

# Students explore dental careers hands-on

Young people draped in yellow scrubs, face masks, and bright blue gloves bent over a table, a pair of hemostats wedged between their fingers, quietly and intently threading the thick and pliable skin of banana, stitch after stitch.

That was one of the dozens of scenes captured during Dental Week earlier this month, when 16 current high school students and recent graduates from across Oregon were at the School of Dentistry exploring what a career in oral health care would be like. Students from Warm Springs who participated were Keith Charley III, Lily Moses and Yamilei Adams.

A highlight for the students was suturing the skin of the banana. "We sutured in the shape of Ws," said Logan Ajifu-Santos, a Parkrose High School student.

The 10 young women and six men also experimented with waxing a dental model, assisted by faculty member Christina Truong, D.M.D. Each student held a probe like a pencil, heated to 250 degrees, and dipped it into a sticky wax before dripping it onto a tooth model. They were building a tooth cusp ridge.

The experiential part of learning can often be the most rewarding and effective way to hold someone's interest. That's why these experiences are baked into Dental Week, a new initiative intended to draw more young people—especially under-served populations—into the profession.

## Diverse backgrounds

The students were from the Confederated Tribes of Warm



Warm Springs Dental Week student at OHSU.

Springs, Klamath Tribes and Klamath County, Jefferson County, and Portland, Parkrose and Woodburn school districts.

Of the group, 38 percent identify as American Indian-Alaskan Native, 12 percent as Black African American, 26 percent as Latino-Hispanic, 12 percent as multiracial-other than white and 12 percent as white.

A local clinician, Thien-Y Hoang, D.M.D., from Permanente Dental Associates, opened the week with an overview of oral anatomy and basic dentistry vocabulary, such as occlusal (chewing surface) and dentin (under tooth enamel). People get their lower front teeth first by age 6 or 7 and the upper front teeth next. Overall, 20 teeth appear within the first year of life. By the time of adulthood, one typically has 32 teeth, according to Hoang.

The program is a collaboration with the OHSU School of Dentistry, Permanente Dental

Associates, and On-Track OHSU! This was the first of what's expected to be two annual sessions.

On Track OHSU! is a health and science pathways outreach program working to increase the number of middle and high school students from underrepresented backgrounds in the health sciences and Oregon's biomedical workforce.

Permanente Dental Associates is an accredited partner of Kaiser Permanente Dental, providing comprehensive, quality dental care in Oregon and Southwest Washington for 50 years.

Some expect to be dentists someday, like Osvaldo Legaria, from Woodburn, who will attend Chemeketa Community College in the fall. Others are still exploring possible career tracks, like Diana Santiago who also recently graduated from Woodburn High School. That's why she was at Dental Week, as well as taking part in other On Track programs.

## Leadership

"Find ways to differentiate yourselves," said Dean Ron Sakaguchi, D.D.S., M.S., Ph.D., M.B.A., as he offered words of wisdom about the oral health care field. He suggested the students explore research as one option to stand apart.

"Take advantage of opportunities that come to you. You can never know how what you learn today—like this Dental Week experience—could apply to your career."

Journeys into the field of dentistry can take many forms.

Cyrus Lee, D.M.D., CEO and executive dental director of Permanente Dental Associates and an OHSU School of Dentistry alumnus, didn't have a direct path after college. Instead, he took two years off.

"This time was an opportunity to look at myself and decide what the next chapter would be," he said.

Lee had done research projects with OHSU while in college and extended that work while he considered dental school. He also tutored immigrant children and taught at an alternative high school.

"Make the most of your detours," said Lee.

Diversifying the health care workforce leads to better health outcomes, according to research. However, there is a health care workforce shortage that is hampering improvement efforts. Oregon's current biomedical workforce is not representative of the state's demographics. Dental Week is an effort to change the current trajectory for dentistry in the state to the benefit of the profession and the community.

# Permanent supportive housing

The Supportive Housing Program of the Warm Springs Housing Authority has partnered with the Behavioral Health Center to develop Permanent Supportive Housing. This includes a number of units on land across from the trailer court area.

Permanent Supportive Housing is a direct rental and housing assistance program for members of the Warm Springs community who are chronically homeless, with limited income, having mental health issues, physical disabilities, and/or drug and alcohol use disorders, who also have an acute housing need.

Eligibility standards are as follows: The person must be an adult community member of Confederated Tribes; and be a severe or chronically homeless resident referred by the Behavioral Health Center.

Another example: If you were homeless and went to residential treatment to get out of the elements and then left treatment and came back homeless.

Other standards: Lack of supportive housing; have medical, mental, substance use issues, or physical issues that are detrimental to being in the elements.

Be homeless or at high risk of being homeless.

The potential tenant should provide proof of income. Examples include: Tanif, Snap, SSD, SSI, Child Support, Employment, G.A., etc., if the person has any.

The person must have income below the 60-percent guidelines to qualify.

To obtain housing, go through the screening process for qualification to ensure you meet the necessary criteria for Permanent Supportive Housing.

If you meet the tenant criteria for Permanent Supportive Housing, then a case manager will begin to work with you and Warm Springs Housing Authority to find an available home.

Permanent Supportive Housing assists with placing a tenant in a safe home. Tenants are responsible for providing their rental needs.

The project includes ten, one-bed, 650-square-foot homes, and a duplex for a small family. Support on-site will be provided by a Behavioral Health Center professional.

# \$100,000 grant for museum's Native arts

The Museum at Warm Springs this month received a \$100,000 grant to support Native arts.

The funding will support Native arts through programming focused on supporting artists and inter-generational sharing of artistic skills and knowledge, as well as supporting the museum's organizational stability.

The grant comes from First Nations Development Institute, based in Colorado, through its Native Arts, Language and Knowledge Program. The grant is made possible through the generous support of Margaret A. Cargill Philanthropies.

"This generous grant from First Nations Development Institute will provide much-needed and extremely welcome support for our annual traditional master arts workshops for Warm Springs artists, who are central to the



Tule reeds at the museum for a mat making class.

museum's programming," said Elizabeth A. Woody, museum executive director.

Last year and the year before, 224 students participated in the museum workshops. "And we are so pleased that we'll be able to continue hosting these important workshops during the two-year grant

period," Ms. Woody said.

The grant monies also will support three rotating exhibitions in the Changing Gallery.

This will begin with the Thirty-First Annual Warm Springs Tribal Member and Youth Exhibit, opening in November, Ms. Woody said.

## Ceremonial burn pit

The ceremonial burn pit is available for grieving families to use for their loved one's personal belongings. Please contact Landfill staff to arrange a time to access the area. Please make sure staff is available after their daily tasks. This is generally in the mornings, but pre-arranged times can be any day of the week.

Staff are not responsible for the burning of personal items, a family member or their designee need to present from start to finish and contact the Warm Springs Police Department and Fire Management's Dispatch prior to ignition.

The landfill number is 541-553-3163. The answering machine is checked on a regular basis.

**Joie Simtustus**, Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, Environmental Health and Sanitation.

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