

NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation Awards Dental Student Grants

NAPERVILLE, Ill. (May 8, 2013) – The Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation, the charitable arm of Delta Dental of Illinois, awarded two \$2,500 grants to graduating dental students at The University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC) College of Dentistry.

Education for oral health professionals is one of the key priorities of the Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation. Through its student grants program, the Foundation recognizes outstanding dental students who have demonstrated service and commitment to oral health in Illinois.

“The Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation is committed to improving the oral health of Illinoisans. Our student grants program allows us the opportunity to invest in oral health professionals committed to that same mission,” said Lora Vitek, director of philanthropy & community relations for the Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation.

The Foundation’s student grants program for graduating dental students in Illinois is a long-standing program both at UIC College of Dentistry and Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine.

To be eligible, grant recipients must pass their National Boards, be in the top 25 percent of their class academically, plan to practice in Illinois, demonstrate an interest and/or participate in community outreach initiatives, or have declared interest in the advanced pediatric dentistry specialty. The 2013 UIC College of Dentistry recipients are Alec Zurek and Claire Sheehan.

Alec Zurek plans to practice dentistry in Naperville with his father, who has been in practice for more than 20 years. He will first pursue a specialty in prosthodontics at UIC. While in dental school, Zurek spent time as a volunteer and student body leader at Goldie's Place in Chicago. Zurek said, "Without question, my involvement in this organization was one of the more rewarding aspects of my dental school experience and has influenced my decision to incorporate charitable dentistry in my future practice." He hopes to combine his specialty education and philanthropic interests to serve the Naperville community, like his father has many years.

Next year, **Claire Sheehan** will be a resident in the General Practice Residency at Advocate Illinois Masonic Medical Center. In addition to working in the general clinic, Claire will also work with the Special Patient Dental Care Program to provide dental care to patients with developmental disabilities and to

those in underserved areas through a mobile dental van. "I will have the chance to learn more about effectively providing care in challenging situations," says Sheehan.

"Access to oral health care is obviously an important step in improving oral health. The Foundation is proud to recognize these two deserving students. We look forward to seeing the impact they will make on oral health in Illinois," said Vitek.

For more information on Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation's student grants program and/or to support programs and efforts of the Foundation, please contact Lora Vitek at lvitek@deltadentalil.org or visit www.deltadentalil.com/ddilfoundation.

About Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation

The Delta Dental of Illinois Foundation (DDILF) was formed in March 2008 by Delta Dental of Illinois (DDIL), a not-for-profit dental service corporation with a mission to improve the oral health of the communities it serves. DDILF is the charitable arm of DDIL and works to support and improve the oral health of people in Illinois. In the past decade, combined efforts of DDIL and DDILF have provided more than \$2 million to programs and organizations in Illinois that improve the oral health of the residents of Illinois. DDIL provides dental benefit programs to Illinois employer groups and individuals and covers 2 million enrollees nationwide. DDIL and DDILF are based in Naperville, Illinois.