



A LOOK INTO THE MODERN FLOSSIFY OF THE VCU SCHOOL OF DENTISTRY

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**KANDICE KLEPPER, DDS CLASS OF 2015, STUDENT BODY PRESIDENT**

## I Bid You Farewell.

How do I sum up these past four years?! When I was asked to write a farewell, I found myself struggling to search for the right words; so I'm giving it my best. Dental school is no easy feat, yet we all embark upon this journey with high careers aspirations as our end goal. Together, we struggle, laugh,

cry, and feel accomplished by what this experience has brought out in each and every one of us.

A close friend recently sought my advice about life in general. Our conversation brought to light that we all have our individual obstacles, but what makes dental school tolerable are the relationships we develop. I could not have survived the trials and tribulations without the love and support of my dear friends and colleagues. From the long nights spent sweating in Woolwine, to the near constant panic attacks of second year, these days have been so worthwhile.

As I am about to step forth into the next phase of my journey I challenge all of you to foster your dental school relationships: with friends, family, and faculty. Take advantage of all of your resources and live each day to the fullest. We are truly blessed to have such a close-knit community at the VCU School of Dentistry, and one I especially hold near to my heart. It has been a pleasure working beside all of you and I am confident in the bright futures each of you has in store.



The Class of 2015 at first year orientation in 2011

I leave you with an excerpt from the great Dr. Suess, “On and on you will hike, and I know you’ll hike far and face your problems whatever they are. You’ll get mixed up, of course, as you already know...So be sure when you step. Step with care and great tact and remember life’s a great balancing act. Just never forget to be dexterous and deft, and never mix up your right foot with your left. And you will you succeed? Yes! You will, indeed! (98 ¾ percent guaranteed). Kid, you’ll move mountains! –*The Places You’ll Go*.



## Letter From the Editor

Anna Pitz, D2016

From day one of my dental school career, the maroon scrubs were the older and wiser D2s. These D2s suddenly became D3s then managed to turn into D4s virtually overnight. Hair was lost and babies were born in the process, and in this time the maroon scrubs have certainly faded. Faded scrubs become a sign of experience and maturity in the school because they’ve seen it all—they’re coated in wax from lab, splattered with blood and saliva from oral surgery, and have lasted through the good and bad days in clinic. It’s finally time for those faded scrubs to retire and be exchanged for new ones that will continue gaining experience beyond the walls of the dental school.



A novelist and neighbor of mine, Ann Patchett, once stated in a commencement address, “Receiving an education is a little bit like a garden snake swallowing a chicken egg: it’s in you but it takes a while to digest”. Whether you’ve realized it or not, the past four years have prepared you well with a solid foundation in clinical skills, knowledge, and an extra helping of evidence based dentistry. As almost-graduates of the Class of 2015, faculty and board examiners have bestowed upon you their trust to enter society as a health care professional. It is now up to you to go out into your residencies and careers and use this trust with *confidence*.

Congratulations, Class of 2015! We cannot thank you enough for your friendship, mentorship, and leadership throughout the years. We wish you all the best!

### CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Graduation	May 8th and 9th
D3 Orientation	May 13th-15th
D4 Orientation	May 13th-15th
Memorial Day Holiday	May 25th
D1 Pathology	May 11th-June 19th
D3 and D4 Break	July 13th-24th

# Reflections

Lindsay King, DH2015



I remember my first day in the dental hygiene program like it was yesterday. I was sitting with twenty-three other students with goofy grins on our faces, nervously glancing around the room as to figure out who their new best friends would be. We were greeted by many faculty and given the speech that we were the “cream of the crop,” and the “best of the best.” We were told that the road would be difficult, however, the results would be spectacular. I do not think we quite heard anything, except for spectacular...

That first week of orientation was an overload of information, trying to figure out how in the world those three buildings actually connected, and experiencing the joys of wearing pajama like scrubs to school every day for the first time. We all thought that two years would take forever to get here. Everyone kept telling us that the “days are long, but the months are short.” Yeah right we said. But looking back now, that’s exactly what happened. The days were long, and it felt as though our brains would explode from the ridiculously large amounts of information we were required to retain. The program proved to be everything they said it would be and more. The curriculum was by far, the hardest I’ve ever studied. However, the clinical skills and lab exercises proved to be enough to keep us motivated to reach our goals together.



Not every moment was great. There were moments of tears, heartbreaks, and disappointments, however, the moments of success were even greater. Treating our first patients, passing that one competency that had been plaguing us all semester, or having a patient hug you because they were so happy with their treatment that day; those things made this program exceptional. But what happens when we leave the safety of VCU School of Dentistry? When we no longer have those faculty checks, but we have to rely on our own intuition. Will I be ready to do that? This past year especially, working with my fellow classmates and our D4’s, I feel as though when May comes around, I won’t be terrified to face the real world, because I know that I have been prepared to be the best clinician possible. I’m thankful for my years here, but I’m excited to see what the future has in store for the dental and dental hygiene class of 2015!

# Seniors Take on SRTA!



Mallery Kibby and Mariela Coronado, DH 2015



Throughout the past several months, the Dental Hygiene Class of 2015 spent what has felt like endless hours preparing for what is known as the Southern Regional Testing Agency's clinical board examination. This is one of the last few stepping stones to cross in order to fulfill our dreams of becoming licensed dental hygienists in 28 states nationwide. With a new change including mandatory additional teeth outside of the qualifying quadrant, VCU dental hygiene students were not going to let this intimidate them. Aside from daily clinic sessions and internal rotations, our program is the only program in the state of Virginia to take part in external service learning rotations all across Virginia. This has allowed us to further apply our clinical dental hygiene skills to real life scenarios, out-

side of the safety walls that VCU so lovingly offers.

The dental hygiene class of 2015 has successfully completed the National Board Dental Hygiene Examination, and would like to give a special thanks to those who have brought us this far. We possess never-ending gratitude for the outstanding and exceptional VCU dental and dental hygiene faculty that have prepared us to become competent in our pursuing careers. They have led us to become as competent as possible as we finish off this semester strong. We are honored to be graduating from a very prestige dental hygiene program.

As one of our main role models and supporters Ms. Swecker would say, GO SENIORS!

## Special Care Interest Group Holds Respect Campaign

Christina Horton, D2017



Special Olympian Travis Hunter and Respect Campaign chairperson Christina Horton stand in front of the banner.

On March 9-13th the Special Care Interest Group (SCIG) held a Respect Campaign. Many students stopped by our table outside of Crockett to take the pledge to stop using the r-word and to use respectful person-first language instead. An example of person-first language is saying "the boy with autism" instead of "the autistic boy". Simple changes in the words we use can make a difference to the people we are talking to and in the way we perceive what we are talking about. Stickers and bracelets were handed out (along with cookies!) as students took the pledge online and signed the banner. The banner is proudly displayed in the Lyons first floor hallway - please stop by and sign it if you haven't already done so! In addition to the banner signing, two speakers from the Special Olympics

and Global Messenger Travis Hunter spoke at a lunch and learn on the importance of providing dental care for individuals with intellectual disabilities. Travis told us about his time at the world games in Korea where he won two gold and one silver medal! We also heard about the Virginia Special Olympics Summer Games coming up on June 12-13 - stay posted for volunteer opportunities. If you are interested in learning more about treating patients with special needs, please e-mail [specialcarevcusod@gmail.com](mailto:specialcarevcusod@gmail.com).



Alyssa Franklin represents SCIG as Mikhail Bondarev and Quan Nguyen take the pledge.



## Staying Active in Dentistry: It All Starts with ASDA

### Brittany Field, D2017



A common theme that resonates within ASDA at the local, district, and national level involves the role of motivation in student involvement. A hurdle for anyone in a leadership position is finding how best to motivate others. At the ASDA District 4 Meeting this year, this was one of the topics many speakers touched on.

Instead of asking how to motivate others, we should ask “why are we motivated?”. Two of the main reasons mentioned were that we see value in the organizations we are involved in, and that we have formed meaningful relationships with others in the group. Value and relationships are important qualities we look for when deciding whether to pursue involvement in an organization, especially with the limited time we have to give as students. People value different aspects of what an organization has to offer, such as gaining experience, exchanging ideas, camaraderie, or making a difference in the community. Targeting what students are interested in will show them the value that an organization such as ASDA has to offer.

ASDA as an organization has wonderful things to offer us as students, such as facilitating networking and relationships, increasing our exposure to dentistry, offering publication opportunities, and giving us the chance to help others. By looking at what motivates us, we can cater our local VCU ASDA events

to represent what we want out of the organization as a whole.

As current dental students, we are the future leaders of dentistry and one of the best things we can do for our future profession is to be involved in organized dentistry, starting now with our involvement in ASDA. While our future as dentists may seem far removed from our current needs as students, it is important to start motivating ourselves now so we can be better prepared to stay active in dentistry throughout our careers.



Top of page: VCU ASDA makes a strong statement with the number of members brought to the meeting

Above: Second year ladies at the District 4 Meeting

Students and faculty alike often wonder, **“What is ASDA?”**. With the goal of increasing involvement and transparency of VCU ASDA, **34 students** from all classes set off to Greenville, South Carolina to spend the weekend networking, learning about dentistry outside the clinic, and discovering what it means to be one of 22,000 members of the American Student Dental Association. **Here is what they learned...**



### What did you learn about ASDA that you did not know before?



I learned that each dental school faces similar challenges with student engagement and therefore we need to collaborate to come up with potential solutions. Although there is not a 'one size fits all' approach to student leadership, it is helpful to learn from one another's successes and mistakes.

- Anjali Soni, D2017



I learned about key dental issues such as student debt, mid-level provider, oral health literacy, and insurance. I also exchanged ideas with other chapters in regarding social events and community service events. Through the leadership breakout session, I learned that there are two styles of leaders, active and passive, and it's important to surround yourself with positive people to accomplish more. Lastly, I learned the difference between a resume (1 page) and CV (story of your life) and how to create an effective CV that can be used as your marketing tool. - Dado Kim, D2018



Organized dentistry is important for supporting and protecting the profession of dentistry. It advocates for public health issues, provides programs that offer dental care for underserved populations and increases funding for research. All VCU dental students are automatically enrolled in ASDA, which entails access to many great resources on the ASDA website, including continuing education classes, online publications, and discounts exclusive to members.

- Jennie Tran, D2017



For myself, the ASDA District 4 meeting was my first ASDA meeting. Heading into this I didn't know what to expect, what I would learn on this trip, or who even will I meet? People call it networking, I call it getting to know people and making new friends. On this trip it came naturally. Right off the bat, during the first ice breaker, I was nominated to represent VCU in a competition. Low and behold, it turned out to be a dance competition. For those who know me, a dance competition was right up my alley. After teaching everyone how to dougie, I won the competition. This had set the tone for the weekend. Students from other schools would come up and comment about my dancing, from there I ran with it, and found different topics of conversation with them. The weekend was a great trip, made friends, and was even able to help set up a social event with Georgia Regents University School of Dentistry for the Hinman Conference in Atlanta. - Tommy Duong, D2016

### Networking 101



As an ASDA trip newbie, how would I network with dental students from other schools when I hardly knew anything about the student dental organization? Knowing I would have to jump out of my comfort zone, I sat myself down next to a stranger on Day 1 of the District 4 meeting. We quickly introduced ourselves and our friends, and I was excited to spend 8 hours with another D2, from ECU. Since ECU's ASDA chapter is in the early stages of development, my new friend had several questions about our school and ASDA chapter that I felt confident answering. I also learned some interesting tidbits about ECU, including the fact that all their classes are pass/fail. I love the idea of a non-GPA based education, but maybe that's just me...

Later during the meeting, Henry Schein reps sponsored a happy hour for the students, and I felt privileged to meet and talk with Dr. Shiven Gupta, a 2nd year resident in a combined GPR/AEGD program in Georgia. We discussed the pros and cons of practicing dentistry in community health centers, as this currently appeals to me for a first job. His words of advice – “If it seems too good to be true, it probably is.” We've all heard this before, but I never thought it would apply to public health dentistry after all the hype we hear at lunch and learns. Definitely some good food for thought. And speaking of food, Dr. Gupta joined me and some other students for dinner that night, and he managed to secretly pay for all six of us there! When we couldn't stop thanking him, he simply told us to pay it forward someday; he enjoyed giving us dental tips and saw great potential in us as future dentists. This ASDA meeting was made possible over the years through networking, and I feel proud to maintain the tradition!

- Alyssa Franklin, D2017

**My District 4 "Top 3"**



Ross Baker, D2018

The ASDA District 4 Meeting was a tremendous opportunity to meet and interact with students from dental schools from all over the district as well as a chance to learn more about all that ASDA is doing that affects life in dental school. The weekend of January 9<sup>th</sup> in Greenville, South Carolina was full of great times spent with classmates, learning experiences, as well as some time to explore the city. My top three from the weekend:

- 1) I enjoyed meeting many members of VCU's ASDA chapter for the first time during the District Meeting. The meeting allowed all of us to interact outside of school and a chance to meet students that I would have never gotten to know had I not gone to Greenville. As a D1, that opportunity has been extremely helpful in fostering relationships with D2's, D3's, and D4's that are more than willing to provide me with help and guidance.
- 2) The chance to travel to Greenville and explore the city was definitely another highlight of the weekend. Having gone to college in South Carolina, I had heard many stories about how beautiful Greenville was but never had believed them. The District 4 Meeting finally gave me the chance to check it out myself and I was pleasantly surprised by how charming, clean, and picturesque the small city turned out to be.
- 3) The breakout sessions during the meeting provided us with the awesome opportunity to hear what the ASDA chapters at other schools were doing at each of their schools and for us to share VCU ASDA's ideas and plans. This interaction allowed us to understand the things that we are doing at the school that are working well and on the other hand, some things that we may need to change or consider to help the chapter grow even stronger.

Overall, the District 4 Meeting was one of the highlights of my semester and an awesome opportunity to see what ASDA is all about. I would highly encourage any student who is interested in learning more about ASDA to participate in one of these meetings during their time here at VCU.



1) Visiting a new city (Greenville, SC) & networking with an awesome group of my peers

- 2) Dr. Alex Barton's "Networking" Session
- 3) Dr. Smallidge's "ADA.org Resources" Session

- Courtney Killough, D2017



First Year students at their first ASDA Meeting

**What dental instrument describes you best and why?**



"A mirror because it is very reflective and can see all sides of things!"  
- Alex Erbesti, D2016



"A spoon because I love to eat!"  
- Nitya Reddy, D2017



"An explorer because it is curious"  
- Jen Snyder, D2016



"A condenser because I like to keep things short and sweet"  
- Chandani Desai, D2017



"A 330 Bur. I may be sharp around the edges but I have curves in all the right places and on any given day you can always count on me to get the job done."  
- Kelli Riddle, D2017





# SUFFOLK MOM: THE HOMETOWN PERSPECTIVE

## Dani Howell, D2017



Dani and father, Dr. Ralph L. Howell

Other than my first year, while my dad was finishing dental school, I lived in Suffolk my entire life. I'm also probably one of the weird Suffolkians- I loved it there, I could not imagine growing up elsewhere. Most of my life my perspective of Suffolk dentistry was from the walls of my grandfather and father's office—business was steady, patients came when they needed work done, and while it may have taken a few payments they could always find a way to pay their bill. As I got older, I quickly noticed that Suffolk dentistry was a far cry from the four walls of RL Howell DDS & Associates.

Mission of Mercy Projects have entered into their sixteenth year and have provided more than 56,000 patients with \$35.6 million in care. I was very fortunate to have gotten involved with MOM projects in the early 2000s on the Eastern Shore. Despite being young and relatively unhelpful, my dad always made sure my sister and I attended and helped in whatever ways we were able. These MOM projects provided me with the vision of the vast dental need across the state. However, it was not until the Western Tidewater Free Clinic opened a dental suite consisting of 2 dental chairs that I understood this need. When it was first opened the clinic was operated strictly on a volunteer basis which usually meant once a week a dentist from an area office would spend an afternoon. I spent a few afternoons at the clinic before I heard about the waiting lists to get an appointment and that hundreds of people had called for appointments, many of which were unable to be placed on the waiting list because the dental suite was only open to the WTFC health patients. This was when I

8 | the probe | spring 2015

realized the need in Suffolk.

In July 2009, on our way home from Wise, my dad and I were talking about the project discussing how they worked, where the funding came from, how a location gets picked, etc. After our conversation continued, I looked at my dad and said "we should do one in Suffolk." Don't get me wrong: I am sure he had already thought about it and I was not the genius who had the epiphany—but that's the moment he and I really started thinking about making the project a reality.

The project really got rolling once we were green-lighted as a location, with the first project happening in 2014. Last year's project was such a success and brought so much interest to the project from the entire city that the project came back to Suffolk on February 28, 2015.



The Class of 2015 completes their final MOM Project at Suffolk

The 2015 Suffolk MOM project took place at King's Fork Middle School. The Suffolk project has been able to mark two momentous occasions: in 2014, the project was the kick off to the 15<sup>th</sup> Year of MOM, and this year, the project was the 80<sup>th</sup> Project in the state. Though the week leading up to the project was full of snow and ice, the weather was a little less miserable, and the project was able to screen on Friday and treat 559 patients on Saturday. The patients received 698 routine extractions, 521 surgical extractions, 580 restorations, 17 root canals, and 20 dentures. 551 volunteers donated over \$63,000 in medical services and \$505,000 in dental treatment. Projects are truly not possible without the volunteers, most notably the students. The Suffolk MOM marked the final project for the Fourth Year MOM Project Coordinators. At the close of the project, members of the VDAF Board recognized all their invaluable leadership, hard work, and seamless management of the organized chaos of a MOM project.

Looking back at all the projects I've attended. I've always loved Wise because of the volume and size. However, the Suffolk project is most special to me. Not only because I've seen its evolution from an idea amid a conversation through the completion of the second project, but because it reminds me of what I love about Suffolk—the community. As I looked around King's Fork, I saw community—the hospitality lounge was run by the ladies from my church, the patient holding rooms are monitored by my dad's front desk coordinator (ask his patients, the office does not run without her), in triage I find my orthodontist (aka Ashley Anderson's dad) and the best dentist I know (aka my grandfather), and countless other Suffolkians there to help in whatever way they can. Attending a home town MOM project shows you the true beauty of what we do at MOM projects—we help our neighbors in need, we provide health care, and restore smiles to a community.

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## PRE-DENTAL PERSPECTIVE

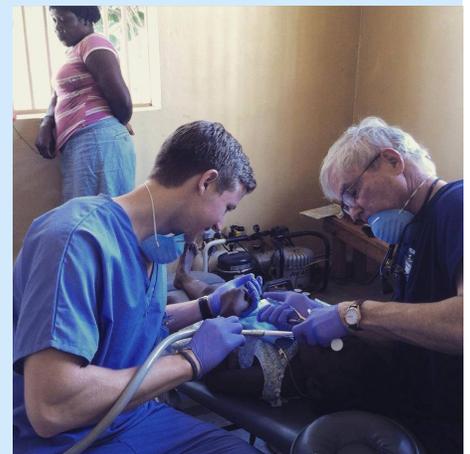
# A Haitian Spring Break

Jacob Vaught, Radford University, 2016



In 2010, a devastating earthquake hit Haiti, affecting an estimated 2 million people. While tagging along with Dr. Don Trawick, it was hard to believe that it was five years before, it seemed like the earthquake had occurred just yesterday. The streets were covered in homeless children, tin for shelter, and desperate vendors begging for money. I was shocked by the amount of poverty I faced. Needless to say, this mission to Haiti was one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life. Dr. Trawick has been doing dental missions trips to Haiti for 25 years, and let me join him for a week over spring break. We were planning to do our dental work at Cité Soleil but riots were taking place outside the compound that had led to two deaths the year before, so we were forced to make due with

the church we were staying in. We went through three air compressors for the portable unit, almost lost the shop-vac we used for suction, and dealt with power outages all day. Despite the less than ideal conditions and the great distance from downtown, Haitians walked miles to come get their teeth fixed. It was moving how appreciative they were of free dental care. They have to worry about where to find water and food on a daily basis, yet that didn't take away their gratitude towards our team. In fact, my relationships with these patients did not stop inside the clinic. I



played soccer with a group of Haitians my age for about an hour and a half every day. The language barrier was insignificant. Their enthusiasm to play with me was enough to feel a strong connection. At the end of the week, I gave one of my soccer buddies, 12-year-old Odelin, a soccer ball and a teddy bear. His father looking on teared up and shook my hand. I was supposed to be making an impact on them, but really they were the ones changing me. With very little to even survive with, they showed an enormous amount of gratitude and love for us and one another. I resolved in that moment to exercise the same attitude in all that I do, and most especially in my future as a dentist. I am looking forward to returning to that beloved community when I can help as a doctor or one in training, not just a student.



## ADEA Faculty Spotlight: **Dr. H. Reed Boyd, III, DDS**



**Jamie Dodd, D2018**  
ADEA Secretary

In our newest Faculty Spotlight segment, we at ADEA wanted to recognize Dr. Reed Boyd for his outstanding contributions to the clinical education of our students. He comes from a legacy here at MCV where his grandfather, father and uncle all attended dental school and claims “As cliché as it sounds, I could not imagine being anything but a dentist. Dentistry really is more of a hobby than a job. I am just glad it was in my blood”. Dr. Boyd joined the VCU SOD part-time faculty in the early 90’s and has been full-time faculty since September 2011, affording all of us the opportunity to learn from his 31 years of private practice experience. Recently, Dr. Boyd has become even more critical to developing D1 operative skills as the Director of the DentSim Lab. From his helpful manner to his clinical insight, Dr. Boyd makes learning dentistry at VCU a truly enjoyable experience.

### **What is your favorite part of being a faculty member?**

Working with the students at all levels. I love it when the “light bulb” goes off and that “Ah ha” moment occurs. To see a young dentist develop and really catch hold of a concept is really rewarding. I love being able to share my experiences with the students in an effort to help them learn and develop their own personal philosophies of dentistry.

### **Most challenging part of being a dentist?**

There is a huge responsibility inherent in employing your care, skill and judgment with a patient. You must set aside your personal biases and listen to the patient and what their priorities are. Teeth do not walk into the dental office, people do, and we must be accepting of them and their own personal wants and desires for their dental and overall health without any judgment.

### **Most enjoyable part of being a dentist?**

I truly enjoyed the ability I have, through lots of training, to restore someone’s mouth to function and form, and ultimately ideal health. As a dentist you have the ability to take a severely broken down debilitated oral system and return it to health, function and beauty, or help a person maintain their current state of oral and dental health. At the same time, you are restoring a person, a human being, to health, function and beauty and restoring their dignity, their self-esteem and their sense of self-worth.

## Highlights of 2014?

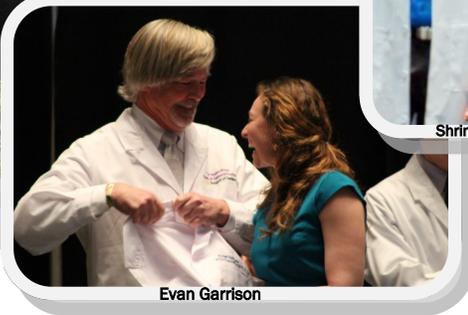
Probably the most rewarding highlight of 2014 was being asked by the D-2 Class that year to help “coat” them at their White Coat Ceremony. It was really an honor to be asked and I consider it to be one of the highest honors that I have been afforded. My granddaughter was born in November 2014. “Baby” Kate as we call her joined her big brother Caleb as my two grandchildren. 2014 brought some tough personal situations to my life and fortunately, at least to date, I am winning on all counts. But they have really put a lot of things into a much different perspective. I was also appointed Director of the DentSim Lab so now I have the opportunity to introduce the D-1 Classes to operative dentistry, the high speed hand piece and teeth, helping them get started with their dream of becoming a dentist. Looking back, 2014 was a pretty special year.



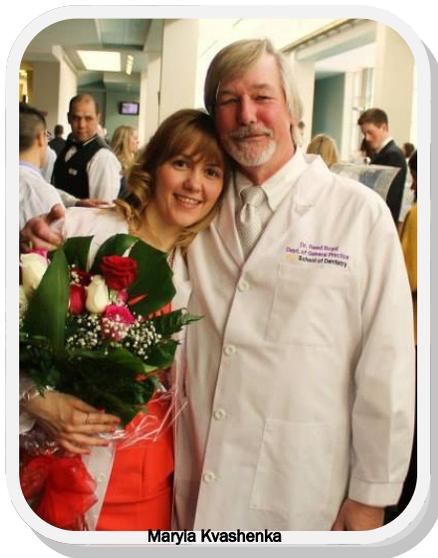
Vickas Agarwal



Shrineel Patel



Evan Garrison



Maryia Kvashenka

## Best advice for the graduating class of 2015 as they start their careers?

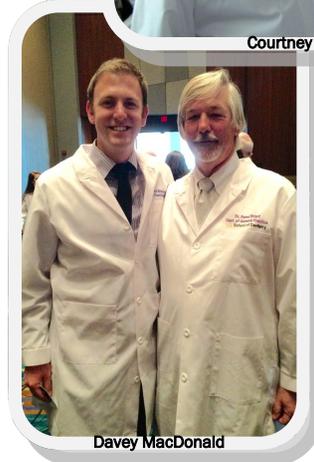
Be the continual student. You have gotten a solid basic dental education here at VCU. However, there is much more to be learned after your graduation. So, I encourage each of you to go to continuing education courses increasing your knowledge and your skills. Do not ever stop growing your knowledge and your abilities. You owe it to yourself and more importantly you owe it to those people, we call them patients, that seek your care, skill and judgment. Always, always, put the patient's needs and wants ahead yours. Listen to your patients.....really listen to them. I would urge each of you to become an active part of organized dentistry. There are lots of forces out there that are trying to control dentistry. We must continue to protect this wonderful profession that is ours from those that would erode it into something less than it is. Finally, I would encourage each of you to write mission and vision statements. I did and it gave me an incredible sense of direction and purpose.

## What do you find challenging about teaching dentistry?

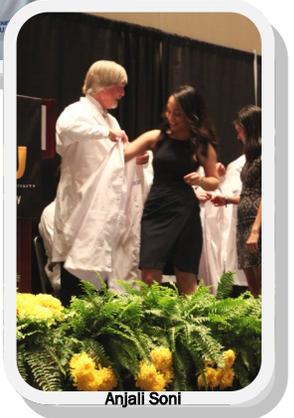
There are a couple of real challenges in teaching anything, especially dentistry to dental students. First, not everyone learns the same way. So, just putting a concept out there doesn't necessarily work for every student. I have to keep looking for other ways to help the student truly understand different techniques, different procedures, different concepts and different ideas. I constantly have to keep reminding myself that you all are just getting started and that you don't have a tremendous wealth of experience or knowledge to draw on yet. I look at you all as peers and colleagues and think you know so much more than you do, or should know so much more than you do. So, I have to step back and take a deep breath and remember that you are just beginning to get started in this wonderful profession. It is also challenging to help such bright, intelligent young people cope with the nuances of dental education. You all are used to achieving at such a high level that it is naturally frustrating for you when something doesn't come quickly. Dental education is not just “book learning”, but eye hand coordination as well. You have to master techniques in your mind, then see them with your eye and finally get all that information to your hands. To some, that all comes quickly. To the rest of us, it takes a little time, but eventually it does happen.



Courtney Killough



Davey MacDonald



Anjali Soni

# The D1 Smurf Life

Our first year class has come a long way since they first stepped foot into dental school back in August. They've completed gross anatomy, been initiated into dental fraternities, gone through round one of "stab lab" (with no casualties that we're aware of), and finally broken in those bright blue scrubs. Their eagerness to learn in clinic adds an exciting element to clinic and they're taking advantage of the finals days of D1 life before D2 year hits and they won't be seen outside of Woolwine or the library.

## Dado Kim, D2018

December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1989. A baby boy with the name "the manner of drinking tea" was born in a small coastal town in South Korea. Exactly 24 years later, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2013, I was singing along a song "Happy" by Pharrell that I finally got into a dental school!



Dado and classmates at Dental Ball

Life as a D1 for the past 7 months has been one of the greatest moments that I have ever experienced. Of course there were stressful times such as taking gross anatomy or carving 3-rooted molars, but when I think about that day, December 2<sup>nd</sup>, I feel really fortunate that I am in a dental school and I become re-energized. I am blessed to have my classmates who have become my friends, sharing happiness, sorrow and excitement. Through this journey, we are becoming a big family that is there to support each other. Speaking of a big family, D1 class Friendsgiving was my personal favorite social event. In Crockett, I was able to meet many of our classmates out of Smurf-colored scrubs and their boyfriends/girlfriends, husbands/wives, and all so lovely children. I hope that we can continue to strongly impact and be a great importance in each other's lives.

Through dental school, I've had several opportunities to participate in community service. Fresh off the airplane, my family have received so much help from our neighbors in adjusting to this foreign land. Well, not so foreign anymore, because I am a citizen of United States of America now. Sorry, I have digressed a little, but there were many chances for me to give back to the community. Through volunteering at Charlottesville Free Clinic, Suffolk Mission of Mercy, and the VCU wellness block party, I was enthralled to help out even in my limited abilities as a D1 and I am really looking forward to contributing more as my skills improve. Helping out at the VCU School of Dentistry open house tour was another awesome experience. I have met several people who were non-

traditional students just like me. I was able to look back on my memories as a graduate student of the VCU CERT program. I have encouraged everyone that they can make it and just keep improving yourself day by day.

During my life as a D1, I have also learned about organized dentistry. I was never involved in ASDA until I had a chance to attend the District 4 ASDA meeting in Greenville, South Carolina. It was a great opportunity to exchange ideas with other dental schools in terms of organizing social events and community service. In addition, I learned about many key dental issues that I did not have any exposure to in dental school, such as mid-level providers and student debt. ASDA Annual Session in Boston was another meeting that I was lucky enough to attend to and I would say it was one of the best weeks in dental school. Keynote speaker, Neil Pasricha, who is well known for his advocacy on positivity, gave a speech on "3 A's of Awesome." Your Attitude, Awareness, and Authenticity will have a great impact on your life that can lead to a great success in anything you do. I strongly agree to the statement and I challenge myself everyday to practice 3 A's of Awesome.

There are so many great things about being D1, but the best part of being D1 is that there is so much to learn and to improve. However, even the greatest ship is useless without captain, so please guide and watch these blue Smurfs grow and mature. This journey has just started!



First year students help out at the Suffolk Missions of Mercy Project



Each year, attendees from each of the sixty-five dental schools pack their bags and travel to ASDA's Annual Session—the main business meeting of the year, during which the House of Delegates votes on the statements, policies, and resolutions of the organization. This past year, Annual Session was held in Boston, MA, from February 18-21 with the theme (and of course, the matching hashtag!) #ASDA AWESOME. Keynote speaker, and author of the bestselling book, *The Book of Awesome*, Neil Pasricha, opened on Thursday morning with “The A’s of Awesome.”

In 2008, Pasricha started a blog titled 1000 Awesome Things, with the idea that recognizing the small, albeit awesome, things in life would make him happier and help him recover from grief after the suicide of a close friend. By 2010, 1000 Awesome Things was winner of a Weebly Award for Best Blog, and now the blog has

### ATTITUDE

As the Eleanor Roosevelt once said, “this life is what you make of it. Always has been, always will be.” Pasricha elaborates by saying that we’re all going to have of highs and lows, and may jump between our proudest moments and trying times—whether its hours, days, or months apart. Ultimately, there are two ways to approach these situations. We can choose to dwell in the doom and gloom forever, or we can grieve and look to the future. What happens after that is largely dependent on our attitudes and how we decide to approach the situation. We can choose to see the awesome.

over 56 million hits. If you were to peruse the blog, you’d see things like “dogs with jobs,” and “the other side of a pillow” listed. And how awesome is that? It’s clear that Pasricha has a talent for pointing out the oh-so-awesome, but often overlooked, things in our everyday lives. As we round the corner on the end of another dental school semester, I find this to be especially true. Amid the hubbub of exams, competencies, requirements, and social events it becomes all too easy to become so narrowly focused that we forget to appreciate the little things.

In his TED Talk style presentation at Annual Session (the official TED Talk has over 2.3 million views) Pasricha details the three A’s of Awesome: attitude, awareness, and authenticity. As he describes, reflection has proven the three A’s as central to the success of his website and his books, and can help others to recognize the many awesome things in their lives.



Above: Kristin Edwards accepts the ASDA Gold Crown Award for Outstanding Fundraising on behalf of VCU ASDA

## AWARENESS

In order to see the awesome around us, we have to be aware. Sure, it's easy to get caught up in life and forget to look for the awesome part of every day, but Pasricha suggests that embracing our inner three year old can be a great tool to see the world in new light. As he mentions in his TED Talk, three year olds are seeing the world for the first time, and each new flower, word, bug, cloud, or color is exciting for them. Having a sense of awareness can bring us all back to that moment and help us remember how *awesome* it is when we find money in our pocket, or hear our favorite 90s song.

## AUTHENTICITY

Appreciating the small things comes down to being authentic. Pasricha tells the story of Roosevelt Grier, who grew up to be a six-foot-five three hundred pound linebacker for the LA Rams, and also had a love for needlepoint. In fact, later in his career, he authored a book titled "Rosey Greir's Needlepoint for Men." While it's easy to laugh at the paradox of this needlepoint loving linebacker, it's obvious that Grier was an example of pure authenticity. What can we all take away from this? Sometimes it's not about being cool—sometimes we just have to embrace what we love, and appreciate the awesomeness of being authentic.

Why #ASDAAwesome? Because as the largest dental student organization, ASDA is there to serve as the voice of dental students, to provide resources, and to help you be successful. That's right—you, as an individual. The coolest part is that organized dentistry doesn't stop at the walls of the dental school, and the Virginia Dental Association and American Dental Association, in conjunction with tons of other organizations, are there to help us succeed. In hindsight, deciding to get involved with ASDA and organized dentistry during my first year of dental school has been one of the most awesome decisions I've made. ASDA has something for everyone, and whether you're curious or skeptical I encourage you to get involved and take advantage of the resources available. You might be surprised how a seemingly little step can make your dental school experience that much more awesome.

I'll be honest. I can be the first person to complain about dental school, and the frustrations that come along with it. Dental school can be difficult, and it can be easy to become frustrated when all the little things add up. As dental students, we spend hours practicing for practicals to get our grade back and see that we got a 3 (but hey, at least you passed!) or study for a test only to find out we didn't know the material as well as we thought. Some days we wake up feeling the pressures of student debt, to improve access to care, or work with patients that dispute the use of dental radiographs, water fluoridation, and the use of amalgam. Other times, we worry about applying to jobs and residency programs, about what's going on at home, about finding patients for our requirements or for boards, or even about buying twelve more practice teeth from the Schein store. It's a lot. It's a whole lot, and sometimes it can seem overwhelming.

If we're going to get serious, dental school isn't all that bad. What's awesome about dental school, is that each of us has been given the opportunity to join what I like to call the greatest profes-



Above: VCU ASDA Members dress up as superheroes for the President's Gala

sion in America. Even the US News & World Report consistently names dentists among the top jobs in America, and in 2015 we're **number one**. Awesome right? Dental school flies by, and before we know it we're graduating and calling ourselves dentists. Just think: who else do you know that can discriminate between millimeters (or tenths of millimeters), carve duplicates of teeth in wax or dental materials, visualize six degrees of taper, or that stare in other peoples' mouths all day for fun. It's awesome. We also diagnose, treatment plan, and restore oral health to our patients, and sometimes we're just as much engineer, psychologist, and artist as we are clinician. We get the awesome opportunity to use our skills to give back to others. But even though dentistry is awesome, it doesn't get easier to slow down and remember *how awesome* it actually is. If it's been a while since you've appreciated the little things, take a step back. Remember the three A's, smell the roses, and realize dental school is awesome, that you're awesome, and that everything can be awesome if you're open to it.

# American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry

## Public Policy Advocacy Conference 2015

*March 22-25, 2015, Washington, D.C.*

Dr. Patrice Wunsch, AAPD Public Policy Advocate for the state of Virginia, along with four VCU pediatric dentistry residents, attended the four day conference in Washington, D.C. Dr. Arpi Patel, Dr. Katherine Nordeen, Dr. Susan Meinerz and Dr. Ethan Puryear were involved with scheduling and meeting with legislative aides and legislators. Dr. Lindsey North, from the University of Illinois, joined our team, since she is from Virginia and is interested in returning to the Charlottesville area.

The Virginia team met with a total of 13 legislators and legislative assistants to discuss three main issues. Our first request was that legislators continue to support Title VII funding which supports pediatric dentists to include faculty loan repayment for pediatric dentists that choose to go into academics.

The second discussion point involved the Affordable Care Act. Currently, the ACA allows parents to choose to purchase pediatric oral health benefits. However, pediatric oral health care is considered an essential health benefit, and it should be a mandatory purchase, whether embedded in a medical plan or offered as a stand-alone plan.

Our last issue was to ask legislators to vote on an extension of the current Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP). CHIP has been largely successful in meeting the needs of children who are not able to qualify for either medical assistance or medical coverage under the ACA. Currently, the program is scheduled to be extended for two more years; we asked that it be extended for another four years.

Our visits gave residents an opportunity to see first-hand the importance of advocacy and become familiar with the various political issues that can affect our profession. Follow-up emails will be sent to the legislative offices that we contacted in an effort to form a relationship between the legislator and the school. It is our hope to have some of the legislators and their aides visit VCU.



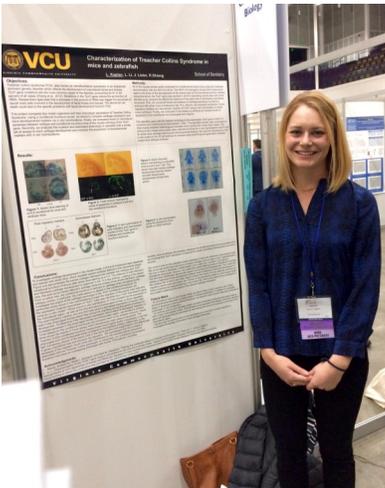
Dr. Patel, Dr. Meinerz, Dr. Nordeen, Dr. North, Dr. Puryear, and Dr. Wunsch advocate for Pediatric Dentistry on Capitol Hill



# Student Research Spotlight:

## AADR/IADR General Session 2105, Boston, Mass.

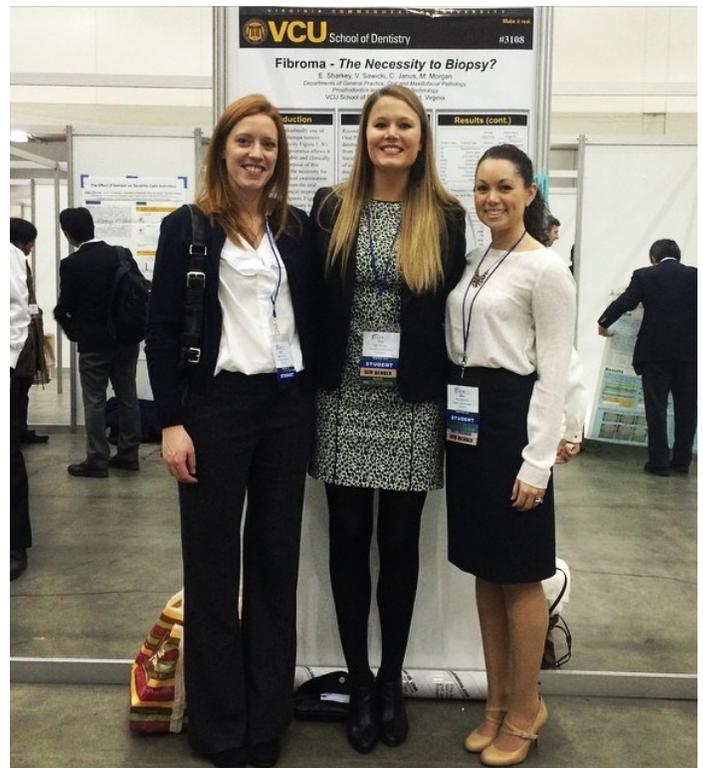
### Lauren Kaplan, D2017, Student Research Group (SRG) Vice President



Sometimes it seems like all the student research happens behind the scenes at the School of Dentistry. I often get the question, “Soooo when are you finding time to do research?” That’s a good question. The short answer is, I don’t really know, but somehow you find time between practicals and tests to sneak into the lab (the other lab) and get it done. And then, after weeks (or months) of working on your project, when you are finally standing next to the finished product, it doesn’t seem like doing research while in dental school actually all that hard. Behind the scenes, more students are conducting research projects than you might expect. There are many reasons to get involved with dental research. Some decide to participate in research to gain experience in a certain specialty that interests you, or to add a publication to your résumé. However, there are some inherent benefits to working on a research project, such as honing critical thinking and problem solving skills. Erin Sharkey (D4) got involved in research here at the school “because I didn’t do any research in undergrad and wanted to get the experience before graduating. I was pleasantly surprised and enjoyed it a lot more than I thought I would.”

This year was a record year for VCU at the American Association for Dental Research’s (AADR) annual meeting with 20 poster projects and oral presentations. Lance Cheng (D2) describes his experience at the meeting sharing, “This was my first time ever doing research, so it was a real honor for me to be at the same conference with so many intelligent and renown researchers. I felt really nervous yet excited to meet fellow researchers and network with other schools, students, and professors. It really was an amazing and eye opening experience to be surrounded by the forefront of dental research.” The meeting took place in Boston and is the premiere dental research event of the year. This year it was a joint meeting with the International Association of Dental Research (IADR) with over 6,000 participants and 4 days of exhibits, poster presentations, workshops, and oral presentations. The projects ranged from an analysis of materials in Dr. Moon’s lab to developing a phenotype for a craniofacial genetic mutation in mice and zebrafish. Erin Sharkey (D4), Elise Hartmann (D4), and Jaime Woodall (D3) were the only 3 dental students presenting oral pathology at the meeting. “Presenting at the AADR meeting this year was a valuable learning experience. It was nice to hear feedback from other dentists regarding their own clinical observations.” (Jaime Woodall)

If you think you would like to become involved with a research project, get in touch with the members of the Student Research Group. An A.D. Williams fellowship is a great place to start. We can help brainstorm ideas about how to get in touch with a mentor and narrow down a research topic. Be on the lookout next semester for some general info sessions where residents and faculty will talk about different projects they are conducting which need student help. Congratulations to all the students at VCU SOD involved with research projects, you are integral to a very important part of our education and are helping to advance our profession.



Above: Lauren Kaplan (D2017) presents her research

Right: Jaime Woodall (D2016), Erin Sharkey (D2015), and Elise Hartmann (D2015) present their findings on “Fibroma—The Necessity to Biopsy?”



# ¿Qué pasa con el club de HDA?

Courtney Killough, D2017

A lot has been happening recently in the Hispanic Dental Association at VCU! In December 2014, we officially became the 33rd nationally recognized Hispanic Student Dental Association Chapter, with 100% of our 62 founding members also earning membership status and benefits within the national HDA organization. We were so excited to be welcomed into the HDA *familia*, and we are equally looking forward to our full integration into VCU SOD as an official organization in the coming months.

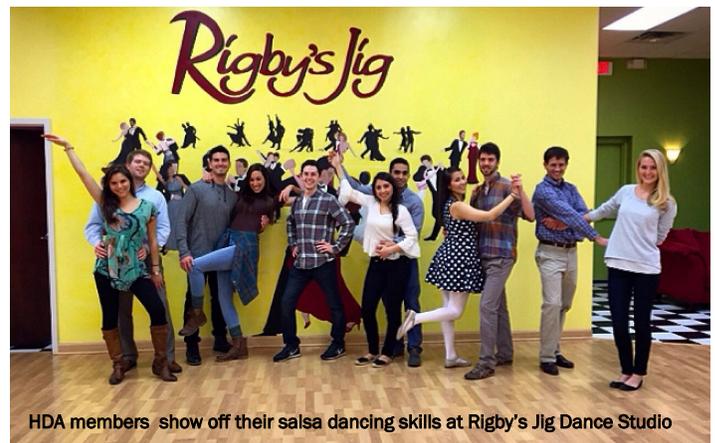


On Saturday, March 21<sup>st</sup>, eight VCU chapter members attended the HDA East Regional Meeting at Columbia Dental School in New York City (pictured above). We heard from the inspirational Dr. Suero-Wade, a dentist in New York City, who pours out her talents in the name of service and spirituality. When a student in the audience asked about how she

balanced giving away her dental services for free with earning a living and paying back student loans, she stressed, “Follow your heart and the money will follow!”. Another take-away message from Dr. Suero-Wade’s presentation was, “The richest land mines are in graveyards, where people have died never having the chance to live out their dreams. Strive to die empty!” She urged each of us to create our own mission statement, in an attempt to prioritize our values and focus our efforts towards our ultimate life goals. We are planning to incorporate this useful idea into a future HDA club event.

While at the conference, we also had an opportunity to sit in on a professional development seminar, led by Jay Budner, founder of *CORE Leadership Consulting*. Here are a few morsels of knowledge he shared that stuck with us:

- 1) “Effectiveness is when aptitude and motivation meet opportunity.”
- 2) “The steps of creating a successful dental team are as follows: get talented people, get them working, evaluate their performance, keep your talented people, and always have a backup plan.”
- 3) “Giving constructive feedback is one of the most challenging aspects of being a leader. Always start by explaining how the person



would have acted in the ideal situation to promote positivity in the conversation. Always end by collaborating to create a plan for the future.”

Most recently, a group of HDA club members and their significant others got together on a Friday evening at Rigby’s Jig Dance Studio in Richmond to learn how to dance the Salsa, Tango, Bachata, and Merengue. The group shared many laughs and unanimously voted Sheyda Maghsoudi and Soheil Rostami as “Most Improved”!

Looking towards the future, our club will continue to hold Spanish Language Workshops and Spanish Treatment Planning Seminars at lunch. We are actively pursuing opportunities to serve the Hispanic populations in Richmond, and are also finalizing plans to send a group to the 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Hispanic Dental Association Conference in San Antonio, TX this August. ¡Nuestro futuro es promisorio – únete a nosotros!



# Psi O'nara 2015

Elise Hartmann, D2015



As summer quickly approaches, we again say farewell to a class of Psi Omega. We have a packed April and May to get in as many activities together as possible before we part ways. Bar golf, Foxfield races, senior send off and the lake retreat fill the weekends to come. After our last hoorahs we say psi o'nara to the class of 2015.

### **Where are these characters going?**

- Carson Rutledge - Pediatrics, San Diego CA
- Grant Steadman - Private Practice, Richmond VA
- Stephen Haupt - Private Practice, Virginia Beach VA
- Stephen Fintel - GPR, Roanoke VA
- Elise Hartmann - AEGD, Fort Walton Beach FL
- Danielle Easterly - Orthodontics, Richmond VA
- Erin Sharkey - AEGD, St. Petersburg FL
- Courtney Schlenker - AEGD, St. Petersburg FL
- Sara Schutte - Orthodontics, Michigan
- Allison Hunter- GPR, North Carolina
- Kristy Greenfield - AEGD, Charleston SC



**Above: Chase Whitlow, Anna Pitz, and Wyatt Loflin (all D2016) spend an evening volunteering with CARITAS**

- Natalie Zuffi - AEGD, Charleston SC
- John White - Periodontics, Richmond VA
- Michele Graham - Private Practice, Virginia Beach VA
- Krista Harriman - GPR VA Hospital, DC
- Wes Parker - GPR, New Orleans LA
- Anna Moore - GPR, Charlottesville VA
- Christopher Shim - GPR, North Carolina
- Kandice Klepper - Periodontics, San Antonio TX
- Anna Borden - AEGD, Charleston SC
- Stephen Glass - Rock climbing somewhere
- Emily Schroeder - AEGD, Baton Rouge LA



**Top of Page: Psi O/DSD Ski Weekend in Showshoe, WV**  
**Above: Members take on Bar Gold in the Fan**

From the Class of 2015, thank you Psi Omega for all the good times during the past four years. Keep the Psi Omega tradition alive at VCU and see you all at Hinman! Unless they decide to make boards the same weekend again...



# DSD: Keeping the Tradition Fresh

Esther Lin, D2016



Another eventful semester flew by as DSD continued to foster camaraderie and success among its members. The semester started off with a ski trip in which members of DSD and Psi-O shared a fun-filled MLK weekend at Snowshoe Mountain resort. In supporting member achievements in academic and professional excellence, DSD President, Becca

Almond, along with fellow fourth-year members, held an informative Residency Seminar in February to help third-year members become more familiar with and prepare for the residency application process. In March, our social calendar continued with a touch of green as members enjoyed great food and company at our annual St. Patrick's Day Brunch.

The DSD executive team and several members travelled to Philadelphia in March for the Annual Regional Meeting hosted by the DSD chapter at the University of Pennsylvania. We met with dental students from UPenn, UNC, MUSC, and Tufts to discuss

strengths, weaknesses, and ideas for improvement for each chapter. The guest speaker, Dr. Egidio Farone from New York, shared with us the benefit of the peer review process for resolving patient complaints and the importance of being a part of organized dentistry. It was a great experience interacting with other DSD chapters while visiting Philly, and we look forward to implementing the new ideas we've gathered in the upcoming year.

Every month, we send out an email to spotlight DSD members who have distinguishing achievements or notable news. As DSD concludes another wonderful year, we would like to take this chance to spotlight our three amazing D4 executive officers. Our compassionate and keen President, Becca Almond, will be heading to Albuquerque, New Mexico for an AEGD residency after graduation. Our sensible and caring Vice President, Louis Formica, will begin his dental career with the Virginia Family Dentistry practice. Our warmhearted and attentive Treasurer, Jill Beitz, will start her GPR residency at Albert Einstein Medical Center in Philadelphia. The three of them have dedicated much of their time and led the fraternity through many positive changes this year.

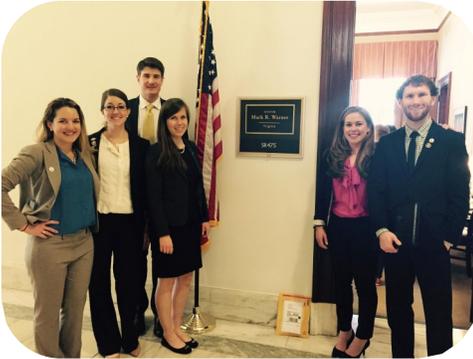
We are very excited about our final celebration with D4 members at the upcoming Senior Send-off and looking forward to a wonderful 2015-2016 school year!



**Top:** Ladies from the Exec team brunching on St. Patrick's Day  
**Left:** Ski bums in the lodge at Snowshoe  
**Right:** Members take on Philly at the DSD Annual Regional Meeting



# NATIONAL Dental Student LOBBY DAY



Quan Nguyen  
D2017

Hundreds of dental students from all across our nation, 17 of which from VCU, had the opportunity to meet with very personable legislators to advocate for two bills affecting the dental profession—the Action for Dental Health Act and the Student Loan Refinancing Act. J.P. Paluskiewicz, deputy chief of staff to Congressman Michael Burgess (R-TX), opened his session on ‘How Congress Works’ by stating, “We have a great propensity to accidentally ruin your future profession (ha-ha)”. This light-hearted statement truly captures the experience of National Dental Student Lobby Day. Advocacy is an important aspect of the dental field that can often be overlooked. It is paramount for us to maintain autonomy within our field.

## THE BILLS:

### Student Loan Refinancing Act: H.R. 649



This bill allows new dentists and current dental students to refinance their loans as many times as needed during the entire life of the loan. The passage of this bill will

enable new dentists to take advantage of lower interest rates to reduce the burden of student debt.

- David Voht, D2018

What I liked about Lobby Day was the comradery and open exchanging of ideas. I gleaned as much as I could from prominent leaders in organized dentistry and from dentists serving within our nation's government. It is a must-experience event for dental students interested in taking an active role in the future practice of dentistry.

- Brandon McCullough, D2018

### Action for Dental Health Act: H.R. 539



This bill would allow organizations, such as MOM Projects and Give Kids a Smile, to qualify for oral health grants administered by the Center for Disease Control (CDC). Passage of this bill would enable these and similar organization to increase access to care. This approach works through education, expansion of care, and partnering with community health programs. Students can look forward to increased care to the population, more dental opportunities, and increased employment opportunity.

- Mikhail Bondarew, D2017



### DC in Bloom



The pink, picturesque cherry blossoms lining the National Mall were gifted to the United States from Japan in 1912 to foster feelings of friendship and were actually the second batch of trees sent over after the original 2,000 were discovered to be diseased two years prior. First Lady Helen Taft and the Viscountess Chinda planted the first two cherry blossoms, known as “Sakura” in Japan, on the northern part of the Tidal Basin. Ever since the First Lady has been responsible for overseeing the annual Cherry Blossom Festival to honor this tradition of friendship between the United States and Japan.

- Kayla Roe, D2018

# What's Happening in the VCU Endodontics Department



We have just completed a national Root Canal Awareness Week. Not to be missed is a terrific video featuring Dr. Clara Spatafore and other Endodontists for the AAE.org website titled "Endodontists: Partners in Patient Care". It describes the close and respected team relationship between the General Dentist and the Endodontist from the perspective of educating the patient about why they were referred to an Endodontist for their more difficult treatments. This is just one of the video offerings in addition to a variety of written materials on the website. It helps dispel some of the false information that your patients are reading online. Please encourage your patients to log-on for this valuable information.

New this year for some students is a Senior Selective opportunity

that is running under the direction of Dr. Garry Myers. It provides them some experience in performing root canal therapy on molars. Thinking to the future, applications for new candidates for the program opens on May 1 on PASS, please fill out your applications if you are interested in Endodontics. Our residents are involved in research projects on cracked teeth and the EPT. Residents will be defending their thesis in front of our faculty and visiting faculty from other departments in the school as they finish up their final year in early summer. Shortly after, we will welcome a new group of residents. Please remember to sign up for MOM projects in Wise County in July and Grundy in October. Most of the faculty and residents will be headed to Seattle in May for the very informative Annual AAE Meeting.

## The Perfect Shrimp Scampi

By: Sheila Daniels



If I had to pick the meal I'm most often requested to make, it's shrimp scampi. This is the perfect thing to cook for just about any occasion: a quick dinner, a special night to celebrate, meeting someone you want to impress... This is also, arguably, the easiest recipe I've created; you can make the entire sauce while the pasta cooks. So get a pot of salted water on the stove and start cooking!



### What you Need:

- 1 package thawed, raw shrimp (deveined and unshelled)
- ½ lemon plus more to serve
- ¼ cup capers
- 6 cloves garlic, finely minced
- salt and pepper, red pepper flakes
- ¼ cup white wine (if you don't have any, this is delicious without as well)
- \*optional: ½ cup halved, heirloom tomatoes

### What you Do:

In a saucepan, melt together 1 Tbs olive oil and 1 Tbs butter. Start frying your garlic and then add the shrimp. You want them to just barely get pink, so arrange in one layer, season with salt/pepper/ and a few red pepper flakes. Turn over and let them finish cooking, add the capers, then deglaze with a swirl of white wine. Drain the pasta (I like spaghetti) and add it to the pan. Squeeze in the lemon and top with a grating of fresh Parm.

# New Dentists Conference

A mountaintop experience for your career and practice.

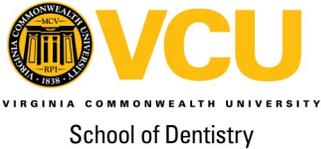
**Registration Fees**  
 \$149 VDA Members  
 \$49 Students  
 \$249 Non-Members

Additional event information coming soon! [#VDANewDentists](#)

August 7-9, 2015 | Wintergreen Resort



**Virginia Commonwealth University**  
*American Student Dental Association*



Please submit and stories, questions, comments, or concerns to Anna Pitz at [pitzae@vcu.edu](mailto:pitzae@vcu.edu)