

AAID Foundation—Caring for Those Who Have Given and Sacrificed for Our Country

Abraham Lincoln wrote, “Honor to the soldier and sailor everywhere, who bravely bears his country’s cause. Honor, also, to the citizen who cares for his brother in the field and serves, as he best can, the same cause.” The AAID Foundation (AAIDF) is putting President Lincoln’s words into action by expanding its “Wish a Smile” program eligibility to include disabled veterans.

In 2014 the AAIDF partnered with the Dental Lifeline Network (formally known as the National Foundation of Dentistry for the Handicapped) to launch the “Wish A Smile” project. The AAIDF had traditionally limited financial support to the dental implant research efforts of dental students, graduate students, and university-based researchers. This cooperative effort would now permit the AAIDF to offer support for a humanitarian effort. The “Wish a Smile” program provides dental implants to financially disadvantaged individuals aged 17 or older who are congenitally missing 1 to 3 teeth. This charitable effort was well received by the community. Implant services for the program are donated by credentialed members of the AAID with help from dental laboratories and implant manufacturers.

Recently, the foundation under the direction of AAID Vice President Dr Bernee Dunson, in response to a suggestion by Dr Caplanis, expanded this program to provide implant services to our “wounded veterans.” Drs Carol Phillips, Rodney Mayberry (US Army veteran, 1968–1969), and AAID Past President Richard Mecurio direct the program. Disabled veterans who have been injured while serving our country and are financially disadvantaged are eligible for the program. Candidates for this program are disabled veterans missing 1 to 3 teeth or are in need of implant-retained denture(s). Associate Fellows and Fellows of the AAID will be providing the implant services for these patients. Dental laboratories and implant manufacturers have agreed to provide additional support.

For additional information on this program, visit: https://www.aaid.com/foundation/Wish_a_Smile.html

The AAIDF is also sponsoring the 2018 AAID’s Annual Meeting Keynote Speaker, CNN Medical Correspondent Sanjay Gupta, MD. Additionally, Dr Gupta will be available for a foundation fundraising, limited attendance “Gupta Experience” following the keynote presentation. All funds from the “Gupta Experience” will be used for future research and humanitarian foundation-sponsored efforts.

Two research grant programs are sponsored by the AAIDF. The *David Steflik Memorial Student Research Grants* are available to all dental students and those in postgraduate dental residency programs. Several grants, up to \$2,500 each, are awarded annually. A second research grant category is available for those doctors who have received their terminal degrees and are involved in an active each. The Foundation funded research grants totaling \$100,000.00 in 2017 and \$94,800.00 in 2016. The AAIDF endowment fund has no administrative expenses and uses 100% of its proceeds to support the sponsored grants and humanitarian efforts. In 2017, 406 AAID members (203 General members, 105 Associate Fellows, and 98 Fellows) contributed to the AAIDF. To join this group of members who have donated to the AAIDF endowment fund, visit: https://www.aaid.com/foundation/Endowmen_Fund.html.

The AAIDF is a mirror image of the AAID membership. AAID members are known for their camaraderie by way of friendship, mentoring, education and research efforts. All of these activities represent various methods in which the AAID membership shares among themselves and with the community at large.

Disabled veterans have given much to all of us; the AAIDF has chosen to reach out and help those disabled veterans who have fallen on financially hard times. AAID members can be proud of the Foundation’s efforts.

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