



## NEWS RELEASE

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### **Delta Dental of Illinois Awards Dental Student Grants to Southern Illinois University Dental Students**

**NAPERVILLE, Ill. (May 18, 2015)** –Delta Dental of Illinois announced the recipients of its 2015 student grants program. Each year, Delta Dental of Illinois awards two \$2,500 grants to graduating dental students at the Southern Illinois University (SIU) School of Dental Medicine. The 2015 student grant recipients are Sarah Tien and Ashley McNealy.

“Delta Dental of Illinois is committed to improving oral health and access to oral health care in the state,” said Bernie Glossy, Delta Dental of Illinois president and CEO. “We have a long-standing partnership with the dental schools in the state, and through our student grants program, we provide educational and financial support to dental students who share our commitment to improve oral health in Illinois. We are pleased to support these two deserving students.”

To be eligible for the grant, students 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.

Sarah Tien, a resident of Darien, Ill., plans to provide dental care to underserved populations and communities upon graduation. Throughout dental school, she volunteered her services in Illinois, as well as abroad. Last June, she joined her professor on a mission trip to Jamaica to provide routine care and emergency procedures to both children and adults. She also volunteered at the 2014 Mission of Mercy free dental clinic in Peoria, Ill. “Those volunteering experiences inspired me to improve myself as a clinician during the remaining time at school and solidified my decision to serve an underserved community or population after graduation,” said Tien.

Ashley McNealy, from Alton, Ill., plans to practice near Elgin, Ill., upon graduation. While in dental school, McNealy developed a passion for treating young children and educating parents about proper oral health care. As a dental student, she worked in a clinic in an area with a large Hispanic population

and was able to treat more patients using her Spanish language skills. She hopes to continue to treat and reach out to the Hispanic community after she graduates. "My commitment to dentistry comes from the fulfillment I feel when I treat a patient and know I have made a difference," said McNealy.

Delta Dental of Illinois is committed to improving access to oral health care in Illinois. Ensuring there are quality dentists to offer patient care services in the state is an important part of this commitment, and Delta Dental of Illinois has long supported graduating dental students at the University of Illinois at Chicago College of Dentistry and the Southern Illinois University School of Dental Medicine.

***About Delta Dental of Illinois***

*Delta Dental of Illinois (DDIL) is a not-for-profit dental service corporation that provides dental benefit programs to individuals and more than 5,000 employee groups throughout Illinois. DDIL covers 2 million individuals, employees and family members nationwide. DDIL is based in Naperville, Illinois and offers single-site administration and client services.*

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