



California Dental Association Foundation Awards More Than \$200,000 in Community Service Grants

Recipients to bring dental care to most underserved communities

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SACRAMENTO, CA - The California Dental Association (CDA) Foundation announced today the recipients of its innovative and charitable Dental Student Loan Repayment Grant Program. Two California dentists, Siri Ziese, DDS, and Jose Torres, DMD will each receive a maximum of \$105,000 to help offset significant student loan debt in exchange for a three-year commitment to work in an underserved community.

Nine grants have been awarded since the program's inception in 2002. It is estimated that each CDA Foundation Student Loan Repayment Grant recipient provides more than \$500,000 in dental care annually. In 2009 the program saw a 67 percent increase in applications over 2008. The two latest recipients, Drs. Ziese and Torres, were two among 25 applicants.

"I am pleased that this program is enables these dentists to follow their hearts in providing care to California's most vulnerable patients. I am confident that Drs. Ziese and Torres will help their local communities in ways that are immeasurable," said CDA Foundation Executive Director Jon Roth.

Siri Zeise is the child of Yugoslavian immigrants with limited financial resources. During college Dr. Ziese worked as a dental assistant for the Diamond Springs Dental Center where she is currently serving her three-year commitment. Because of the debt she incurred from dental school, Dr. Ziese was planning to move out of state after graduating from Loma Linda School of Dentistry in 2007, but now is able to remain at the clinic that taught her so much.

"My family's long struggle with social and economic hardship have inspired me to serve the community I am so familiar with. The grant is an amazing blessing and is having a huge impact on my life and in turn my community," said Ziese.

Jose Torres practices at United Health Centers of the San Joaquin Valley/Earlimart Health Center in the same farm worker community where he grew up. His fluent Spanish and roots in the



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community have helped him earn the trust of its current residents. Dr. Torres knew he wanted to give back to the community that raised him when he graduated from Tufts University in 2007, but with his mounting debt, was not sure how.

“Because of the grant, I am able to stay here for a long time, giving the patients stability in care that had been lacking. It allows me to focus on providing quality dental care and building relationships with the patients that I identify with,” said Dr. Torres. “It is a very admirable thing to do, to provide this kind of grant that increases access to care. I’m glad there are people out there who care enough to give to a program like this.”

California Dental Association Foundation

The CDA Foundation was formed as the philanthropic affiliate of the California Dental Association in 2001 with the mission to improve the oral health of Californians by supporting the dental health profession and its efforts to increase access to care for the state's most vulnerable people. The CDA Foundation works with experts in the dental profession, private business, academic institutions and government to produce programs that increase access to care, promote prevention education, advance health policy research and build a sustainable oral health workforce. www.cdafoundation.org.

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