

The AAWD Chronicle Quarterly



WHM 2026
#GivetoGain

Table of Contents

02 President's
Message

09 The Women
Dentistry Didn't Put
in Our Textbooks

03 2026 #GivetoGain:
AAWD sister
foundations

11 Chapter
Spotlights

06 Leading with
Intention

13 Give Smart, Gain
Strong

08 AAWD at ADEA
GoDental

14 AAWD Partners and
Upcoming Events

From the President

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

As we celebrate Women's History Month, we honor the extraordinary contributions of women who have shaped the past, are transforming the present, and are boldly defining the future of our profession. In dentistry and across healthcare, women continue to break barriers, lead with purpose, and uplift one another in meaningful and lasting ways.

At the American Association of Women Dentists (AAWD), we believe deeply in the power of community, mentorship, and shared success. This year, I invite you to embrace a guiding principle that has never been more important: #GiveToGain. When we invest in one another through mentorship, collaboration, advocacy, and support, we all rise together. Giving is not a loss; it is a multiplier of opportunity, growth, and impact.

Collaboration is at the heart of progress. No single individual or organization can advance our profession alone. By working together across specialties, institutions, and organizations, we amplify our voices, expand our reach, and create stronger pathways for the next generation of women dentists. Whether through shared educational initiatives, leadership development, research, or community outreach, our collective efforts can drive meaningful change.

I extend a heartfelt invitation to all women dentists, as well as to organizations that share our vision, to join us. Let us build bridges, foster partnerships, and create a unified network dedicated to empowering women in dentistry.



Together, we can champion excellence in clinical care, innovation and leadership.

As we reflect on the achievements of those who came before us, let us also commit to being active architects of the future. Each of us has the ability to lead, to mentor, and to inspire. By embracing a spirit of generosity and collaboration, we not only strengthen our profession, we leave a legacy for those who will follow.

Thank you for your dedication, your leadership, and your commitment to lifting others as you rise.

With gratitude and purpose,

Dr. Roya Zandparsa

AAWD President

When Women Give, We All Gain

This Women’s History Month, AAWD reflects on the power of giving — not as a one-way act, but as a catalyst for collective growth. Through mentorship, education, service, and advocacy, women dentists continue to invest in one another, strengthening both individual careers and the profession as a whole.

The [#GiveToGain](#) campaign reminds us that when we create opportunities for others, we build a stronger, more inclusive future for all women dentists and their communities.



Investing in the Future of Women Dentists



Rooted in AAWD’s mission, the Gillette Hayden Memorial Foundation (GHMF) plays a critical role in ensuring that women have access to the resources, education, and opportunities needed to thrive.

For decades, GHMF has supported initiatives that strengthen the profession by investing in education, research, and scholarship. These efforts are grounded in a simple but powerful belief: when women are supported early and consistently throughout their careers, they are better positioned to lead, innovate, and give back to the profession in meaningful ways.

Through scholarships, conference registration sponsorships, and leadership-focused educational programming, GHMF helps reduce barriers and expand access to opportunity for dental students, early-career professionals, and researchers. These experiences provide not only financial support, but also critical exposure to mentorship, professional networks, and career pathways within dentistry.

GHMF’s impact also extends beyond individual recipients. Through grant support to the Smiles for Success Foundation, GHMF helps expand access to care and strengthen community-based programs.



[Scholarship Info](#)



[Learn More & Donate](#)

GHMF demonstrates how investment in women’s growth creates ripple effects across the profession.

In the spirit of [#GiveToGain](#), these efforts reflect a shared commitment to lifting others as we grow. When we invest in women, we are not only supporting individual success — we are shaping a stronger, more inclusive future for dentistry.

From education to employment, AAWD’s sister foundations support women at every stage of their journey.

#GivetoGain — One Smile at a Time

By Lindsay Abeln, Executive Director, Smiles for Success Foundation and AAWD



As we reflect on the #GiveToGain campaign, we are reminded that gender equity is built through action, not theory. For many women, equity begins with something fundamental: the ability to show up with confidence, be seen without judgment, and be given a fair chance to succeed.

At the Smiles for Success Foundation, what we give is more than dental care. We give dignity, confidence, and the opportunity for women to move forward without barriers that too often stand between them and economic independence.

Through a simple, accessible process, women participating in workforce reentry and job readiness programs are matched with AAWD volunteer dentists who provide individualized care. The impact extends far beyond oral health: SFS restores not only smiles, self-confidence, and opportunity.

“If I don’t get a job now, it will be because someone was better qualified—not because of my smile.” — Crystal, SFS Patient

For many women, the challenge is not a lack of skill or ambition, but barriers tied to perception. By addressing oral health needs, Smiles for Success helps women show up fully and be evaluated for their abilities, not their circumstances.

This work is made possible by AAWD volunteer dentists who give their time and expertise to create meaningful change. In return, they gain renewed purpose, deeper connection, and the opportunity to make a tangible impact in their communities.

The exchange is powerful and reciprocal. When women receive care, they gain confidence, opportunity, and independence. When professionals give their time, they gain purpose and connection. When communities invest in women, we all gain a stronger, more equitable future.

At SFS, we give care, compassion, and confidence. In return, we witness women stepping into opportunity on their own terms, and we see volunteers rediscovering purpose through service.

 [Read the Full IWD Article](#)

 [Donate to Smiles](#)

 [Get Involved](#)

 [Volunteer Dentist Application](#)

Member Spotlight

Dr. Lorena C. Alex Named AADS Fellow



Dr. Lorena C. Alex was honored with appointment as a Fellow of the American Academy of Dental Science on November 12, 2025, during the Spice Night event at the Sheraton Boston Needham Hotel.

The evening celebrated scholarship, leadership, and service in dentistry, bringing together a distinguished group of clinicians, educators, and researchers. Dr. Alex described the experience as inspiring and humbling, with the event fostering meaningful connection and reflection on advancing excellence in dental science.

This distinction recognizes Dr. Alex's contributions to dental education, clinical practice, and research, as well as her ongoing dedication to mentorship and professional service.

Dr. Alex expressed gratitude to her mentors and colleagues—including Drs. Roya Zandparsa, Alvaro Gracia, Aidee Herman, and Ekaterini Antonellou—whose support has shaped her professional journey.





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- Membrane Repair
- Flap Design and suturing
- Multiple implant placement



Julia Jackson
FRCR, FRCR, FRCR, FRCR



Mohamed Attia
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Meet AAWD's Newest Board Members

Dr. Chineze Enwonwu —
Mentorship Program Coordinator



Dr. Chineze Enwonwu champions excellence in care, mentorship, and access, ensuring every patient receives treatment rooted in respect and compassion. She also serves on the SFS Board.

Dr. Guzin Uzel —
Chapter Liaison



Dr. Guzin Uzel is currently an Asst. Professor and Asst. Director of Advanced & Graduate Education at Tufts. Beyond her academic and research accomplishments, Dr. Uzel is deeply committed to patient care.

Leading with Intention

A Conversation Worth Having

By Dr. Terri Dolan, Moderator



Women's History Month invites us to look back with gratitude, look around with honesty, and look forward with purpose. This year, the American College of Dentists and AAWD did exactly that—together—through the joint webinar, Lessons in Leadership: Insights from Women Leaders in Dentistry.

I had the privilege of moderating this conversation, and I use that word deliberately. Sitting in dialogue with women who have not only observed leadership, but lived it, grown from it, and now give it back with remarkable generosity is no small thing.

Our panelists brought a powerful range of experience and perspective. Dr. Tamara Berg, Vice President of the American Dental Association and past President of both the Oklahoma Dental Association and AAWD, has built her career on leadership and service, including co-founding Smiles for Success. Dr. Krista Jones, honored as ODA Dentist of the Year and recipient of the James A. Saddoris Lifetime of Leadership Award, embodies the belief that legacy is built over a lifetime of giving back — through time, talent, and treasure. Dr. Isabel Rambob, Immediate Past President of AAWD and Assistant Dean for Student Affairs at the University of Oklahoma College of Dentistry, brings a global perspective shaped by her journey from Brazil through NYU, Howard, and into academic leadership — along with a commitment to equity and ethical mentorship.

The questions explored — around readiness, risk, and responsibility; the difference between mentorship and sponsorship; and what we owe the profession and the next generation — are not abstract. They reflect the real decisions women in dentistry navigate every day.

Today, women represent the majority of dental students in the United States, yet remain underrepresented in senior leadership roles. That gap does not close on its own. It closes through conversations like this one — honest, specific, and shared.

If you missed the live session, the webinar recording will be available on the [ACD YouTube channel](#).

Continue the Conversation

AAWD members have access to a growing library of educational webinars through the [Member Portal](#), including recent sessions from March:

- **[Post-Match Panel](#)** – Insights and guidance for dental students navigating next steps after Match
- **[Paths & Passions: Specialist Panel](#)** – Perspectives from specialists on career pathways and professional growth

Members can log in to the [AAWD Member Portal](#) to access webinar recordings and resources at any time.



Shining a Light on Confidence: Medit's Glow Together Campaign

AAWD is proud to recognize Medit as a 2025–2026 Mentor Partner and to spotlight their [Glow Together Campaign](#) — an initiative rooted in the belief that light becomes more powerful when it is shared.

Launched in alignment with International Women's Day, the campaign focuses on how care, connection, and intention can create meaningful impact beyond the clinic — extending from individual patients to communities around the world.

At the center of the campaign is a simple but powerful model: through Medit's partnership with Global Dental Relief, each qualifying scanner purchase helps support dental care for 10 children in underserved communities. Collectively, the campaign aims to support care for thousands of children globally — demonstrating how everyday clinical decisions can contribute to lasting change.



This connection between technology and purpose is what makes the [Glow Together Campaign](#) especially compelling. Digital dentistry enhances precision and efficiency within the clinic, but initiatives like this extend that value outward — transforming clinical excellence into broader social good. It is a reminder that innovation is not only about advancing care, but also about expanding access and opportunity.

Participants also gain access to a mentor-led insight series featuring perspectives on leadership, growth, and professional development, reinforcing Medit's commitment to supporting clinicians beyond technology.

This focus on shared impact aligns closely with AAWD's mission and the spirit of the #GiveToGain campaign. When dental professionals invest in their patients, their communities, and each other, the results are reciprocal — building confidence, expanding opportunity, and strengthening the profession as a whole.

As a Mentor Partner, Medit's support helps advance AAWD's efforts to connect, support, and elevate women in dentistry — demonstrating how innovation and purpose can come together to create meaningful, lasting impact.

When we glow together, we grow together.

Supporting Growth Through Mentorship

AAWD's Bridge to Brilliance Mentorship Program reflects this same commitment to shared growth. By connecting experienced professionals with students and early-career dentists, the program fosters guidance, confidence, and meaningful professional development.

The next cohort will launch this fall, and AAWD welcomes both mentors and mentees to submit interest forms and get involved.

[!\[\]\(e9474ce1d70442456f8fe9c393ea149c_img.jpg\) Mentor Interest Form](#)

[!\[\]\(e3f255517d37bb309a3a931ec4849e6a_img.jpg\) Mentee Interest Form](#)

Inspiring Future Women Dentists: AAWD at ADEA GoDental Fair



AAWD was proud to participate in the recent ADEA GoDental Fair in Montreal, connecting with aspiring dentists from across North America and introducing opportunities to get involved in a supportive, empowering professional community.

At the AAWD booth, board members engaged directly with pre-dental students — answering questions about the path to dental school, sharing personal experiences, and introducing the many ways AAWD supports women at every stage of their careers.

We extend our sincere thanks to the American Dental Education Association (ADEA) for hosting such a dynamic and impactful event, and for the opportunity to be part of a space dedicated to mentorship, education, and future growth in the profession.

AAWD was represented by several board members whose presence helped create meaningful connections throughout the event — reflecting AAWD’s ongoing commitment to outreach, mentorship, and building a strong pipeline of future women leaders in dentistry.

Among those connections were members of AAWD’s growing pre-dental community — students who are already beginning to engage, contribute, and shape what comes next.

Among those future leaders is Amina El-Tobgui, a pre-dental student at the University of Massachusetts.



Amina has taken the next step in her involvement by joining AAWD’s Pre-Dental Subcommittee, where she is contributing to the development of new benefits and resources designed specifically for pre-dental members.

Her engagement reflects what AAWD strives to create — early opportunities for connection, leadership, and impact within a supportive community of women in dentistry.

AAWD members and future members are invited to get involved by joining one of AAWD’s committees.

 [Submit a Committee Interest Form](#)

Start Your Journey with AAWD

AAWD’s **Pre-Dental membership** offers early access to mentorship, resources, and a national network of women in dentistry. Members can explore career pathways, connect with dental students and professionals, and begin building relationships that support long-term success.

Coming Soon: AAWD Pre-Dental Chapters — creating new opportunities for connection, leadership, and community at the local level.

The Women Dentistry Didn't Put in Our Textbooks

By Monica Anderson, DDS, DBA, FICD

1929



When dentists learn their professional history, we often hear the same familiar names — G.V. Black, the founders of the first dental schools, and the early architects of organized dentistry. Yet scattered throughout that same history are remarkable women whose stories rarely appear in lectures or textbooks.

It raises three questions most dentists never ask about our profession's past:

- *Who taught the first women dentists?*
- *Which women invented tools and materials we still use today?*
- *Who carried dentistry into leadership, innovation, and unexpected arenas?*

Many of us know the women who broke the most visible barriers — Lucy Hobbs Taylor, Geraldine Morrow, and Hazel J. Harper. But beyond these well-known figures are equally extraordinary stories that still make dentists say, "I didn't know that."

Before dental schools admitted women, dentistry was learned through apprenticeship. Emeline Roberts Jones secretly practiced on extracted teeth in the 1850s while assisting her dentist husband, who believed women lacked the dexterity for dentistry. After proving her skill, she joined the practice and went on to treat patients successfully for decades.

Innovation also bears the fingerprints of women many clinicians have never heard of. Sumita Mitra developed nanocomposite dental materials at 3M — technology introduced in the early 2000s that transformed modern tooth-colored restorations used in millions of fillings worldwide.

Other pioneers shaped entire specialties. Minnie Evangeline Jordon opened one of the first dental practices devoted exclusively to children and authored the landmark 1925 textbook *Operative Dentistry for Children*, helping lay the foundation for pediatric dentistry.



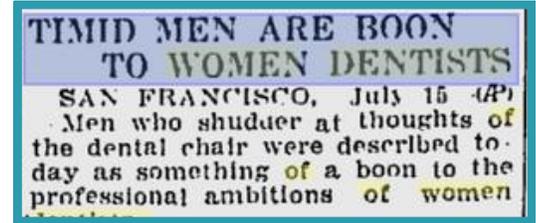
Dentistry's reach has even extended to royal courts. Rosalie Fougelberg overcame legal barriers to practice and eventually served as dentist to Queen Louise of Sweden.

The influence of women in dentistry now extends far beyond the operatory. Marjorie Jeffcoat, a renowned periodontist and former dean of the University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine, later served as CEO of CareCredit — one of the most widely used healthcare financing organizations in the US.

Women Who Shaped the Profession

continued

1936



As I reflect on my own career — one that began more than three decades ago in classrooms where few faces looked like mine — I am reminded that every opportunity women enjoy today was built on the persistence, courage, and quiet determination of those who came before us.

Women’s History Month is both a celebration of legacy and a call to continue expanding what is possible. The next generation of dental history is not something we inherit — it is something we actively create.

And that work is happening right now — through AAWD members like you. In practices, classrooms, boardrooms, and communities across the country, women are leading, innovating, mentoring, and redefining what leadership in dentistry looks like.

The women we read about in history books were once where we are today — building, contributing, and pushing forward without knowing how their stories would be told.

We are not a footnote in this story — we are the authors of what comes next.



Monica F. Anderson, DDS, DBA, FICD (Dr. mOe) is a bestselling author, award-winning podcast host, speaker coach, and dynamic motivational speaker.

With a background in healthcare and entrepreneurship, Dr. mOe is also a cancer survivor and community advocate who uses her experiences to inspire others through powerful, engaging storytelling.

AAWD at IADR

AAWD President Dr. Roya Zandparsa represented women dentists on a global stage at the 2026 IADR General Session. Dr. Z presented *Enhancing Dental Care with AI Integration: Insights from Dental Practices* and chaired the scientific session on *Clinical Application of Digital Dentistry*, highlighting the critical role of innovation, research, and leadership.



“When women unite with purpose, there is no limit to what we can achieve. By choosing collaboration over competition and lifting one another with intention, we create a legacy of leadership, innovation, and impact that extends far beyond ourselves.” ~Dr. Z

Building Community Across Campuses: AAWD Tri-School Event at Tufts



AAWD was proud to support a recent Tri-School event at Tufts University, bringing together students and alumni from Tufts, Boston University, and Harvard in conjunction with Yankee Dental.

The event created a valuable opportunity to connect, share experiences, and strengthen relationships across schools—highlighting the power of community and mentorship within AAWD.

We extend our thanks to the participating schools, alumni, and sponsors who helped make the event a success.



Tufts Chapter



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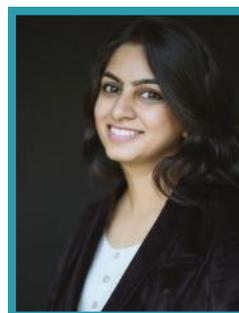
New Chapter at CNU

AAWD is excited to announce the formation of a new student chapter at California Northstate University (CNU), expanding AAWD's presence on the West Coast.

As interest continues to grow, AAWD is working to support additional chapters, create resources and opportunities for existing chapters, and strengthen connections in new regions — building a broader network of women in dentistry.

 [Learn more about starting a chapter.](#)

Member Spotlight: Dhara Shah



Dr. Dhara Shah, DDS, BDS, FICD, FPFA, is Regional Dental Director at Jefferson Dental & Orthodontics in Austin, Texas and a Fellow of both the International College of Dentists and the Pierre Fauchard Academy.

Her work spans clinical practice, leadership, and mentorship, with a focus on advancing patient care and supporting the next generation of dental professionals.

AAWD Student Chapters in Action!



ULSD



Meharry



Creighton



UK



UNE



IUSD



UTSA



Midwestern - IL

Give Smart, Gain Strong: Financial Literacy for Women Dentists

By Dr. Shweta Annaldasula, DDS

Financial literacy is a clinical superpower for women dentists. It turns long hours, high debt, and physical work into flexibility, choices, and security, so your life is not controlled by the operatory chair.

Women dentists face high student loans, income tied to hands-on work, caregiving breaks, and a longer life expectancy, so your money plan has to be intentional, not accidental.

Start by deciding what you want money to do for your life—fewer days in clinic, earlier retirement, the freedom to pivot careers, or independence from a partner. Then take an honest look at whether your current habits align with those goals.

Think of your financial picture like a clinical diagnosis: understand your cash flow, net worth, and risks before making decisions. From there, focus on reducing debt, building reserves, investing consistently, and protecting your income with the right safeguards.

 [Read the full article in the AAWD Member Portal](#)

Why Women Dentists Can't Pour From an Empty Cup

By Lauren Chase, PhD, LCMHC, NCC, BC-TMH, PMH-C

Women in dentistry often hold multiple roles at once. You may be a clinician, business owner, team leader, mentor, partner, and caregiver at home. You support anxious patients, guide your staff, make complex clinical decisions, and manage the operational realities of running a practice.

High-achieving women are often used to being the ones who hold everything together. Over time, chronic stress without support can begin to affect professional fulfillment and personal well-being.

This is where the idea of #GivetoGain becomes powerful.

When women invest in their own well-being through support, boundaries, and intentional care, they gain the clarity and resilience needed to sustain meaningful careers. Taking care of your mental health does not take away from your patients or your practice. Instead, it strengthens your ability to show up with presence, patience, and leadership.

This Women's History Month, consider what it might look like to give some of that care back to yourself. If you are feeling overwhelmed or burned out, support can make a meaningful difference.

 [Read the full article](#)

Member Spotlight: Damaris Molina-Negrón



Dr. Damaris Molina-Negrón, DMD, FAAPD, is based at the Medical Sciences Campus SoDM in San Juan, Puerto Rico, where she supports academic and admissions initiatives.

Her career includes leadership roles such as Assistant Dean for Academic Affairs and involvement with ADEA and the AAPD student chapter, reflecting her commitment to education, mentorship, and student development.

Partner Spotlight

Dentist Advisors

AAWD is proud to recognize Dentist Advisors as a 2026 Mentor Partner, supporting members with practical financial guidance and resources tailored specifically to dentists.

Through this partnership, Dentist Advisors has contributed a collection of financial tools available to AAWD members in the Member Portal, including:

- [10 Questions to Ask Before Hiring a Financial Advisor](#)
- [2025 Dentist Financial Benchmark Report](#)
- [Year-End Tax Planning Checklist](#)

These resources are designed to help members make informed decisions, better understand their financial position, and plan confidently for the future.

Looking ahead, Dentist Advisors will continue to engage with the AAWD community through upcoming programming, including an educational webinar this August and a student-focused workshop this fall.

Together, these efforts reflect a shared commitment to empowering women in dentistry with the knowledge and tools needed to build sustainable, successful careers.

Sister Society Spotlight: Institute for Exceptional Care

AAWD is pleased to welcome the Institute for Exceptional Care (IEC) as a sister society, strengthening our shared commitment to improving access to care for underserved populations.

IEC is a national nonprofit working to improve healthcare for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities (IDD) through education and more coordinated, patient-centered care.

AAWD looks forward to collaborating with IEC on future initiatives, including an upcoming educational webinar.

[Want to learn more about our partners?
Visit the Partner & Sponsor Directory](#)

Upcoming Events

April

Oral Cancer Awareness
Volunteer Month
6: Annual Awards Open
16: [AAWD Webinar - AI Series: Shaping the Future](#)

May

Women's Health Month
Mental Health Awareness
7: [AAWD Webinar - Risk Assessments](#)

June

Dental Diversity Month
18: [AAWD Webinar - From Function to Esthetics](#)

Ongoing

Webinars, networking events, and leadership opportunities

We want to hear from you! What events would you like to see AAWD host? [Click here to share your feedback!](#)



Where Women Dentists Give, Grow, Gain, and Lead Together

AAWD is a thriving network of women dentists, students, and leaders committed to lifting one another through mentorship, education, and community. Through connection and shared purpose, we create opportunities that empower women at every stage of their careers. Together, we are shaping a more connected, inclusive, and impactful future for dentistry.

Not a member yet? [Join Now](#)

Questions? Email us: membership@aawd.org

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