



*Foundation*

## NEWS RELEASE

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### HDS Foundation Awards \$110,000 in Scholarships to 18 Hawaii Dental and Dental Hygiene Students

Honolulu, Hawaii — The HDS Foundation recently awarded \$110,000 in scholarships to eight dental students and 10 dental hygiene students. The HDS Foundation established the Hawaii Dental Service Community Scholarship Program in 2018.

“It’s exciting to help these young professionals follow their passion and to support their journey toward becoming dentists and dental hygienists so that our communities can have greater access to oral health care,” said **Dr. Diane Paloma**, HDS president and CEO. “These scholarships are an investment in our oral health. They will be our dental professionals to serve us and our children or grandchildren.”

Each dental student received a \$10,000 scholarship for tuition and other school-related costs. The eight students are:

- **Kylie Carganilla**, of Kalihi, a third-year dental student at Oregon Health & Science University School of Dentistry in Portland, Oregon. This is Carganilla’s third HDS dental scholarship;
- **Robert Mau**, of East Honolulu, a third-year dental student at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Dentistry;
- **Sophia Oak**, of the Ala Moana area, a fourth-year dental student at Temple University Kornberg School of Dentistry, near Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. This is Oak’s fourth HDS dental scholarship over the past four consecutive years;
- **Ciara Robinson**, of Hilo, a fourth-year dental student at Oregon Health & Science University School of Dentistry in Portland, Oregon;
- **Lauryn Shinno**, of Kailua, a first-year dental student at UCLA School of Dentistry in Los Angeles;
- **Juliana Tomita**, of Salt Lake, a second-year dental student at the University of Missouri-Kansas City School of Dentistry;
- **Tyson Tonokawa**, of Pauoa in Honolulu, a first-year dental student at Rutgers School of Dental Medicine in Newark, New Jersey; and
- **Grace Wee**, of Kaneohe, a first-year dental student at the University of the Pacific Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry in San Francisco.

“My first job after high school was as a dental assistant at a low-income, public health center on the Big Island,” said Ciara Robinson. “I have no family in dentistry or healthcare, but I had always known I would end up in a career where I could help others and somehow give back to my community.”

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“My first day, I almost passed out! I had no idea what I was getting myself into,” Robinson recalls. “Fast forward a year later, and I was completely hooked. I saw just how important these services were for those in need and shortly thereafter I began my journey towards a career in dentistry, with a special interest in rural public health.”

The 10 dental hygiene students attending the dental hygiene program at the University of Hawaii’s Nancy Atmospera-Walch School of Nursing each received a \$3,000 scholarship. The recipients are:

- **Koushin Arceo** of Wailuku, Maui;
- **Isaiah Castro** of Kapiolani;
- **Christine Joy Diza** of Paho, Hawaii Island;
- **Tamia Hirano** of Mililani;
- **Maegan Abygail Laoag** of Ewa Beach;
- **Michelle Leung** of Salt Lake;
- **Amber Cassandra Lopez** of Waipahu;
- **Jane Jezeilyn Pascual** of Waipahu;
- **Shareena Lei Ramos** of Waipahu; and
- **Cyndie Rayoan** of Waipahu.

Amber Lopez, one of the dental hygiene scholarship recipients, explained her reason for pursuing dental hygiene in her scholarship application:

“Growing up, I had an amazing dental hygienist who helped me to love going to the dentist. Years later, I still remember how she made me feel while sitting in the dental chair,” Lopez wrote. “Dental hygienists are the face of the dental office, and I too, hope to soon be that face of the dental office that helps patients to feel comfortable and welcomed at the dental office.”

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### About the Hawaii Dental Service Foundation

The Hawaii Dental Service Foundation was established in 1986 by Hawaii Dental Service to improve oral health in Hawaii. The Foundation focuses on oral health education, preventing oral disease, and increasing access to dental care for underserved populations. In 2018, the Foundation established the Hawaii Dental Service Community Scholarship Program to support Hawaii students pursuing careers in dentistry or dental hygiene and to increase access to oral health care. The Foundation also awards grants to local non-profit organizations for oral health programs and projects. The Foundation’s oral health initiatives include programs such as Seal Away Decay, Dentist by One and Kupuna Smiles. Visit the Hawaii Dental Service Foundation website at [www.HDSFoundation.gives](http://www.HDSFoundation.gives).