

# Dental Med Notebook



*Students listen to faculty presentations as part of the GENA Project*

## Faculty Member Participates in GENA Project to Enhance High School Education in Genetics

Dr. Manika Govil, assistant professor in the Department of Oral Biology, has worked in conjunction with Ms. Pamela Connolly, a biology teacher at North Catholic High School in Pittsburgh, to enhance the genetics curriculum as part of the Geneticist-Educator Network of Alliances (GENA) project. The goal of the project is to clear misconceptions about genetics while creating a sound base of knowledge with the hope that the project will encourage more students to pursue science and genetics after high school. Dr. Govil is one of five scientists to partner with a high school in this national effort supported by the American Society of Human Genetics.

The current state of curriculum requirements for science across the country is inadequate based on the growing need for an educated workforce in the sciences. The partnerships for the project were selected by principal investigators of GENA, based on the availability of scientists and local schools with an interest in participating.

In addition to helping Ms. Connolly develop a new genetics curriculum, Dr. Govil visited the high school for three days where she taught about genetics and

clefing. The students also took a field trip to The Center for Dental and Craniofacial Genetics where they heard a lecture on genetics by Dr. Mary Marazita, professor and associate dean for research, and director of the center. While at the center, they also did three hands-on activities in phenotyping including an ultrasound, lip prints, and a 3-D image to study minor physical variances, common minor physical differences, and laterality.

The students also visited Salk Hall for a lecture on clefting from a clinician's perspective by Dr. Dennis Ranalli, senior associate dean, professor in the Department of Pediatric Dentistry, and a North Catholic High School alumnus ('64).

Dr. Govil administered a pre-test and

post-test with the students and plans to test the students for a third time one year later to see how much they retained.

## Give Kids a Smile Days Celebrates Its Ninth Year

Give Kids a Smile (GKAS) Days, sponsored by the Department of Pediatric Dentistry in conjunction with the Student Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry (Pedo Club) and the American Student Dental Association, kicked off its ninth year with a total of 103 patients seen in the Pediatric Dentistry and Dental Hygiene Clinics over the course of two days in February and March. Ms. Janel Marcelino, third-year predoctoral student and president of the Pedo Club, worked with staff in the Department of Pediatric Dentistry including Ms. Diane Cervi, who has had a hand in organizing this event since its inception. The event brings together teams of faculty and students who together provided cleanings, fluoride treatments, radiographs, sealants, restorations, and extractions to uninsured children and adolescents. Dental hygiene students provided participants with a brief instruction about how teeth are used and an interactive discussion about what a dentist does. The participants also were guided through stations to learn about radiographs, nutrition, plaque, brushing, fluoride, and tooth loss.



*SDM Alumni Reception at the PDA Annual Session, from left: Dr. William Spruill, immediate past president of the PDA, Dr. Thomas W. Braun, and Dr. Dennis J. Charlton (DMD '81), PDA president*