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## Herman Ostrow School of Dentistry of USC

[3/4/2022]



### DEAN'S BI-WEEKLY MESSAGE

Dear USC Dentistry Community:

Last week, we held a mobile dental clinic — as part of our long-time partnership with the nonprofit Young and Healthy — at Blair High School in Pasadena. From what I hear, the event was incredibly successful. Our residents, students, faculty and staff worked tirelessly to connect these children (ages 4-18) — the majority of which had never seen a dentist other than for extractions — with oral healthcare. In total, 130 patients

were treated, and more than 2,000 dental procedures were completed, including comprehensive exams, regular and deep cleanings, restorations, sealants, root canals and extractions. I would like to acknowledge faculty members **Dr. Gardner Beale, Dr. Rebecca Kim, Dr. Daniel Romo** and **Dr. Nineli Zadourian** as well as endodontics residents **Dr. Mattie Donaldson** and **Dr. Berit Ek** and pediatric dentistry residents **Dr. Carla Alvarez, Dr. Tiffany Chan, Dr. Ami Gadhia, Dr. Jesslyn Hodge** and **Dr. Annie Tsuchiyama** for putting in the incredibly long hours during this 8-day mobile dental clinic. Additionally, I would like to thank staff members **Mr. German Hernandez, Ms. Epifania Juarez, Mr. Edwin Salgado** and **Mr. Anthony Santiago**, all of whom started each day at 6 a.m. and ended at 10 p.m. to make sure our patient care providers were fully supported. I would also like to thank **Dr. Sunny Fereshteh** and **Dr. Roseann Mulligan** for their continued leadership in these efforts. Finally, thank you to the dental students who either volunteered your time or finished your clinical rotations at the mobile dental clinic. I am confident the efforts of all of you did not go unappreciated by these children in desperate need of dental treatment.

Our **Office of Continuing Education** has released the latest episode of its podcast, *Louped In*. In ["The Strokes, Algorithms, Artificial Intelligence and Humint,"](#) **Dr. Alon Frydman** speaks with neurosurgeon and algorithm expert **Dr. Parsham Yashar** about the ways in which artificial intelligence and algorithms are being used in healthcare (for stroke patients, in this discussion) to improve patient outcomes. Alon begins with a passage from the book, *21 Lessons for the 21st Century*, in which the author talks about how artificial intelligence may one day replace large sections of the workforce. While it doesn't look like AI is likely to replace any of us dental professionals in the near future, there are certainly capabilities that allow for better treatment outcomes for our patients. It's a fascinating listen, and I highly suggest it. Congratulations Alon on another terrific episode!

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## GIVE KIDS A SMILE DAY 2022

Last week, Ostrow students, residents, faculty and staff descended upon Resurrection Catholic School for our annual Give Kids A Smile Day. They provided nearly 230 students with oral health kits as well as nutritional and oral health education. Nearly 100 students received dental screenings and will be treated by our Neighborhood Mobile Dental Van Prevention Program. I would like to thank the residents and students who took part in this event plus **Dr. Gardner Beale, Ms. Linda Brookman, Mr. Carlos Sanchez and Dr. Piedad Suarez** and staff members **Ms. Carmen Molina, Ms. Meyerer Perez and Ms. Ana Parra** for your help in making this event a success. I'm always proud to see Trojan Dental Family members rolling their sleeves up, out in the community, improving the quality of life for so many!

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As you might know, our doctoral program in craniofacial biology underwent a University Committee of Academic Review (UCAR) back in 2020, at which point the committee offered some suggestions to improve our already excellent program. Building upon the steady leadership of former director of the Ph.D. program in craniofacial biology **Dr. Michael Paine**, the new program director **Dr. Jianfu “Jeff” Chen** has done a remarkable job implementing these suggestions, which has led to remarkable program growth. In fact, this year, the number of applications jumped nearly 90 percent (!). This is not only a testament to the success of our craniofacial biology faculty who have earned more grants this year, allowing us to support more students, but also to the staff members supporting the admissions process. I’d like to acknowledge **Ms. Janice Bea** for her invaluable contributions as well as **Mr. Corey Berry** and **Ms. Larissa Leach**, all of whom work tirelessly behind the scenes to help make the program one of the nation’s best. Kudos to all of you.

A few weeks ago, three of Ostrow’s own were featured on the USC homepage: faculty members and alumni **Dr. Ruth Kawakami** and her brother **Dr. Kent Ochiai** and Ruth’s daughter, **Niki Kawakami**, who will be the fifth in her family to have pursued her dental studies at USC. Both of Niki’s grandfathers were *Nisei* students — the offspring of Japanese immigrants forced into detention camps during World War II, disrupting their educations at USC. In 2012, USC sought to right this historic wrong, bestowing an honorary degree upon Niki’s paternal grandfather, **Dr. Iwao G. Kawakami**. This year, her maternal grandfather, **Dr. Tadashi Ochiai** will receive the same honorary degree, during the Asian Pacific Alumni Association’s annual gala in early April. I look forward to commemorating the special occasion alongside these Ostrow community members. The [USC News story](#) is a fascinating read about a multigenerational Trojan family finally getting the justice they deserved all along.

With that, I wish you all a nice relaxing weekend.

As always, stay safe, stay healthy and Fight on!

*Avishai*

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Dean

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