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## Student Community Outreach for Public Education: A Year in Review

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# **OKU Sutro Excellence Day Project Cover Sheet**

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# Student Community Outreach for Public Education: Two Years in Review

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## INTRODUCTION

Oral health care inequities have disproportionately impacted marginalized subgroups resulting in poor oral health outcomes. These disparities mirror the unequal opportunities to improve access to care as a result of socioeconomic and educational limitations, emphasizing the need for equitable change in these vulnerable groups.<sup>1</sup> Populations that are low-income, members of racial/ethnic minorities, live in rural populations, special needs, uninsured, or immigrants are historically burdened by poorer oral health outcomes.<sup>2</sup> In order to enact change, health promotion at the community level is necessary to reinforce good oral health practices and increase literacy.<sup>2</sup> Community programs allow populations to become active participants in their dental care by emphasizing the importance of oral hygiene, healthy eating habits, providing resources for low-cost dental clinics, and highlighting the systemic link to oral health.

The Student Community Outreach for Public Education (SCOPE) program at the University of Pacific School of Dentistry aims to improve health literacy and oral health outcomes in these populations through community outreach and public service events. Although SCOPE's participation in the surrounding communities changed drastically in response to COVID-19, the organization maintains opportunities for students to engage in community service and adapt to the limitations of reaching communities in need.

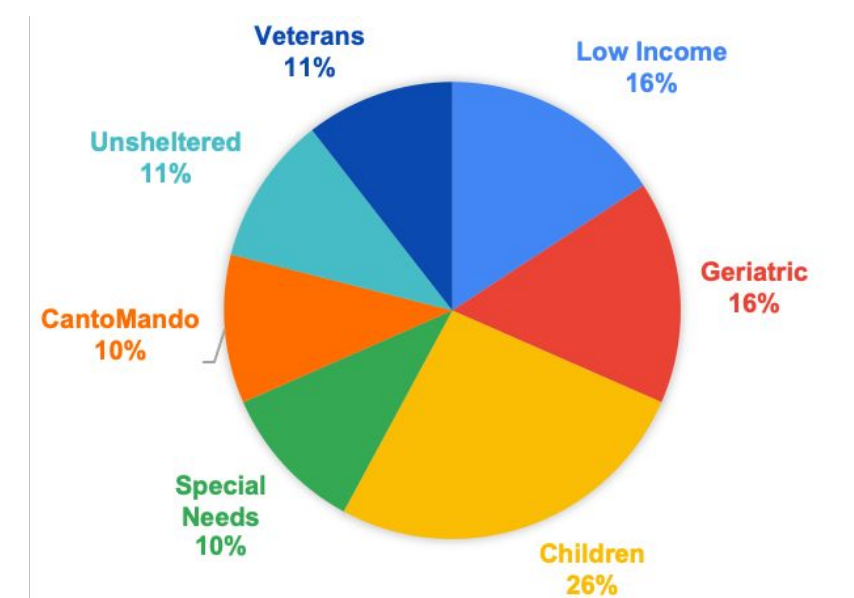
This project offers a two-year review of the accomplishments of SCOPE and its volunteers as students continue to return to in-person service events. The 2022 goals highlighted by former president Samantha Gallia are as follows: 1. Continue to provide oral health education/resources to underserved populations. 2. Relaunch in-person community health events and assess challenges with its re-implementation, and 3. Strategize solutions for SCOPE leaders to mitigate those challenges in coming years. We will discuss our return to in-person outreach since COVID-19 and how the support of our administration and enthusiastic student volunteers has made these changes possible.

## METHODS

As one of the first classes to address community oral health needs without drastic limitations from COVID-19, our earliest events were made possible with meticulous use of PPE, holding outdoor events, and distancing protocols. As restrictions relaxed, we were able to launch more in-person services. However, our greatest challenge surrounds successfully providing services while respecting community guidelines and protocol established as a result of COVID-19. We assessed our goal outcomes using volunteer hour spreadsheets and a master event spreadsheet guide, and a calendar used for students and staff to communicate in the event planning process.

## RESULTS

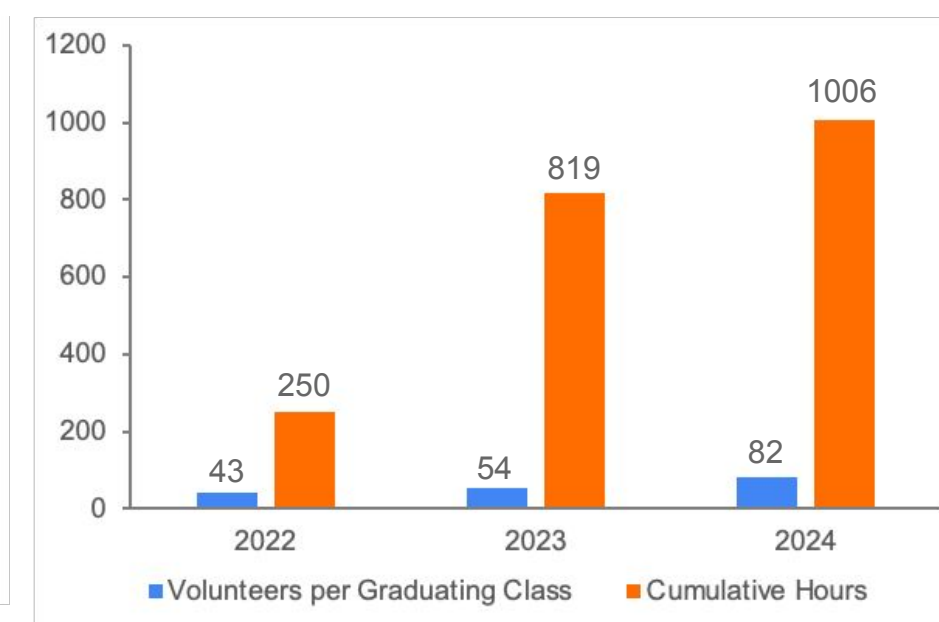
Throughout the course of our leadership, SCOPE hosted 16 events, coordinated 82 volunteers from the 2024 graduating classes, and logged 1006 hours of community service. The events hosted targeted underserved communities of the San Francisco bay area including US military veterans, low income communities, elderly populations, unhoused individuals, special needs and developmentally disabled populations, and a large population of children consisting primarily of hispanic and asian students. Throughout these events, we distributed over 1250 goodie bags consisting of toothbrushes, 2-minute hourglass timers, toothpaste, floss, and pamphlets depending on the population targeted. These events consisted primarily of oral health education but extended as far as cardiac and diabetes screening, limited dental exams/screening and same day treatment.



**Figure 1.** Demographic populations impacted by SCOPE events in our 2023-2024 term



San Francisco City Impact 2023



**Figure 2.** Volunteer totals and cumulative hours for the graduating classes of 2022 through 2024



Senior Smiles 2023

## CONCLUSION

The SCOPE Program at University of the Pacific Arthur Dugoni School of Dentistry is a student-run volunteer service organization with the mission to develop dental professionals committed to improving the health of all people. Over the course of the last two years as SCOPE officers, we focused on the goals set by the previous president focusing on relaunching SCOPE's impact on the community through the pandemic.

From 2022 to the present, SCOPE was initially recovering from COVID, the black swan event that was the pandemic left our greater community and our club lacking knowledge of how to volunteer safely, recruiting volunteers and organizations willing to collaborate. In the past two years, the previously set goals were implemented thanks to the support and continued effort from students and faculty leaders. Events such as Senior Smiles, Chinatown Health Fair Event, TDIC, Project Homeless Connect, Special Smiles, San Francisco City Impact, Community Health Fair and many more were in person SCOPE volunteer events helping underserved communities that were restarted after the two year COVID impact. Mentorship from our class onward has turned into a productive pattern for the club to continue on an upward trajectory. We found volunteering events and involvement increased as we saw a large number of students excited to participate in events throughout the year regardless of their rigorous schedule. In reflection, many students appreciating the opportunity that SCOPE to help in their local communities.

Looking forward, we would like to set the following goals:

1. Improve the organization of events and communication between staff, faculty, volunteers and student leaders through continued use of the event masterlist and collect data on individuals impacted.
2. Increased number of student involvement, year after year. in order to increase volunteer involvement and number of community members served.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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## REFERENCES

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