

DELTA DENTAL FOUNDATION
ANNUAL REPORT 2023



DELTA DENTAL
FOUNDATION

A LETTER FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Last year, in addition to funding the people and programs that improve oral health equity, our team had the opportunity to reevaluate our grantmaking. We asked ourselves, “What does the data tell us? Where are we currently making an impact, and how can we do more?”

What we found is that even though we’re helping millions of people each year get and maintain healthier smiles, large disparities in care persist, especially for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.

For many non-disabled, neurotypical people, it’s easy to practice good oral hygiene by brushing twice a day, flossing and regularly visiting a dentist. However, those same hygiene habits can become mountains to overcome for some people with disabilities, whether because of sensory preferences, a lack of fine-motor control, extreme anxiety, an inability to open one’s mouth, finding a provider or any number of other challenges.

These barriers to accessing oral health care have led to much higher rates of dental disease for people with disabilities compared to the general population. This is both tragic and preventable.

Building on that knowledge, our new [strategic plan](#) envisions a world where everyone has access to high-quality dental care that meets their comfort level and abilities across the lifespan. Our grantmaking and program development will align under five strategic aims—access to care, advocacy, education, emerging initiatives and workforce development—with oral health equity for people with disabilities as our cornerstone.

By centering the needs and experiences of the most vulnerable, everyone benefits.

Yours in health,

Holli Seabury, EdD



DELTA DENTAL FOUNDATION STAFF

Holli Seabury, EdD Executive Director
Kimberly Garland Manager
Jen Anderson Senior Communications Officer
Megan Schreier Program Officer
Emily Waldschmidt Communications and Program Specialist



DELTA DENTAL FOUNDATION BOARD MEMBERS

Kelly J. Scheiderer, RHIA, MHA Chair
Faiyaz Syed, MD, MPH Vice Chair
John A. Breza, DDS Board Member
Stephen A. Eklund, DDS, MHSA, DrPH Board Member
Raymond Gist, DDS Board Member
Joseph C. Harris, DDS Board Member
Goran Jurkovic, CPA, CGMA Board Member
Elaine Loyack Board Member
Carole Watkins Board Member
Sunčica Travan, DDS, MS Board Member
Vinod Miriyala, BDS, MPH, CAGS, DDS Board Member



OUR COMMUNITIES

In 2023, we committed nearly **\$7.3 million** in grants, scholarships, sponsorships and educational resources, impacting more than **2 million lives in Michigan, Ohio, Indiana and beyond**. For a full list of the grants the DDF awarded in 2023, visit [Current Grant Recipients page](#).

A light blue map of the Great Lakes region, specifically highlighting Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. Numerous orange location pins are scattered across these states, indicating the locations of grant recipients. The pins are concentrated in Michigan and Ohio, with a few in Indiana.

**\$7.3 million
in contributions**

**Impacting
2 million lives**

ORAL HEALTH BY THE NUMBERS



400,000

Brochures, flyers and posters distributed



450

Miles of floss donated



275,000

Toothbrushes donated



64

Organizations received more than \$258,000 through the Community Mini-grants Program

AREAS OF FUNDING



57%

Access to Care



25%

Workforce Development



16%

Oral Health Education



2%

Oral Health Research

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

POSITIVE EXPOSURE

“We wanted to emphasize that people with disabilities matter,” said Holli Seabury, EdD, executive director of the DDF. “They’re friends, neighbors and loved ones, and they deserve a healthy smile just as much as the next person.”

Enter a collaboration with [Positive Exposure](#), founded by award-winning photographer Rick Guidotti.

With Guidotti behind the camera, the DDF invited Michiganders with disabilities to participate in a free, two-day photoshoot at Delta Dental of Michigan. The goal? Create images that promote inclusion in dental settings and help lay the groundwork for future advocacy and education efforts.

For the full story, visit “[Art increases understanding about oral health and disabilities.](#)”



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

DENTAL STUDENT LEARNING

Getting dental students out of the classroom and into the venues where they can learn more about public health dentistry and caring for people with disabilities can be prohibitively expensive. That's why in 2023, the DDF started offering grants to send dental student groups in Michigan, Ohio and Indiana to conferences that teach them how to meet everyone's comfort level and abilities across the lifespan. Fifteen dental students took advantage of this opportunity, with more set to apply in 2024.

For the full story, visit "[Student grants support oral health equity learning beyond the classroom.](#)"



PROGRAM HIGHLIGHT:

CENTERS FOR INCLUSIVE DENTISTRY

The DDF reinvested in its Centers for Inclusive Dentistry (CID) program, which was created to provide the training and resources necessary to deliver high-quality dental treatment to people with disabilities at participating safety-net dental clinics. More CIDs mean more options for people with disabilities—and an improved care experience.

By the end of 2023, fifty-six people received immersive training, bringing the total number of participating clinics in Michigan, Ohio and Indiana to 11.

For more on the immersive training experience, visit [“Training providers to deliver better dental care to people with disabilities.”](#)



COMMUNITY PARTNER HIGHLIGHT:

UNITED WE SMILE

MICHIGAN

Last year, the United Way of Northeast Michigan opened a brand-new dental clinic in Traverse City to address critical dental shortages—especially for people who are uninsured or underinsured—in the region. Funding for the clinic came from the Delta Dental Foundation, Delta Dental of Michigan and community donors.

United We Smile (UWS) is open Monday through Friday, offering dental care to children and pregnant people four days a week, with Fridays reserved for local veterans through the Victors for Veterans program. Since opening, UWS has seen 628 patients, delivering more than \$500,000 in care. Dental care is primarily provided by University of Michigan dental interns and Northwest Michigan College's dental assistant students. Local oral health professionals are serving as mentors and teachers.

Critically, UWS is also a Center for Inclusive Dentistry (CID), which means that their care team received immersive training so that they can provide the best possible care to people with disabilities.

For the full story, visit "[United We Smile providing 'life-changing,' trauma-informed dental care to kids, veterans.](#)"



COMMUNITY PARTNER HIGHLIGHT:

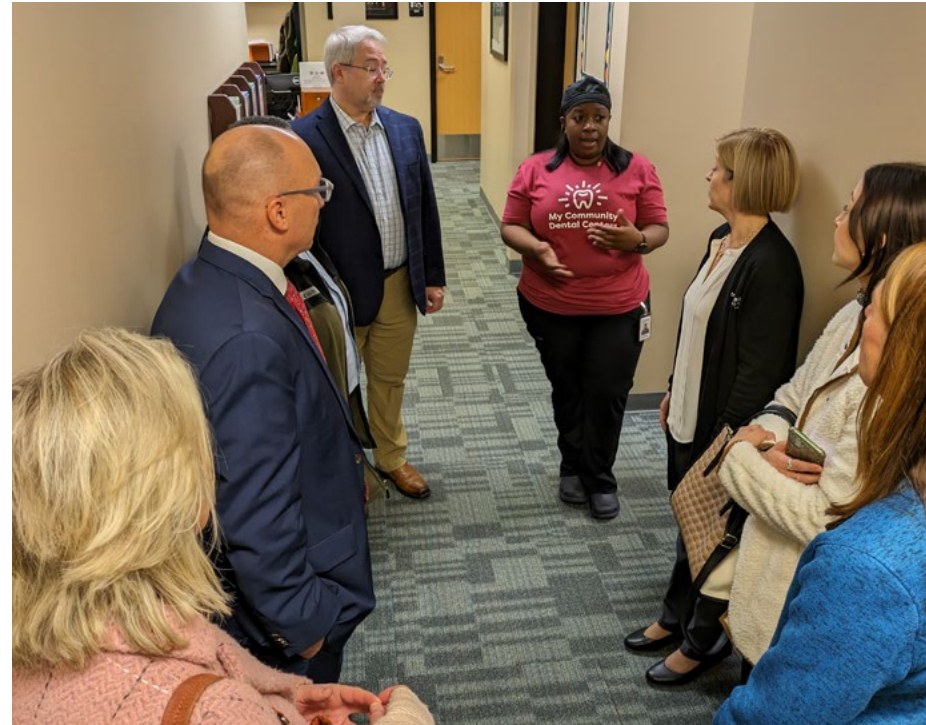
MY COMMUNITY DENTAL CENTERS

MICHIGAN

More than half a million veterans call Michigan home—and, nationally, fewer than 15 percent are eligible for dental benefits through the Department of Veteran Affairs (VA). As a result, many veterans face significant challenges accessing the care they need and often face far greater dental decay than non-veterans.

MCDC created the Veterans Day of Care to help challenge that disparity. In total, 74 veterans in Battle Creek, Detroit and Harrison received nearly \$20,000 worth of no-cost care, which was funded with grant support from the DDF and the Michigan Dental Association Foundation.

For the full story, visit “[Servicepeople receive free care, dental home during Veterans Day of Caring.](#)”



COMMUNITY PARTNER HIGHLIGHT:

CITY OF DETROIT

MICHIGAN

If someone can't make it to their appointment because they don't have or can't operate a vehicle, it doesn't matter if they have a local dentist—they simply cannot access the care they need. People who may be at higher risk for dental disease, such as [older adults](#) and [people with disabilities](#), may experience additional issues managing complex medical conditions, preventing pain and keeping teeth healthy enough to eat and speak without regular trips to the dentist.

New self-driving technologies may be part of the solution.

This year, the Detroit Office of Mobility Innovation will launch the [Detroit Automated Driving Systems \(ADS\) Shuttle program](#) to help older adults and people with disabilities get to critical locations, such as the dentist. A DDF grant of \$206,000 will directly sponsor one of these shuttles.

For the full story, visit "[Self-driving shuttles will soon bring Motor City residents to dentist, other critical appointments.](#)"



COMMUNITY PARTNER HIGHLIGHT:

CORKTOWN HEALTH

MICHIGAN

Last year, [Corktown Health](#) opened the first LGBTQ+ affirming nonprofit dental clinic in Michigan with support from the DDF. Located in the Corktown neighborhood of Detroit, Corktown Health focuses on providing care to the LGBTQ+ community. Adding this three-chair dental clinic to the health center will expand access to care, making Corktown Health a one-stop shop for primary care, behavioral health services, case management, dental, financial assistance and insurance navigation.

Corktown Health will also open a second campus in Hazel Park, Michigan, which will feature a dental clinic with six operatories, a lab and training opportunities for University of Detroit Mercy School of Dentistry dental interns. This clinic will be supported by a \$437,084 grant from the DDF.

For the full story, visit “[Corktown Health opens first LGBTQ+ affirming dental clinic in Michigan.](#)”



COMMUNITY PARTNER HIGHLIGHT:

MEDWORKS**OHIO**

It was still dark out when people started lining up in front of the Huntington Convention Center in Cleveland. Doors opened at 7 a.m., but people wanted to secure their spot to receive dental services during Medworks' two-day, 100-chair dental clinic.

The clinic, which was supported by a DDF grant and more than 500 volunteers, provided free dental care—from cleanings to temporary partial dentures—to more than 1,000 people from surrounding counties.

For the full story, visit "[More than 500 professionals volunteer to offer free dental care, flu and COVID-19 vaccines and more.](#)"



COMMUNITY PARTNER HIGHLIGHT:

CENTRAL NINE CAREER CENTER INDIANA

High school students at Central Nine Career Center in Greenwood, Indiana, are getting a head start on a dental career thanks to the dental career pathways program.

As part of the program, which received grant funding from the DDF, students spend one to two years completing clinical and lab training that prepares them for the National Entry Level Dental Assistant exam. In the process, they can also earn certifications in radiation health and safety and infection control. This means that students will have the certifications and licensing they need to be employed as a dental assistant right after graduation—or the tools they need to pursue post-secondary education or degrees in dentistry.

For the full story, visit “[Central Nine students learn oral health, inclusive care.](#)”



COMMUNITY PARTNER HIGHLIGHT:

WARREN ARTS & EDUCATION FOUNDATION INDIANA

As part of the Walker Career Center Dental Program, high school students explore careers in dentistry by learning about dental anatomy, terminology and hands-on procedures in a simulated dental office. By their senior year, work experience becomes a part of the program with a five-month internship. After that, students are equipped for an entry-level career in dental assisting.

“We used to work on each other, but that’s been a little more difficult,” said Christinia Harris, dental health careers teacher, in reference to safety concerns due to the COVID-19 pandemic. “Now students are able to work on [dental] mannequins instead of each other. They can suction and practice a lot of other skills more safely in the classroom.” The DDF grant funded the purchase of these dental mannequins.

For the full story, visit “[Supporting the oral health workforce.](#)”





CONNECT WITH US

We have so much to share with you. Follow the DDF on [Facebook](#) and [LinkedIn](#) or [subscribe to our newsletter](#) to learn more about how you can be an oral health champion, future grantee and more!

ABOUT THE DDF

The Delta Dental Foundation is a nonprofit, charitable organization established in 1980, which serves as the philanthropic arm of Delta Dental of Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and North Carolina. The DDF is dedicated to developing and enhancing partnerships and programs to improve oral and overall health and health equity. For more information, visit www.deltadental.foundation.

