

the probe

VIRGINIA COMMONWEALTH UNIVERSITY
SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY NEWSLETTER

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LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome!

Another semester, another Probe. It's hard to believe that the fall semester, and 2011 as a whole, is coming to a close. It's amazing how quickly the year flew by, and how many things VCU dental students have achieved over the past year. Between celebrating the Class of 1951 in a special military ceremony during Alumni Reunion weekend in April, to the Miles for Smiles 5K raising awareness and money for the MOM projects in September, to VCU dental students traveling to Jamaica to donate dental services to native populations in October and November, it's been a busy year. Given all VCU dental students have done over the course of this year, it's exciting to see what we will be accomplishing next year and beyond. Until then, good luck with finals and have a happy and safe holiday break.

~ Rachel Barone, D2012



Calendar of Events

January 3	Classes start and clinic opens
February 17	MCV/SGA Winter Ball
February 21	Mirmelstein Lecture (D1s and D2s)
March 2-3	SRTA PIE I
March 12-16	Spring Break
April 19	Clinic and Research Day (Clinics Closed)
April 20-22	MCV Reunion Weekend
April 27-28	SRTA PIE II
April 30-May 4	Final Exam week
May 4	Clinics close
May 11	VCU School of Dentistry Hooding Ceremony
May 12	VCU Dentistry Commencement Ceremony

Groupon Health Care

As the popularity of advertising via web-based deal-of-the-day services (such as Groupon and LivingSocial) increases, it is no surprise to see health care providers jumping on board. Although I consider myself pretty computer and Internet savvy, I have purchased only one Groupon deal, and that was to have our automobiles detailed by a mobile service provider. While the owner and his son were cleaning and shining our vehicles, I had a chance to ask the owner about Groupon and how it works. I was amazed that he had over 400 customers to service who had purchased his Groupon offer that ran for just one day. He completed the work and we gave him a nice tip, because after all, the Groupon offer was a good deal, the service was good, and we learned Groupon retains 50% of the payment made by the customer, excluding tips.



David C. Sarrett,
DMD, MS, Dean

Today I received a Groupon for 79% off an eye exam and glasses. Two days ago another offer arrived for 86% off a chiropractic visit. In reviewing my Groupon offers for the past couple months, I identified offers for hair removal, manicures, acupuncture, body detoxification, teeth whitening, body sculpting, wellness services, dental exam & tooth whitening, massage therapy, tanning, body waxing, facial treatment, hair care, weight loss, and fitness. This list represents those Groupon offers that I believe do something to your body. These were, of course, mixed in with other offers, such as picture framing and golf packages. I do recall previously seeing Groupons for cosmetic surgery and corrective vision procedures. I have not seen a Groupon for gall bladder removal or broken bones. I guess it is hard to plan for that type of service. It appears to me that for some of our patients, dental care is

equivalent to other elective body treatments like those I listed above. Now, I am not particularly thrilled with this news, because I have far more education and expected professional responsibility than any of the service providers for the majority of the Groupons I receive. I am writing this article while sitting in a restaurant we frequent often. Our server is well-known to us, youthful, and hard-working. So, I decided to ask her if she would respond to a Groupon for dental care. She responded, "If I did not have insurance or money, then yes". I then asked, if you did not have dental insurance and had no urgent need to see a dentist, why would you respond to a Groupon for dental care? She responded by saying, "If I could save money I would". I asked another question. Do you think all dentists are equal? She quickly responded "No". She went on to say, "If I have insurance, I can be more selec-

tive". Subsequently I asked two final questions. First, assuming she has dental insurance, and she is looking to find a dentist, and a Groupon appears offering a dental deal, "Would she purchase the Groupon?". She said, "Maybe". My final question was, "Would you expect to be able to make an insurance claim for the cost of the Groupon?". That question seemed to stop her in her tracks. "Oh I am not sure." Now, I am not completely certain about all of this, but when an individual purchases a Groupon (which is not a health care provider), and the provider only receives 50% of the deal payment, can patients file insurance claims to cover the cost of the Groupon? Wow, this is kind of complicated! But who said life was simple? It seems to me that important health care decisions should not be based on enticements delivered via various forms of advertising. I am interested in your thoughts and opinions.

Conscientious Coding: Maximizing Profits and Reducing Errors

Kandice Klepper, D2015

This past September, I attended the District 4 ASDA meeting in Charleston, SC hosted by the Medical University of South Carolina's College of Dental Medicine. During the afternoon session, Mr. Jamison Leigh, the local Henry Schein representative, gave a memorable presentation regarding dental coding procedures. Mr. Leigh spoke about the importance of dental procedure fee balancing in private practice in order to maximize profits and minimize dental coding errors. He provided examples of Charleston area practices, which after evaluating current their methods, were incorrectly coding dental procedures and losing substantial profits. He also emphasized that improper coding could potentially lead to consequences resulting in legal ramifications.

Mr. Leigh began his presentation with an overview of the consulting services available and explained that Henry Schein offers a free consultation to evaluate coding procedures and determine if there is need for improvement. Consultations include re-



view of number of patients treated, scheduled fees, procedural codes, and calculating the frequency each code used for treatment. A full review of coding procedures is recommended every two years. Dental coding training programs are also available through Henry Schein and are focused on analyzing practice costs, coding and reevaluating procedural pricing to maximize profits and control overhead costs. It is estimated that following the consultation and completion of coding training programs, a 10-15% increase is expected in overall practice profits.

Mr. Leigh frequently referred to the wealth of information provided in Dr. Charles Blair's book, "Coding with Confidence," which provides an in-depth explanation of strategies aimed at maximizing insurance reimbursements by utilizing alternative procedural codes. Typically, practitioners utilize code 150 for comprehensive oral exams. However, if the patient presents any signs or symptoms associated with periodontal disease or presents risk factors that predispose them to periodontal disease, the

exam can be listed as code 180. This code is a comprehensive exam which must include a full mouth probing and charting. Though this procedure may be longer and more in-depth, the associated fee is higher. In addition, code 180 can also be used for follow-up exams, an alternative to code 120, as long as the patient presents symptoms or risk factors associated with periodontal disease.

Before implementing alternative codes it is essential to have a complete understanding of coding procedures in order to maximize practice profits and reduce errors. On occasion, coding errors or miscoding can be perceived as a fraudulent act, despite lack of intent. This can result in lawsuits and other consequences that could have been avoided. Nevertheless, Henry Schein and Dr. Blair's services are just a few resources to consult with regard to dental coding and fee balancing procedures.

For more information about Henry Schein's consultation and training programs please contact your local representative or fill out an online request at: www.henryschein.com/us-en/sites/wedothat/coding.html. The local Richmond Henry Schein rep can be reached at (804) 379-6467

Class of 2014 and ASDA host 1st Annual Dental Ball

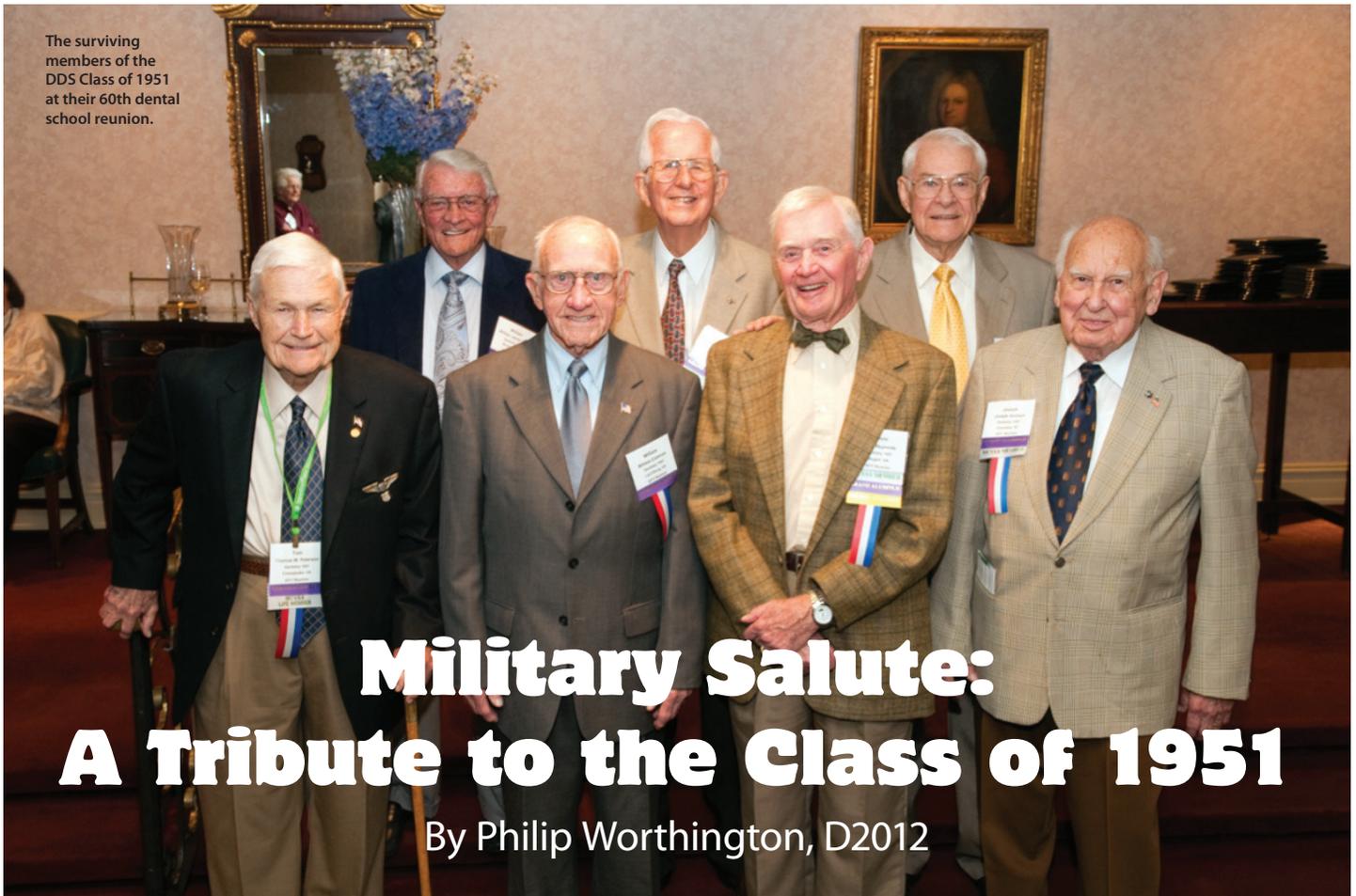
By Sarah Glass and Tarah Coleman, D2014

While daydreaming during oral pathology about social events that don't involve the passage of STDs, D2 Ryan Minga began to outline what would become the VCU School of Dentistry's first Dental Ball. The Class of 2014 partnered with ASDA to construct an evening of glamorous proportions, which was cleverly portrayed by the advertising expertise of D2 Jill Nowadly. The event was held within the expansive windows of the Bull and Bear Club, allowing the breathtaking city lights of downtown Richmond to surround the evening.

Over 300 people attended stunningly dressed, and every class was well represented. How wonderful it was to see classmates in attire other than colored coded scrubs! DJ Mikey Swafford of Blackfinn kept everyone entertained. The night proved to be a huge success. Sponsors for the evening included Septodont, Premier, and Henry Schein. Patterson Dental and ADEC in particular were big sponsors for the event. We can't wait to see what the Class of 2014 puts together for next year.



The surviving members of the DDS Class of 1951 at their 60th dental school reunion.



Military Salute: A Tribute to the Class of 1951

By Philip Worthington, D2012

Prospective students devote the years before dental school to a number of different pursuits. Some opt to complete additional education to prepare them for the rigors of the dental curriculum. Others work in dental offices or laboratory settings to develop clinical acumen. The members of the MCV DDS Class of 1951 boast a different experience, using the years prior to dental school matriculation to serve a historic purpose. Each member of the 48 student class arrived at dental school as a veteran of World War II, an honor believed to be unique amongst any graduating dental school class in history.

On April 16, 2011, the VCU Dental School used the occasion of the 60th reunion of the Class of 1951 to stage a Military Salute ceremony to honor the accomplishments and service of these extraordinary alumni. Director of Alumni Engagement Jim Doyle organized the event with the help of a committee of military veteran faculty and students committed to military service after graduation. “We thought this class deserved special recognition for their service not only to their country, but to the profession of dentistry,”



Doyle explained. “This is an exceptional group in the history of the dental school and we wanted to convey the great admiration and respect we have for them.”

The ceremony began with remarks from Dean David Sarrett after which the nine Class of 1951 alumni and six widows in attendance received introductions by Chairman of the Department of General Practice and United States Navy veteran Dr. Fred Certosimo. Associate Dean and United States Army veteran Dr. Jim Burns followed with a keynote address highlighting the military and dental careers of the honored guests. The military service of the Class of 1951 spanned each of the four branches of military and included action in the Allied

campaigns across Europe, Africa and the Pacific. One member of the class witnessed the raising of the flag on Iwa Jima while another was stationed at Pearl Harbor on the day of the Japanese attack. Another class member spent the war as a turret gunner on a PT boat in the Soloman Islands serving aside another vessel commanded by a young lieutenant by the name of John Fitzgerald Kennedy. But the experiences of the Class of 1951 also serve as a reminder that the being a member of the “Greatest Generation” was not always glamorous. “I spent a miserable 9 months in France, Germany and Austria as an infantryman in the Army,” remarked Dr. H. Marvin Midkiff. “That will make you want to go back to school.”

The dental exploits of the Class of 1951 remain equally impressive, encompassing numerous professional and academic accomplishments. The class includes a past president of the South Carolina Dental Association, a past present of the American Dental Associations and a former Dean of the University of Maryland Dental School. One alumnus, Dr. Van Buren McCarter, still practices dentistry 40 hours a week in Galax, Virginia.

The Class of 1951 remain notable not just for its service, but for its extraordinary camaraderie. In an effort to maintain ties with one another following graduation, the class compiled a yearly newsletter to keep each other apprised of each individuals personal and professional progress. Entitled the “Painless Publication,” the editorship of the document rotated amongst the various members of the class from the first issue in 1952 until the cycle completed in 1994. The 2011 edition marked the conclusion of the remarkable 60 year run of the Painless Publication, whose individual issues have been added to the archives of the Tompkins-McCaw Library on the grounds of the MCV campus. Members of the Class of 1951 credit the yearly publication with helping maintain class unity as its members fanned out following graduation. “Our class would not have as close throughout the years without the Painless Publication,” observed Dr. William J. Artrip Jr.



The rare opportunity to celebrate the historic achievements of one of the dental school’s most distinguished groups of alumni proved memorable for the honorees and participants alike. “We were all overwhelmed and appreciative of the attendance of so many faculty and students from every class and their sincere comments at this presentation,” said Dr. Thomas R. Peterson, Sr. “It was from the heart.” Current fourth-year student Justin Page, a United States Navy scholarship recipient, relished the chance to partake in the ceremony. “As a future dentist and military officer it was a great honor to meet these men,” said Page. “I hope to

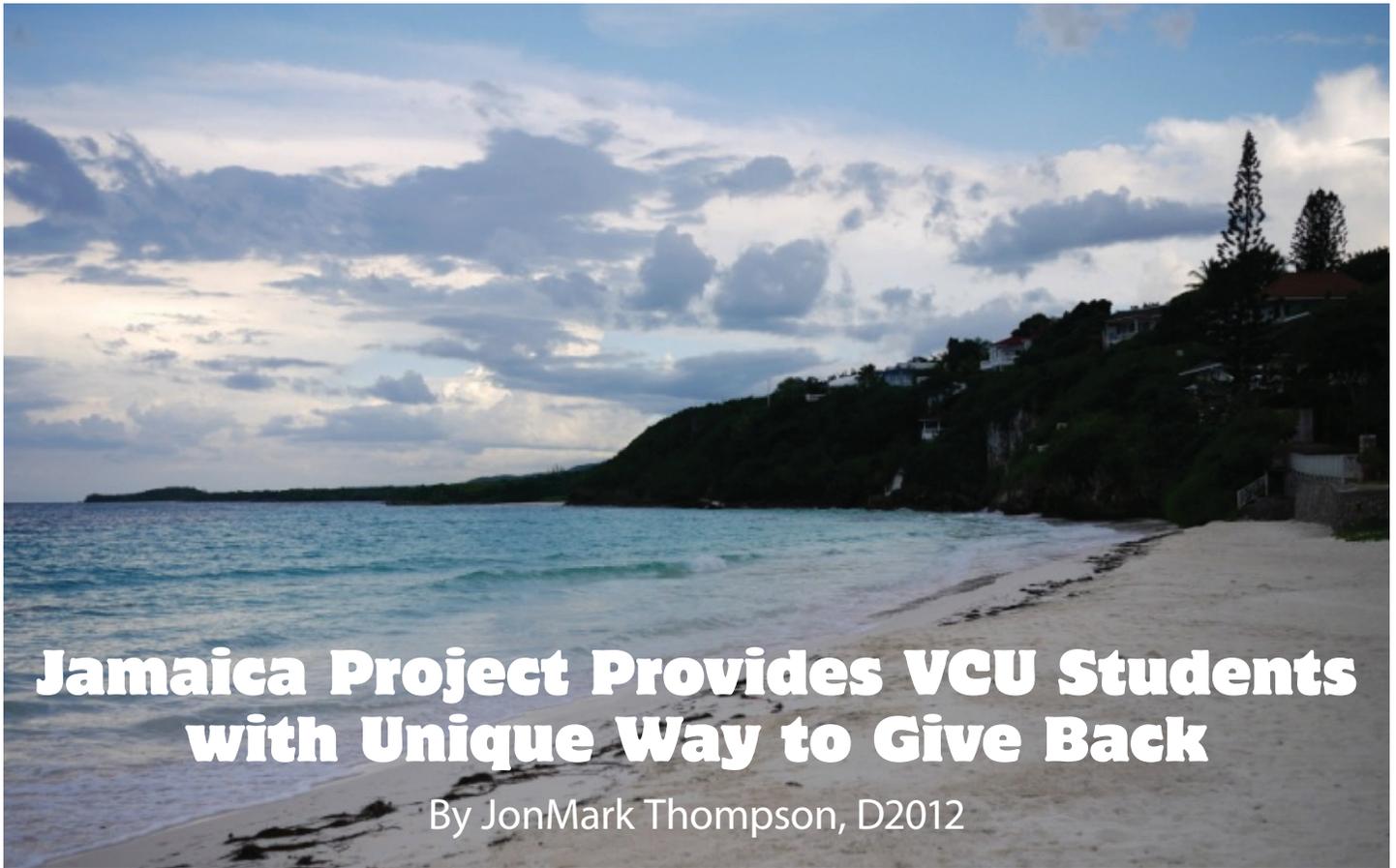
serve my country and the dental profession with the same passion they’ve shown over their careers.”

The Military Salute ceremony concluded with a special presentation by Vice Chairman of the Department of Periodontics and Virginia National Guard Colonel Dr. Tom Koertge. Recently from a deployment in Salerno, Afghanistan, Dr. Koertge dedicated to the Class of 1951 a combat flag flown over Afghanistan by Chinook helicopter during missions in support of Operation Enduring Freedom. Dr. Koertge then assisted in the unveiling of a plaque commemorating the Class of 1951 which will hang outside the Crockett Lounge in the Lyons Dental Building. “To the Class of 1951, I would say ‘job well done,’” said Dr. Burns, concluding his remarks. “Your legacy will continue to grow and your light will never be extinguished.”



TOP: Dr. Thomas Koertge, left, and Dr. Sarah Stires and Dean David Sarrett, right, unveil the plaque commemorating the accomplishments of the Class of 1951.

BOTTOM: Attendees admiring the plaque commemorating the Class of 1951.



Jamaica Project Provides VCU Students with Unique Way to Give Back

By JonMark Thompson, D2012

Picture this: warm, sunny beaches, crystal clear 80 degree water, and a breezy beach villa. Now add 20 plus VCU dental students, ten faculty members, sunscreen, and the intent to serve the native population. This is the essence of the Jamaica Project.

During the last week of October and the first two weeks of November, fourth year dental students venture out of Richmond for the excitement of the Caribbean. The trip began with a flight into Montego Bay, Jamaica. Not only were we the only mission group on the plane, we were probably the only non-newlyweds on board. From there we exchanged our American currency for Jamaican dollars. Feeling like Donald Trump – one US dollar equals 86 Jamaican dollars – we rented two woefully underpowered vehicles and commuted one hour to



a small beach-front community in the Trelawny parish.

After arriving at two quaint villas and laying our claim to one of the brightly colored bedrooms, we immediately changed into our bathing suits and headed straight for the beach. The warm, salty air and the waves crashing on the beach heightened our excitement for the upcoming week. Later that evening we shared a practical smorgasbord of salad, Jerk Chicken, rice and beans, and homemade banana bread. With stomachs full, the group moved into the pool and finished the night off with games, music, and anticipation for the following day.

A typical clinic day began with a 20 minute drive to the Long Pond Dental

Clinic in Clarks Town. On Monday, a small group gathered outside the doors, but as the week progressed and word spread that “the dentists” were in town, the group swelled to 30-40 people, all hoping to be the first patient of the day. Upon arrival, the students quickly seated the patients while the faculty triaged, readied supplies and instruments, and assisted in every imaginable way. Working together through the hot and humid conditions, we provided over one thousand people with restorations, extractions, and cleanings. One story, in particular, reminded us why we all journeyed to Jamaica in the first place. A young woman presented with severely decayed maxillary anteriors. Two lucky

students worked diligently to restore function and transform her smile. As she rose slowly from the chair and gazed into the patient mirror, tears of joy ran down her face. After composing herself, she exited the clinic with an ear-to-ear grin.

Not all of the patient experiences were as remarkable as the one above, but everyone – the students, patients, and faculty – left the clinic each day with a sense of fulfillment.

After wrapping up the workweek, we spent our last full day exploring the island. During the day we climbed 600 feet up the giant, terracing, stair-step like Dunn’s River Falls. The cool, rushing water cascaded over the rocks, forming a natural water park for all. After conquering the falls, we gathered for a group picture to commemorate our final day in paradise.

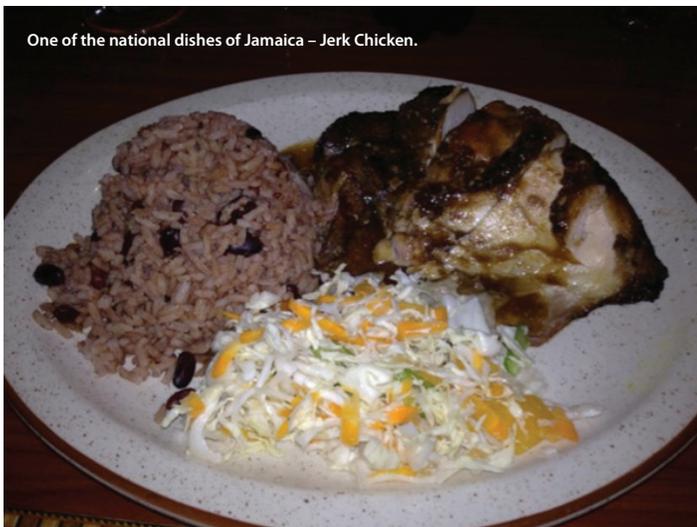
The Jamaica Project is an unforgettable life and professional experience. There is no greater satisfaction than serving those in need while taking in the sights, sounds, and beauty of a foreign country. I cannot speak for the others, but I know my future includes many more service-oriented trips. I just hope they are all as wonderful as Jamaica!



The week one group outside of the Long Pond Clinic



Refueling at a local restaurant



One of the national dishes of Jamaica – Jerk Chicken.



Restorative chairs at the Long Pond Clinic

A-Dec Trip to Oregon Provides Students with Unique Experiences

By Tayeab Faruk, D2012

A-Dec and Patterson Dental took 6 VCU and 6 UNC Dental students on an all expense paid trip to Portland, Oregon to tour the A-Dec plant. D4s Saleh Ashkanani, Tayeab Faruk, D3s Kate Helfrich, Andrea Onderdonk, and D2s Tarah Coleman, and Justin Mallette got the opportunity to appreciate not just the manufacturing process, but the A-Dec philosophy.



A-Dec (Austin Dental Equipment Company) is one of the largest dental supply companies in the world. They manufacture operatory chairs (the kind we use) dental stools, delivery units, cabinets, hand pieces and other accessories. The company was founded by Ken Austin who in 1964 revolutionized the field by introducing an air powered vacuum suction system instead of the belt driven systems that were used at the time. He based the family owned company on 15 core values. Those values were seen in action throughout the entire plant. Our A-Dec regional representatives Dale and Daniel Sarjeant took us on a grand tour of the facility. The students were able to witness the commitment to excellence A-Dec uses to make its chair and delivery units. The students were also treated to the showroom to preview the latest operatory designs that A-Dec had to offer. The tour was finished off with a Q&A session with Ken Austin.

While in Portland, the students also had a chance to visit the Oregon Health Science University School of Dentistry. OHSU dental students took them around their school and to the site of their new school (planned to open in 2015). OHSU Dental School Dean Dr. Jack Clinton finished the afternoon with an engaging conversation on the state of dental education. Patterson Dental, carrier of numerous dental supply industry leaders put on a presentation to inform the students on what Patterson can do for them.

However, it was not all work. The students were treated to a tour of a local vineyard, they braved Multnomah falls, watched salmon at the Bonneville dam, and scarfed three dozen donuts from the legendary Voodoo donuts (Google it). They combed through the streets of downtown Portland, ate at country clubs, and jammed at dive karaoke bars. It was fun and informative stuff. Special thanks to A-Dec representatives Dale and Daniel Sarjeant and Patterson representative Jim Budziszewski for showing us all a great time.

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TOP: VCU and UNC dental students touring the A-Dec facilities in Portland, Oregon.

CENTER: VCU dental students making good use of the A-Dec equipment while touring the A-Dec plant in Portland, Oregon.

BOTTOM: VCU dental students tour an area winery while on their trip to Portland, Oregon.

Second Annual Miles for Smiles: A Race For a Good Cause

By Rachel Barone, D2012

On the morning of September 17, 2011 in Joseph Bryan Park, 211 runners completed the second annual Delta Dental Miles for Smiles 5K roadrace. Participants of all ages came to race and support the Mission of Mercy Project.

Miles for Smiles is a non-profit organization and 3.1-mile road race, created by students at the Virginia Commonwealth University School of Dentistry, that donates all proceeds to the Mission of Mercy (MOM) Project. With these funds, the MOM Project is able to buy additional necessary supplies to help in their cause for greater access to dental care.

Through the hard work of the student volunteers and the participants in the 5K, Miles for Smiles was able to raise \$11,686.59 for the MOM projects. This money was raised at fundraising events leading up to the race, including a pre-race dinner at California Pizza Kitchen, and through the participants registering for and competing in the race.

“We had an amazing turnout as well as excellent sponsorship for the 2nd Annual Miles for Smiles

5K,” said Lindsey North, D3 and Race Director. “Our race grew by about 100 participants and we raised approximately \$4,000 more than last year. I look forward to expanding our race and increasing our donation to the MOM Project in 2012.”

The donations from the 2010 Miles for Smiles 5K were used in part to fund a new box truck for the MOM projects that is used to transport supplies to various regions of the state. The donations from this year’s race will be used for new supplies and other necessities to enable greater access to care among citizens of Virginia.

“We are so grateful for the Miles for Smiles donation to the MOM projects,” Molly Adler, D4, said. “Every little bit helps, and this donation will allow us to further our outreach efforts across the state.”



Participants in the 2nd annual Delta Dental Miles for Smiles 5K starting the roadrace. A total of 211 runners came out to run in the 3.1-mile race.



D3s Justin Hughes, left, and Lindsey North, right, pose with the Miles for Smiles mascot post-race.



Members of Psi Omega enjoying a tailgate at a NASCAR event in Richmond.



D3 members of Psi Omega Bri McGuinness, Meredith Cash, Ashley Abesamis, and Andrea Onderdonk enjoy Psi Omega's fall initiation.

Psi Omega Fall Update

By Brianne McGuinness, D2013

Fall time brings a lot of exciting things in dental school. A new batch of D1s to eat all the food at the lunch and learns. A new season of college football showcasing the superior Virginia Tech team. A new rush year for frat pledges.

After showing what Psi Omega is all about through events like throwing a NASCAR tailgate that resembled a true redneck family gathering and a highlighter Post Gross party, 19 new members requested membership in to the prestigious brotherhood. The elder members, esteemed faculty consisting of Drs. Al-Anezi, Barnes, and Sabatini, and new initiates gathered for a sacred, 562 year old ritual on the 4th day of November. After the initiation ceremony, the group enjoyed food, beverages, and an epic dance party led by the father of the frat himself.

The members of Psi Omega also look forward to future events like the annual Tacky Sweater Christmas Party in December. At this festive event, the members enjoy holiday drinks while donning onsies and sweaters that could be straight out of my Grandma Muriel's closet. John Belushi would surely be proud of these bros.



Delta Sigma Delta

By Ariadne Dane Hernandez, D2013

On the 12th day of the 11th month, 11 years after the 3rd millennium, new members of Delta Sigma Delta were initiated -- 22 to be exact. These new members were scared, yet excited to be a part of a fraternity bigger than themselves, directed to serve a purpose beyond their own.

Delta Sigma Delta is more than an average fraternity. With chapters extending as far as Australia, DSD is a widespread international fraternity -- not to mention the oldest dental school fraternity -- whose mission is to bring together the leaders of the profession to further excellence in ethical, professional and scientific ideals of dentistry. In the past year, the Omicron Omicron Chapter (VCU chapter) participated in several service oriented projects such as the Charlottesville Free Clinic, the Special Olympics, Habitat for Humanity, Trick or Treat for UNICEF and the Jamaica Project to name a few. Hardwork for the chapter has paid off that on October 12 at the Annual Na-



tional Meeting in Savannah, Georgia, the Omicron Omicron (VCU) Chapter was given the Outstanding Community Service Award out of all of the chapters in the United States.

In January, the chapter will be hosting the Eastern Annual Regional Meeting where members from Penn, UNC, Boston University and others will fly to Richmond to tour the city and the VCU Dental School, and more importantly, convene to provide an opportunity to discuss how to further advance and enhance each chapter.

MOM Projects Provide Students with an Opportunity to Give Back



Tayeb Faruk, D2012, talks with a patient during triage at the Roanoke, Va. MOM Project in April 2011



Dan Yeager, D2012, discusses treatment options with a patient at the Roanoke MOM Project in April 2011



MOM Project coordinators take a break from patient care during the Wise MOM Project in July 2011



Saira Ahmed, D2014, gives anesthesia during the Grundy MOM Project in October 2011

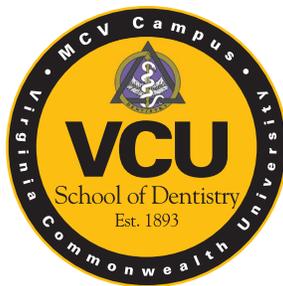


MOM Project coordinators Tony Mauri and Mary Catherine McGinn, D2014, pause for a picture during the Grundy MOM Project in October 2011.

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Please submit story ideas, questions, comments or concerns to Rachel Barone at baronert@mymail.vcu.edu
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