telling him I know most of what I need to know, and he's being very gracious about it."

One thing Krieger didn't know was that Cohen—who would grow the Seattle Study Club into a worldwide network of 250 chapters—was about to take him on as a project. “I saw in Glenn a thirst for learning,” Cohen said. “I could see a clear path for him becoming a great dentist. I knew he could develop to his maximum potential with guidance.”

And so the “project” began. During the next 18 years, Krieger purchased a practice, acquiring \$770,000 in debt; completed a three-year advanced restorative dentistry program at the University of Washington; and by 2002, had become a restorative adviser for the Seattle Study Club, presenting cases at the organization's national symposium.

It was another mentor—Ward Smalley, D.D.S., M.S.D.—who taught Krieger about photography and using it as a tool to communicate with patients. He learned to use mirrors and retractors in his photography, taught his friends clinical photography, and lectured to Seattle Study Club chapters around the country.

Despite the success photography has brought him—Krieger was traveling around the world and presenting his own two-day course in Seattle—his wife was ready to escape rainy Seattle. It was 2010 and time to chase another dream: becoming an orthodontist.

“I was at the top of my game,” he says. “I was teaching, I was a restorative adviser, I was lecturing internationally, and I had letters of recommendation from some big names in orthodontics.” The next year, he began attending NSU's CDM. He will graduate in December.

“The CDM's clinical program is one of its strengths,” said Krieger, who is the chief resident in his 21-member program.

“They're trying to turn out a good clinician.” Moreover, the CDM's daily diagnostic conference, its wide variety of instructors and teaching methods, and the ability to work closely in the clinics with other specialties are all drawing cards for NSU's program, he said.

With graduation just months away, Krieger knows he and his family—wife, Alissa; daughter, Jordan, 14; and 10-year-old twins Devin and Zachary—will be staying in South Florida. He'll join John Marchetto, D.M.D., in his practice in Weston.

“He's genuine,” said Marchetto, who met Krieger through the Boca Raton chapter of the Seattle Study Club. “He knows dentistry, but is always learning more about the field, and that's hard to find.”

Michael Cohen agrees. “Glenn Krieger can be a top orthodontist. He can be a leader in ortho,” Cohen said. “He has a database of experience and a true understanding of restorative dentistry, not just moving teeth and making them look good. He has an understanding of all the elements that make a good orthodontist.”

As graduation looms, Krieger continues to take his time at the CDM very seriously. “I had a successful practice, a career lecturing, all of our friends in Seattle, a paycheck, and I took on a loan,” he reflected. “The gamble my family and I took has been worth it. If you're not going to go at this full bore, why are you doing it? I traded in my entire life for this. Do you think I'm going to do it halfway?” ♦



# Student Impressions

Fourth-year dental student an advocate for leadership.



*Siblings Jason and Vanessa Watts plan to share a dental practice after he graduates from the College of Dental Medicine.*

BY LONA O'CONNOR

For **Jason Watts**, now a fourth-year student in the College of Dental Medicine, the term “family practice” has a special meaning. If all goes well, in a few years, he will practice dentistry with his sister Vanessa Watts, D.M.D., who entered an oral surgery residency earlier this year.

Those who know him say Watts has a bright future, not only in dentistry, but also in advocating for the field—and the welfare of its patients. “Jason is one of the most outgoing, vocal, involved, and motivated students in his class,” said Jeffrey Thompson, Ph.D., professor of prosthodontics and director of the Biosciences Research Center at the CDM.

“I think of him as focused and mature. He’s interested in having a positive impact on his profession. And that means not just being a dentist, but also being involved in policy decisions, in areas like insurance and regulation,” added Thompson, who, along with a team of researchers from RTI International in Durham, North Carolina, recently secured a U.S. patent. (See story page 43.)

As a busy dental student, Watts fills his days with clinical work. But he has another mission, one that is vital to dental students and would benefit all those with student loans. Recently elected one of the vice presidents of the American Student Dental Association (ASDA), Watts, 25, was part of a group that visited lawmakers in Washington, D.C., last April. (See story on page 15.)

Watts and other ASDA representatives explained to members of the Senate and Congress that the group’s top priorities are controlling student debt and the interest on that debt—which has spiraled in recent years to \$66 billion. Such debt can take decades to pay off and can influence young dentists’ careers and personal choices, the group pointed out. “Such debt affects everything—



where you practice, when you start a family,” said Watts, who wants to be able to devote part of his professional time to treating low-income patients.

The legislation that Watts and his colleagues are advocating would reduce the interest rates on student loans, make interest on educational debt tax deductible, and forgive loans for some dental students and residents working in underserved areas after they graduate. The ASDA also is working with local dental societies to increase the number of scholarships for students.

With 21,000 members headed for professional careers, the ASDA is the largest student-run organization in the country and can command a certain amount of attention from legislators. The CDM’s group has 400 members and is one of the largest chapters. Before the Washington trip, fellow CDM student Casey Lynn, who also is president of NSU’s ASDA chapter, visited state legislators in Tallahassee on a similar mission.

Legislators made no promises, but Watts came home cautiously optimistic. “We got some positive responses,” said Watts, who received his bachelor’s degree in exercise science and physiology with minors in chemistry and psychology from Florida State University in 2011.

His sister supports his political work. “My brother embodies leadership; he is a role model for others. He knows how to uphold high ethical and moral principles and relate them to others,” said Vanessa Watts. “There’s a gap between classes, and he goes to Washington, and takes the time to come back and share these experiences and inform others.”

The siblings grew up in Delray Beach with a mother who emphasized health and nutrition. Their mother, Michelle Amiel, the daughter of Moroccan immigrants, works as a treatment coordinator/consultant in the Delray Beach dental office of Craig Spodak, D.M.D.

From an early age, brother and sister understood the values of family loyalty and hard work.

“We never came from wealth. We learned to work for everything we wanted, to provide for our families,” said Vanessa Watts, 27, who is now gearing up for four more years in her chosen specialty, oral and maxillofacial surgery.

The brother and sister joke about which one of them first decided to become a dentist. They recently bought a house together and are best friends. “We always want to be a part of each other’s lives and work together,” said Vanessa Watts.

Both have traveled to other countries on mission trips to provide dental care. Each has a strong desire to provide dental education and more care to those who need it most.

Vanessa Watts’ plan is to spend part of the year working with her brother and the rest on more mission trips. Her training will allow her to tackle severe problems such as jaw reconstruction for cleft palates, traumas,

and other conditions. “I’m a firm believer in using the gifts you have to help others,” said Vanessa Watts, who would like to join, or set up a program similar to, Doctors Without Borders.

Like his sister and many of his colleagues, Watts has determined that it is not enough just to be a good dentist. He realizes that his responsibilities extend to improving dental health in the community, and beyond that, to affecting legislation. “Jason’s really aware of where he fits into the community and that you’re supposed to give back. He has figured out the balance,” said Thomas Dwork, D.M.D., associate professor and Jason Watts’ clinical team leader.

“Jason is intense and intentional,” said Craig Spodak, D.M.D., a Delray Beach dentist and his mother’s boss. “He is focused on achieving goals, and not just financial goals, but goals that include love, friendship, and physical health. He has a balance in his life, academically and physically. He’s very generous with his emotions, and he is bright, motivated, and passionate. It will be a pleasure to watch him flourish.” ♦

**“[Jason] is interested in having a positive impact on his profession.”**

**—Jeffrey Thompson**



Twelve CDM students participated in the Florida Dental Association Mission of Mercy trip to Tampa.



CDM student Josh Blimbaum works on a patient.

# *compassionate care*

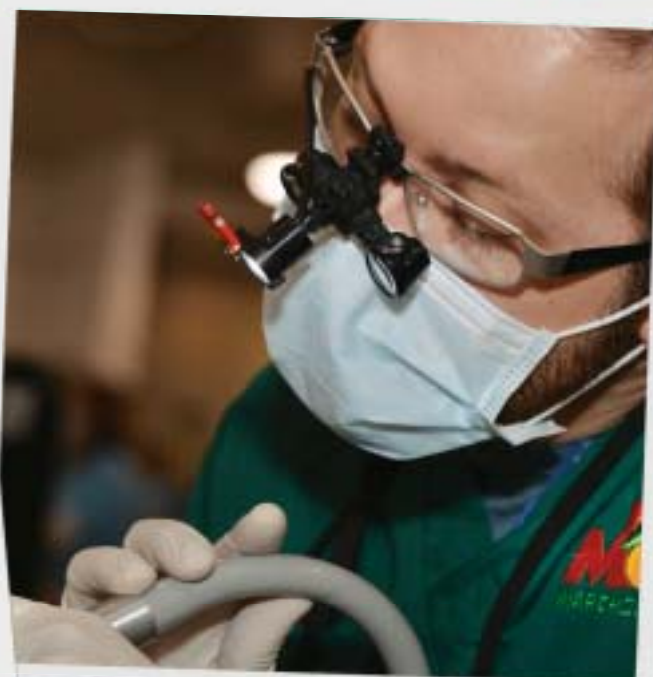
CDM students rally to medical projects across the globe.

BY LYNN KALBER





Diane Ede-Nichols, right, observes  
CDM student Ricky Pan.



CDM students, such as Casey Lynn,  
treated patients all day in Tampa.

The gates did not open until 5:30 a.m. on a Friday, but by 3:30 a.m., the lines already were long. Those waiting were fairly patient. After all, they had come just to see what could take away the pain they had lived with for months.

Many needed to have cavities filled, bad teeth pulled, whatever it would take to dull or get rid of the pain and bring back their smiles.

Not having dental care means suffering through all of those things and more. But this wasn't happening in a poor country. This was Tampa, Florida.

"The amount of dental disease was pretty overwhelming. I was quite taken aback," said Diane Ede-Nichols, D.M.D., M.H.L., M.P.H., chair of the section of community dentistry at NSU's College of Dental Medicine. "We took out all the remaining teeth of three or four patients," she said. "One after the other. They were young people. It was very disturbing. I can still see it. The good news is that the FDA is planning on continuing this effort, and next year, they're talking about a South Florida site."





On March 28, Ede-Nichols led 12 College of Dental Medicine students to the Florida Dental Association (FDA) Mission of Mercy (or FLAMOM) trip to Tampa.

"It was the first official and wide-scale (Florida) dental mission trip that was aimed toward people at home," said Ricky Pan, one of the CDM student-doctors who traveled to Tampa. "I was working with fellow student-dentists, along with hundreds of other dentists, to provide free dental care that included fillings and extractions."

CDM students also regularly participate in similar medical trips to Jamaica, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic, as well as volunteering at events such as Give Kids A Smile, Caring for Miami, and Special Smiles at the Special Olympics.

"What I learned most on these trips is that there is a need for dentists in any society," said Ravi Soni, a CDM student who also has been on trips to Jamaica and the Dominican Republic. "The residents come from very low socio-economic backgrounds and cannot afford to seek dental care in their own country. Every day, we would go to different sites, and there would always be groups of a hundred or more just waiting for us to arrive."

Fillings, cavities, cleanings, and pulling teeth are the order of the day on these trips. If there are a lot of patients, the pace is fairly fast. "In school,"

said Ede-Nichols, "they're limited to one extraction. Now they're doing multiple extractions and working at a pace where they are barely finished with one patient and the next one is in the chair already."

The chance to see patients in unusual settings adds to the students' education. "It's extremely important for our residents and students to have the opportunity to treat children using behavior techniques only," said Alejandro Ibarra, D.D.S., M.S.D., associate professor in the CDM's Department of Pediatric Dentistry. Last year Ibarra took five pediatric dentistry residents and two predoctoral students to Jamaica where they treated approximately 700 patients, most of whom were children.

Lessons learned on the trips continued after long days with patients, said John Aylmer, a CDM student who participated in a Dominican Republic project. The host school for the trip was Universidad Católica Nordestana, in the town of San Francisco de Macoris. "After a long day of hard work, we sat for lectures to review basically everything we have learned so far in school. You must be attentive to all of the body's physiology in an attempt to limit the number of complications," added Aylmer.

For the students, one of the hurdles is raising the money for the trips themselves. Money given from the CDM is used to purchase dental equipment, and donations help, as well. Fund-raising helps to provide supplies.

And student fund-raising teaches lessons, too. "They have officers, organize themselves, and do fund-raisers to raise money for the trip," said Ede-Nichols. "They will solicit dental materials or supplies from dental companies. Then, on the trip, all the students are treated the same. They all are assigned the duty of cleaning and sterilizing instruments and are assigned to restock their bags for the next day. They all have to contribute, and they do an amazing job."

Community service is a requirement—and one of NSU's core values—and the students can participate in a variety of programs. "They are incredibly creative," said Ede-Nichols. "This year, they came up with a clothing drive to donate to the trip to Jamaica."

## CONNECTING WITH PATIENTS

Jason Dale, a CDM student-doctor who assisted in both Jamaica and Tampa, remembers many discoveries on his first trip. "My Jamaica trip was one of my first experiences doing hands-on dentistry. With that came the excitement and joy of helping others, and

seeing the great impact you can have on their quality of life,” he said.

“A patient came in with excruciating pain, due to an abscess. The pain was not only affecting his eating, but was severely impacting his confidence levels as well,” said Dale. “The problem with an abscess is that it is very acidic in nature, and lidocaine ... has little effect. This patient endured his medical treatment with no assistance from painkillers. He only had the hands of two volunteers to hold to get him through the pain. After the surgery, he expressed his joy for what we did, and said that it has helped him get back to a normal life.”

For students, it’s this connection with patients that’s every bit as important as learning the dental techniques.

“The first thing the students think when they enroll for the mission trip is about what they are going to gain expertise-wise,” said Antonio Godoy, D.D.S., assistant professor of prosthodontics at the CDM. He helped lead the recent trip to the Dominican Republic.

“Once they realize the human component of the patient-dentist relationship (that they are reducing pain in these people) and that they need their classmates for their knowledge and expertise,” Godoy said, “then a change begins to occur in their conduct, professionally as well as personally... . They realize they must function as a team.”

Godoy added, “[students then] feel more mature, they discover that soon they will be health professionals; that they can cure and produce an effect on the community.” The medical trips can teach all of that, he said, and help students find a direction to pursue after graduation.

The students agree with Godoy’s assessment. “When I was working in our clinic in Jamaica, I saw so many children,” said Dale. “Children whose parents could not provide them with a toothbrush, children whose parents couldn’t take care of them, and children with mental disabilities who had been dropped off at a day care for others to watch. The experience not only solidified my desire to pursue pediatrics, but also to find a way to care for those children with disabilities.”

Pan added, “I learned that I’m in the right profession. That beyond the rigorous and tough curriculum at my dental school, all of that hard work pays off when I see my patient’s joyful reaction.”

Aylmer had a similar experience. “Although I volunteered in high school and as an undergraduate for different organizations, it wasn’t until this mission trip

to the (Dominican Republic) that I felt like I had something that not many other people could offer. As we started the planning of the trip, I realized how significant an impact we would have.”

Soni said he is even more invested in his future career. “The satisfaction of knowing you’re providing a much-needed service is very comforting, and reassures me that I chose a good profession. I plan to continue to do these types of trips throughout my career and encourage others to do so as well.”

As an educator, Ede-Nichols believes these students’ experiences are proof that these trips solidify their learning experiences.

“I’m always amazed and pleased by how the students step up and you don’t have to push or instruct them to do so,” said Ede-Nichols. “They step up and do the right thing. They’re willing to work very hard; it’s really impressive. You find out about their true grit. You don’t do these kinds of missions if your heart’s not in it. It’s too hard.” ♦



CDM students Melissa Smiley, left, and Chelsea Sands assist a patient.

# Faculty Impressions

Dentist found second career as a professor.



*Kenneth Namerow instructs endodontic residents Jason Foreman, left, and Jeffrey Gardyn.*

BY CHAUNCEY MABE

The plan was simple. After 32 years, **Kenneth Namerow**, D.D.S., would retire from his practice in Ridgewood, New Jersey, at the turn of the millennium. He would spend his time touring the country in an RV with his wife, Marcia. But first, they'd take a vacation to sunny Florida. That's as far as Namerow got.

"The schedule in an endodontics practice is so rigid. I wanted no responsibility. I wanted to spend as much time as I wanted in one place and then move on," said Namerow, recalling those plans.

But Namerow was intrigued with NSU's College of Dental Medicine, which had opened in 1997 and was the first private dental college to be established in Florida, and the first to open in the United States, since 1975.

Namerow wrote a note to the CDM's founding dean, Seymour Oliet, D.D.S., which led to an offer to teach part time. "It snowballed from there," said Namerow, who joined NSU in 2000. He became a full professor in 2010 and now serves as division chief of surgical sciences and section chair of endodontics.

Since joining NSU, Namerow has been a part of the CDM's growth. One of his proudest contributions is a fund-raising effort that enabled the CDM to announce an endowed professorship in endodontics.

Namerow created the campaign and guided it to the goal of \$500,000 in only four years. The endowment, as a result, has been named in his honor—Kenneth N. Namerow Endowed Professorship in Endodontics.

"It's important to have a young faculty," Namerow said. "But for an endodontist to choose an academic career is a major financial sacrifice. He can go into practice and earn three times the income. We had to do something."



The first recipient of the endowment, which requires a two-year commitment, is Taner Cem Sayin, D.D.S., Ph.D., an associate professor of endodontics who has been teaching for seven years at the CDM. "He wants to make a career in academics and research," said Namerow. "Now, hopefully, he'll be able to make a career of it. All indications are that he will."

Sayin is "honored to be the first recipient" of the professorship. "This [endowment] will allow me to devote more time and energy into teaching and future research that will benefit our specialty and the College of Dental Medicine," said Sayin, who is also associate director of postgraduate endodontics. "My work will be the way to show my gratitude to the generosity of the donors, the selection committee, and the students who will be the ultimate beneficiaries of this prestigious award."

Sayin especially is grateful to Namerow who he called a great professor, clinician, and leader. "The Department of Endodontics is one of the most organized, successful, and innovative departments in the College of Dental Medicine and Dr. Namerow is the main supporter for our accomplishments," Sayin added.

The associate professor already is planning on how he will utilize his endowment. "My plans are to bring in more external funding for our research projects, create courses with innovative teaching methods for board preparation for our postgraduate residents, and also dedicate more time to continuing education as an educator," said Sayin.

Namerow personally raised most of the money for the endowment, making calls to alumni and residents. "Making a donation is their way to say thank you," Namerow pointed out. "Without educators, you wouldn't have a specialty. I spoke with them personally. They all gave, and they all continue to give."

In fact, the campaign exceeded its goal. The American Association of Endodontists Foundation

provided the final \$100,000 to reach the initial goal. But pledges are still being fulfilled so the total will continue to climb. Each member of the class of 2014 has financially committed to the endowment.

#### CAREER PATH

Namerow chose endodontics after graduating from Fairleigh Dickinson University's dental school because he preferred to save teeth rather than pulling them. "Basically, endodontics is being able to take an infected tooth and instead of extracting it, eliminating the infection while being able to retain the tooth," said Namerow, who did his postdoctorate training at Columbia University.

At the time Namerow joined the CDM, dental schools were closing because of "an oversupply of dentists." By opening a new school, he said, NSU set the trend for the resurgence in dentistry that's taken place during the past 15 years. "For a young school, the CDM has made a lot of progress," he said.

Namerow is especially proud of the endodontics program. "Our postgraduate endodontic program is recognized as one of the finest in the United States. We offer our students the latest advances in technology in the endodontics field and valuable opportunities in education," he said. Those opportunities include the chance for each student to participate in a surgical rotation at one of NSU's partner universities in Tlaxcala, Mexico; Universidad Santa Tomas, Bucaramanga, Colombia; Universidad Peruana Cayetano Heredia in Lima, Peru; or Universitat Internacional de Catalunya in Barcelona, Spain.

Although he's 72 now, that RV will have to wait. Namerow plans to keep teaching and raising money for the dental school, possibly helping to develop additional endowed chairs. "My wife thinks I'm never going to stop," Namerow said. "I will stop when I feel I've done enough. It doesn't look like there's an RV in the immediate future. Besides, gas prices are too high." ♦



# Faculty Impressions

Marchesan brings  
laser focus to NSU  
dental program.



When **Melissa Marchesan**, D.D.S., M.S., Ph.D., gives presentations about laser technology in dentistry, she says the reaction is often the same.

At first, the audience wonders how much this 37-year-old associate professor of endodontics at NSU's College of Dental Medicine could possibly know about lasers. By the end of her lecture, however, it becomes evident that Marchesan is not only passionate about the subject, but is also an expert in the field. She has dedicated more than 17 years to researching, writing, teaching, and speaking about how lasers can be used in root canals and other dental procedures.

This past July, Marchesan brought her knowledge and expertise to a more global level when she became president of the North American branch of the World Federation for Laser Dentistry (WFLD). She is excited about her new, two-year term and what it might mean for the CDM's programs. "I am hoping that, with my role in the WFLD, I will be able to create partnerships within the industry that will help bring the technology here not only for research, but also for use in the clinical environment," Marchesan said.

Marchesan grew up in Brazil and completed all of her dental school training there. She received a master's degree in restorative dentistry from the University of Sao Paulo, and a doctoral degree in dentistry/endodontic and specialty degree in endodontics from the University of

Ribeirao Preto. She also spent six years as a faculty member at the University of Ribeirao Preto.

Because students can enter dental school at the age of 17 in Brazil, Marchesan said it gave her the unique opportunity to learn and do research early on in her dental career. In 1997, she was still a predoctoral student when she was first introduced to laser research through a lecture given by Aldo Brugnera Junior, a highly respected educator in Brazil and the emeritus professor at Camilo Castelo Branco University. Under the guidance of her adviser, Marchesan began delving into laser research and participated in several research projects with Brugnera.

Currently the president of the entire WFLD, Brugnera nominated Marchesan for the North American branch position. "He (Brugnera) ended up becoming one of the pioneers in lasers and we became really good friends," Marchesan said.

While she was working toward her master's and doctoral degrees, Marchesan's research focused on the different types of lasers and how they could help clean root canals better than the existing instruments.

"When we do root canals, as in anything in dentistry, nothing is 100 percent successful. So we are continually striving to reach that goal," she said.

"Lasers are a way of thinking outside of the box to try to reach that 100 percent success rate. The technology can be applied to many areas, not just root canals," Marchesan said. "It has also been very successful in soft tissue cutting, like surgeries. And people talk about how lasers can replace the high-speed unit."

BY ELLEN WOLFSON VALLADARES



In 2010, Marchesan moved to Florida to take a position as an associate professor in the CDM's Department of Endodontics. To continue teaching, she had to retake her endodontics specialty education in the United States. She received the prestigious American Association of Endodontics Fellowship Award, which allowed her to complete the courses at NSU. She finished in 2013 and is currently teaching and mentoring predoctoral and postgraduate students. She also has been awarded two President's Faculty Research and Development Grants.

Marchesan is excited about the possibilities of expanding the research and use of laser technology at the CDM and in the local community. Currently, only a couple of offices in the South Florida area use lasers in dental procedures, she said.

"Lasers can't replace all of the instruments we use," she said. "They are adjuncts to the techniques we already do. The laser does things that we can't achieve with regular treatment."

Marchesan is most enthusiastic about exploring the use of laser in the future to help children who have experienced a trauma to a permanent tooth that has not yet completely formed. She explained that the college's on-campus dental clinic is already using one of the most innovative treatments available anywhere—revascularization technology.

The procedure involves stimulating the precursor cells from a patient's blood at the end of the tooth root so that the tooth will continue to grow. The challenge, Marchesan said, is that the new cells struggle to survive with the chemical solutions that are currently used in the procedure. That's where the lasers can help.

"The cells need a scaffold, like soil, so that they can grow. They like collagen. With lasers, we can



*Melissa Marchesan has dedicated more than 17 years to researching, writing, teaching, and speaking about how lasers can be used in root canals and other dental procedures.*

expose collagen on the tooth, which provides a favorable environment for cells to grow in. That's where the research is going," Marchesan said.

She sees a bright future for the use of lasers in dentistry and plans to keep researching, presenting, and teaching about the topic. She hopes to pass on her knowledge and passion to College of Dental Medicine students.

"Part of what I would like to do in the future is have a training class in the program so that students can apply the technology and bring it with them to their offices when they graduate," Marchesan said.

In the next two years, she is hoping that her position as president of the North American branch of the WFLD will help bring more of the tools needed to implement laser technology at CDM, establishing the university as a leader in this innovative area and providing unique opportunities to help the college's dental clinic patients.

"We could be applying this technology to everyday clinical procedures," Marchesan said. "And we could be helping children by using it on premature, traumatized teeth. The future is vast and practically limitless in how we apply this technology." ♦

# Faculty Impressions

Alumnus' career brings  
him back to NSU.



*Jason Portnof, right, instructs Saili Ruiz, left, with Jordan Kaltman, his OMFS faculty colleague.*

BY ARNIE ROSENBERG

You can come home again. **Jason Portnof** did.

This Nova Southeastern University College of Dental Medicine alumnus—class of 2002, only the second graduating class in the college's 17 years—has built his career as a faculty member. Portnof, D.M.D., M.D., returned to the College of Dental Medicine (CDM) in 2013 as director of Pediatric Craniomaxillofacial Surgery and director of Predoctoral Oral Surgery.

"There's an energy level here at the College of Dental Medicine," said Portnof, 37. "The students are excited about learning and they have an eagerness to learn, and that's unique. I've worked at other institutions where that doesn't exist, but it does here."

Portnof's career has taken him from NSU to New York to Australia and back to New York before returning to the CDM. He earned his M.D. from Cornell University, did his internship and residency in New York, and a fellowship in pediatric maxillofacial surgery and craniomaxillofacial surgery in Melbourne, Australia.

"The more education the better," he said. "In dental surgery, your training should go deeper and deeper. If there's something additional to do, it's in my personality to do it." In his case, it was the sub-specialty he developed with his fellowship at the Royal Children's Hospital of Melbourne.

Yet after seven years of postgraduate training, it was the cutting-edge work being done at the College of Dental Medicine—for patients today and in research for the future—that helped lure him back. "We're riding the front of the wave, bringing research from the bench top to patient treatment," he said.

The CDM is a leader in virtual orthognathic and craniofacial surgery, state-of-the-art techniques that helped make the faculty position attractive, he said. Portnof is enthusiastic about the future of dental practice, describing how a CT scan done as part of a patient's workup is shared digitally with medical engineers in Colorado. The engineers and surgeons then meet on the Web to develop a surgical plan and to design a surgical guide. This allows surgeons to practice delicate procedures on virtual models of the patient's jaws before ever beginning actual surgery.

Similarly for implant patients, CT scans help surgeons determine the level of bone a patient has and design a surgical guide to pinpoint the ideal placement for the implants.

This past summer, Portnof headed a team that did groundbreaking surgery. They placed five implants in a patient with progeria (rapid premature aging in children) that will later be used to anchor a maxillary and mandibular over-denture.

"We believe that it is the first documented case of endosseous dental implants to be placed in a progeria patient for oral rehabilitation," said Portnof. "The patient's lack of oral function had been resulting in poor oral intake and malnutrition. This was likely affecting his growth and development. We hope that placing these dental implants will help improve his quality of life." (See story on how students helped raise funds for this surgery on Page 43).

Portnof is equally excited about the research being done at CDM, especially in craniofacial biology. One day, he predicts, stem cells will help oral surgeons reconstruct alveolar defects. In fact, his team received an NSU 2014–2015 President's Faculty Research and

Development Grant to study the In Vivo Efficacy of Gingival Mesenchymal Stem Cells in Alveolar Cleft Grafting.

"Jason is on the cutting edge of oral and craniofacial surgery and teaching," said Linda Niessen, D.M.D., M.P.H., M.P.P., dean of the CDM. "He has exactly the skill set we're looking for. Jason's education and background represent what we need for the next generation of dental-education leaders."

#### SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY MERGE

More than ever, dental education is taking an evidence-based approach, driven by science and technology—and Portnof's background in oral and maxillofacial surgery and his fellowship in craniofacial surgery "is what we need for the future," said Niessen. "I look at Jason as the next generation of dental-education leaders," she said. "He has a strong science background, and science and technology continue to advance at lightning speed."

Still, there's more than Portnof's penchant for research and technology and his advanced training that makes him such a good fit for the faculty as the CDM looks toward its next decade. "He has the clinical and teaching skills and a great personality. It's a trifecta of skill sets. He understands caring for both patients and students," Niessen added.

His students agree. "I'm a big fan," said Dipak Suri, a third-year student from Danville, California, who wants to specialize in prosthodontics. "Most professors are a little bit older, so someone his age brings a fresh perspective on dentistry."





Because he's a recent graduate of NSU he's really easy to talk to and very approachable," she added.

"Dental school isn't being taught the way it was 30 or 40 years ago," Suri said. "Today's techniques and materials are so different. His technology is up to date. It's a refreshing change."

Students say that Portnof is still close enough to his own days as an NSU student that he understands what they're going through. "If I'm having trouble studying for a particular midterm, I can go to him and ask if there was a strategy he used for that same class that helped him," said Suri. "He's like a mentor

Pediatric Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery. He also was one of four recipients honored with the 2013 Faculty Educator Development Award from the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons and the Oral and Maxillofacial Surgery Foundation. The award—in the form of a three-year, \$130,000 grant—was established to encourage promising, young oral and maxillofacial surgeons to choose an academic career.

While he is kept more than busy, he still makes time for his growing family. He and his wife, Courtney, have two children—Justin, 4, a soccer

**"I want to lead by example. I want to encourage students and residents to consider the best interests of the patients..."**

**—Jason Portnof**

to me. I only hope to have his level of expertise at some time in my career."

Returning to the CDM has given Portnof the opportunity to again work with his own mentor, Steven Kaltman, D.M.D., chairman of the Department of Oral Surgery.

"He [Kaltman] was doing state-of-the-art surgery when I was a student, and he encouraged my interest in oral surgery," said Portnof. Now that he teaches, Portnof gives more credit to his mentor. "He gave me the opportunity to express what I know, what I have learned in my career."

When he's not on campus, Portnof often is at Joe DiMaggio Children's Hospital in Hollywood, where he's a member of the cleft and craniofacial team. He may also be at Broward Health Medical Center or Memorial Regional Hospital.

He also runs the Student Externship Program. It allows students from around the country who are interested in residencies and careers in oral and maxillofacial surgery to shadow CDM residents for up to four weeks.

In addition, Portnof serves on the board of directors of the Florida Cleft Palate-Craniofacial Association as Counselor for Dentistry and was appointed to the American Association of Oral and Maxillofacial Surgeons Committee on Cleft, Craniofacial, and

player; and Liv, 15 months, who's learning to walk.

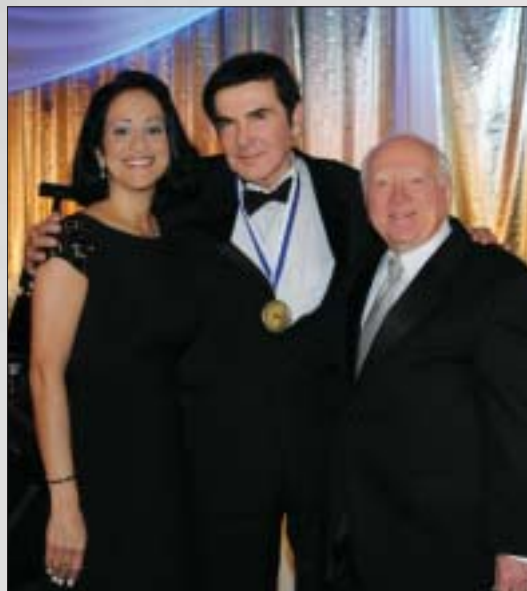
"I just hang out with the family: the beach, the park, and a lot of Baby Einstein. ... On the weekends I drink a lot of coffee," he said, with a laugh, admitting he has little time for outside interests or hobbies beyond "dad stuff."

Looking to the future, Portnof wants to create a fellowship at the College of Dental Medicine for craniomaxillofacial surgery. But he's looking at the big picture. "I want to lead by example. I want to encourage students and residents to consider the best interests of the patients and patient care, but also to encourage residents to advance our specialty, to stay in academia. Especially for me, that means staying on the cutting edge of dental surgery. That opportunity is not always there in private practice," he said.

"Private practice is enticing to many. With student debt, it's easy to go into private practice," he said, "but it is a shame if you're not giving back to the educational process. It's important to me to give back."

It's easy to hear Portnof's pride in his specialty as he describes the "fence" between dentistry and medicine. "Oral and maxillofacial surgery sits on that fence between the two worlds. If all the thinkers went into private practice and did not give back, it would be the end of advancing our specialty." ♦

# HPD Impressions



From left: Jackie Travisano, Joel Wilentz, and Fred Lippman at the 2104 Bal Fantastique

## BAL FANTASTIQUE TO CELEBRATE 30 YEARS OF FUND-RAISING

The annual Bal Fantastique, hosted by NSU's Health Professions Division (HPD), will celebrate its 30th year of raising funds for NSU in 2015. The black-tie event attended by community leaders, philanthropists, students, faculty members, and NSU administrators is scheduled for Saturday, March 28, 2015.

Through the years, Bal Fantastique has raised money to support educational and community programs in areas such as medicine, optometry, pharmacy, dental medicine, health care sciences, nursing, and medical sciences. Those programs include both classroom and community settings—such as participating on medical missions to the Caribbean and South America, seeing patients at NSU's Health Care Centers, and volunteering at numerous health fairs the university hosts for the public.

During the 2014 Bal Fantastique gala, HPD Board of Governors member and dermatologist, Joel Wilentz, M.D., was honored with the HPD Distinguished Service Award for his numerous contributions to the health care field and to Nova Southeastern University. ♦

## PROGRAM RECEIVES ACCREDITATION

The Cardiovascular Sonography Program at Nova Southeastern University's College of Health Care Sciences has received national accreditation by the Commission on Accreditation of Allied Health Education Programs. The new accreditation will be effective through March 31, 2019.

NSU's Bachelor of Science—Cardiovascular Sonography degree program, which is offered at the Tampa Regional Campus, is designed to prepare students for entry-level positions in the field of cardiovascular sonography.

Students take a series of online courses at the undergraduate level, accompanied by on-campus lectures integrated with ultrasound labs, to prepare them for a clinical externship during the second year. ♦



Goar Alvarez confers with students enrolled in NSU's College of Pharmacy.

## COLLEGE OF PHARMACY ASSISTANT DEAN APPOINTED TO FLORIDA BOARD

Goar Alvarez, Pharm.D., C.Ph., FASCP, assistant dean of NSU's College of Pharmacy, has been appointed by Governor Rick Scott to the Florida Board of Pharmacy. His term began on May 23, 2014, and ends on October 31, 2017.

Alvarez is past speaker of the House of Delegates of the Florida Pharmacy Association (FPA) and past president of the FPA. He is also the 2002 recipient of the James H. Beal Pharmacist of the Year award. He joined NSU in 1999 and has served as director of pharmacy services and assistant professor of pharmacy administration. ♦

# CDM Impressions

## CDM DEAN APPOINTED TO U.S. COMMITTEE

Linda Niessen, D.M.D., M.P.H., M.P.P., dean of the College of Dental Medicine, has been appointed to the Advisory Committee on Training in Primary Care Medicine and Dentistry by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius. Niessen's term runs through August 31, 2016.

The Advisory Committee provides advice and recommendations on policy and program development to the U.S. Secretary, and is responsible for submitting an annual report to the Secretary and Congress concerning certain activities of the Public Health Service Act (PHS). The Advisory Committee also develops, publishes, and implements performance measures and evaluations of certain sections of the PHS Act.

"It is truly an honor to be appointed by Secretary Sebelius to represent the field of dentistry and Nova Southeastern University on a national scale," said Niessen. "The Advisory Committee, through its policy recommendations, has the ability to improve the health of our Florida residents and the U.S. population through innovative health professional training programs."

The Advisory Committee is composed of 17 members including practicing health professionals engaged in training, leaders from health professions organizations, faculty from health professions educational institutions, and health professionals from public or private teaching hospitals or community-based settings.

Among other leadership positions, Niessen has been elected as a council delegate representing the Dentistry and Oral Health Sciences Section of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, an organization that seeks to advance science, engineering, and innovation throughout the world and publishes the journal, *Science*. In this role, Niessen will serve a three-year term.

Niessen joined NSU in October 2013. She previously served as a clinical professor in the Department of Restorative Dentistry at Texas A&M University's Baylor College of Dentistry. While at Baylor, Niessen developed and directed a dental public health residency program and partnered with faculty members at the University of North Texas Health Science Center College of Osteopathic Medicine to start a geriatric dentistry and medicine fellowship. ♦



Give Kids A Smile is an annual event.

## ANNUAL EVENT CREATES SMILES

Approximately 325 children were given a reason to smile thanks to the CDM's student and faculty member volunteers during the annual Give Kids A Smile event.

Nearly 300 volunteers from the CDM provided limited pro bono dental services, valued at more than \$100,000, to South Florida children ages 2–18 as part of the Give Kids A Smile Day held last spring.

In addition, the more than 1,000 attendees, including the children and their family members, enjoyed a fun carnival atmosphere with Miami Dolphins' player Marcus Thigpen, the Dolphins' cheerleaders, face painters, a clown, magicians, music, and mascot Timmy the Tooth.

The CDM faculty members donate their time and supervise dental students during this community service event. Give Kids A Smile sponsors included Henry Schein, American Student Dental Association, and the NSU College of Dental Medicine's Student Government Association. ♦





### CDM STUDENTS' DVD BENEFITS PATIENTS, HOSPITAL

Fourth-year dental students Geoffrey Morris and Ian Lieberman recently saw firsthand the results of a fund-raising project they had devised to raise money for children who need dental implants.

Two years ago, the two spent their winter break creating a DVD study guide that discussed and illustrated the anatomical structures of the brain and Neuroanatomy to assist Health Professions Division students in their studies. Sales of the DVDs during the first two years brought in more than \$12,000. Morris and Lieberman donated some of the money to Joe DiMaggio's Children's Hospital in Hollywood, and they set up a special fund for dental treatment at the CDM's clinic on NSU's main campus.

This past semester, Morris and Lieberman were able to use some of the money raised to pay for implants and restorations for two rare conditions. One of the conditions is called dysosteosclerosis, characterized by excess hardening of the bone, and the other progeria, is characterized by rapid premature aging in children.

In June, a surgical team, headed by Jason Portnof, D.M.D., M.D., with Adam Fisher, OMFS, placed five dental implants in a progeria patient, which may be the first such case in the world. (See story on page 38.) "I'm happy we could be a part of this project. These procedures can be so life changing. We are able to bring a sense of normalcy to these individual's lives," said Morris.

The two students hope to raise more than \$20,000 before graduation and say they plan to continue the project after they graduate.

Contact [Geofmorr@nova.edu](mailto:Geofmorr@nova.edu) for more information about the DVD study guide. ♦

### CDM PROFESSOR RECEIVES U.S. PATENT

Jeffrey Thompson, Ph.D., professor of prosthodontics and director of the Biosciences Research Center in the CDM, and former colleagues from the University of North Carolina have been awarded a joint patent on improved adhesion technology. The patent is shared between NSU and RTI International, a leading research institute headquartered in Research Triangle Park, North Carolina. The research was funded by a National Institutes of Health/National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research grant.

The U.S. patent is for a surface modification technology that promotes chemical bonding between high-performance ceramic materials like zirconia and biological materials, such as tooth structure, or with other synthetic components, such as dentures and crowns.

The method utilizes a chloro-silane precursor to produce a very thin layer of silica on the inert ceramic surface. This allows traditional adhesive approaches and adhesives to be used in clinical bonding procedures with a high probability of a durable bond.

"Zirconia is like Teflon®, so getting it to bond with anything is a challenge. Our chloro-silane approach is one very promising solution to the problem of adhesive bonding of zirconia products in clinical dental applications. It also could have implications in other medical and non-medical fields," said Thompson.

The title of the patent is Surface modification for enhanced silanation of ceramic materials (U.S. patent 8617704). The research was funded by a National Institutes of Health (NIH)/National Institute of Dental and Craniofacial Research (NIDCR) grant.

Thompson joined NSU's College of Dental Medicine in 2007. He has published 135 papers and book chapters and is a fellow of the Academy of Dental Materials. He is also a former president of the Dental Materials Group of the International Association of Dental Research.

A profile of Thompson and his research ran in the first issue of *Lasting Impressions*. The article can be viewed in the online edition of the magazine at [www.nova.edu/dental](http://www.nova.edu/dental). ♦

### DENTISTRY RESIDENT A RUNNER-UP

Neeva Chukkappalli, D.M.D., a second-year pediatric dentistry resident at the CDM, received second-place honors in the My Kids Dentist Research Poster Competition held at the annual session of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry in Boston. Her poster was chosen as runner-up among 417 participants from throughout the United States and Canada.

Chukkappalli's presentation was titled Comparison of in vitro Toothbrush Disinfection Procedures. Faculty mentors and coinvestigators were Peter Murray, Ph.D.; Lesbia Drukteinis, D.D.S.; and Romer Ocanto, D.D.S. ♦

# CDM Impressions



*Htet Bo has been an active participant in research while pursuing her Master's of Science in Chemistry and Doctor of Dental Medicine degrees.*

## STUDENT AWARDED COLGATE SCHOLARSHIP

Htet Bo, a junior dental student at the College of Dental Medicine, is 1 of 10 students in the United States selected to receive the 2014 Colgate Research Scholarship Award.

The Colgate Research Scholarship Award is presented to junior and/or senior dental students who have demonstrated excellence in research. Each recipient receives \$500 and complimentary admission to the annual meeting of the American Association of Women Dentists' (AAWD) of which Sharon Siegel, D.D.S., is the chapter mentor.

Bo has been an active participant in research while pursuing her master's in chemistry and Doctor of Dental Medicine degrees. She serves as a lab research assistant focusing on stem cell research under the direction of Umadevi Kandalam, Ph.D., assistant professor of pediatric dentistry at the CDM. Their work was part of a poster titled Gelling Parameters of Alginate and Viability of Umbilical-Cord Stem Cell that was presented at the 2014 International Association for Dental Research meeting.

A native of Canada, Bo is president of the Women's Dental Society (WDS), the AAWD student organization at the CDM. She has organized the group's participation in several fund-raisers including UNICEF and the Miami Breast Cancer Awareness Run for the Susan G. Komen Foundation.

Bo and the other nine winners were listed in the August issue of the AAWD's Chronicle newsletter and on the organization's Web site: [www.aawd.org](http://www.aawd.org). ♦

## ALUMNI SOCIETY EVENTS SCHEDULED

The College of Dental Medicine will always be a home for its many alumni, whether they graduated a decade ago or this year. And the College of Dental Medicine Alumni Society wants to make its alumni feel even more at home.

Started earlier this year, the society is open to graduates and students of all the dental college's degree, postdoctoral, and specialty programs. Non-alumni dental professionals, friends of the college, and faculty and staff members may join the Alumni Society as associate members.

To keep alumni connected to CDM, the society is scheduling a variety of activities. These include service projects, reunions, social events, scholarship opportunities, mentoring, networking, and professional development.

Alumni from the Tampa area recently had a chance to network during a reception hosted by Linda C. Niessen, D.M.D., M.P.H., M.P.P., dean of the College of Dental Medicine.

Upcoming scheduled events include

### • October 17, 2014

A symposium for recent graduates will be held at NSU's main campus.

### • November 7, 2014

Linda C. Niessen, CDM dean, will host a reception with alumni in the Orlando area.

### • February 19–22, 2015

Alumni Weekend is scheduled at the Seminole Hard Rock Hotel and Casino in Hollywood, Florida.

For more information on alumni events, email Mindy R. Romer, coordinator for alumni relations, at [mr1300@nova.edu](mailto:mr1300@nova.edu).

Alumni can update their information at [dental.nova.edu/alumnirelations](http://dental.nova.edu/alumnirelations). ♦





# Become a part of an extraordinary story.

**Be active in YOUR alumni society and leave a lasting impression.**

The chain of events started as you applied to NSU. It continued as you became a student at the College of Dental Medicine, and then graduated to become a member of the dental profession. You are a vital part of the NSU family.

Make your voice heard by becoming active in the new Alumni Society. We also are accepting nominations for the newly formed Alumni Society Advisory Board.

The chain begins and continues with you.

For the latest information, visit our Web site at [www.dental.nova.edu](http://www.dental.nova.edu). You can update your personal information at [www.dental.nova.edu/alumnirelations](http://www.dental.nova.edu/alumnirelations).

For more information on becoming involved, email Bart Whitehead, D.M.D., at [walbert@nova.edu](mailto:walbert@nova.edu), or call (954) 262-1495.





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# CDM Alumni Society Events

## RECENT GRADUATE SYMPOSIUM—NSU HEALTH PROFESSIONS DIVISION

**Saturday, October 18, 2014 • Practice Management Essentials • 8:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.**

## CDM ALUMNI SOCIETY WEEKEND—HARD ROCK HOTEL AND CASINO

**Friday, February 20, 2015 • Crest/Oral B Focused Care: A Team Approach to Peri-Implantitis • 8:30 a.m.–2:00 p.m.**

**Saturday, February 21, 2015 • CDM Alumni Society Reception • 6:00–8:00 p.m.**

## DEAN'S REGIONAL RECEPTIONS

**Friday, September 12, 2014 • Tampa • Location TBA • 6:00–8:00 p.m.**

**Friday, November 7, 2014 • Orlando • Location TBA • 6:00–8:00 p.m.**

## NSU-CDM ALUMNI RECEPTIONS

Please check your mail for receptions and specialty meetings.

For more information, please visit [www.dental.nova.edu](http://www.dental.nova.edu).

