



CLARK COLLEGE FOUNDATION

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Clark College Foundation Announces \$1.5 million Firstenburg Foundation Gift to Expand Dental Hygiene Program

Dental Hygiene to add clinic chairs, radiology suite, electronic medical records

RIDGEFIELD, Wash.—Clark College announced it has received the third-largest single gift in its history during commencement ceremonies Thursday night.

The Firstenburg Foundation has donated \$1.5 million earmarked for the college’s Dental Hygiene program that will add patient chairs to its training clinic, renovate existing spaces for a digital radiography suite and lab, and add paperless charting software.

Clark College President Robert K. Knight announced the gift and its benefit to the region during Clark’s 76th commencement ceremony. The college honored the largest graduating class in its history at the Sleep Country Amphitheater in Ridgefield, Wash., with more than 1,700 men and women earning degrees and certificates during the 2011-2012 academic year.



“Taught by outstanding faculty, the Dental Hygiene program is recognized as a leader in training. Our students and graduates work in dental offices across our region. Clark students and alumni also serve as volunteers—helping children and adults who otherwise wouldn’t have access to dental care. This generous donation will have a huge impact—not only for our college—but for our community,” said Knight.

Bill Firstenburg also addressed the class of 2012, acknowledging his family’s commitment to the community and encouraging graduates to give their time, talents and treasures.



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“My mother and father loved this community. They also believed strongly in the power of education. Clark College trains our workforce. Clark College educates our leaders. Clark College changes lives.



“Everyone who is graduating tonight has benefitted from the support that Clark receives from its alumni and donors. You may never know their names, but they support Clark College because they believe in you. In the years to come—and as you are able—we hope you will pay it forward. We hope that you will turn your belief into action by supporting tomorrow’s students,” said Firstenburg.

The Firstenburg gift allows Clark to increase the number of patient chairs in its teaching clinic by six, thereby providing more opportunities for student enrollment. Historically, the Dental Hygiene program has had a waiting list for its 24 slots each academic year. That number will now jump to 30 openings.

Lisa Gibert, president/CEO of Clark College Foundation said, “The Firstenburg Foundation is a champion for education, health care, youth, seniors, social justice, the arts and more. The gift we’re announcing tonight will expand Clark’s outreach into the greater community by giving more students the tools they need to care for underserved patients. The Firstenburgs are directly impacting the health and wellness of the residents of Southwest Washington and for that, we are truly grateful.”



With the addition of paperless charting technology and an advanced radiology suite, students will be workforce ready upon graduation. In addition, the expansion will allow for compliance with federal patient privacy and confidentiality requirements.

“Clark Dental Hygiene students will be prepared on day one of their jobs to use the most current technology and tools in the dental industry because of the generosity of the Firstenburg Foundation,” said Ara Serjoie, vice president of development, who led the fundraising efforts for the project.

Clark’s Dental Hygiene Clinic provides education and access to oral health care to residents who otherwise would not have regular care. The clinic fills 3,200 appointments for 2,000 patients annually. Clark’s students serve the community by participating in oral health programs in area schools and caring for patients at the Free Clinic of Southwest Washington, Clark County Skills Center, and Share, a Vancouver-based homeless service. Additionally, students and instructors team up with the Clark



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County Dental Society each year for Children's Dental Health Day to provide hundreds of children with free care.

This is the third largest gift Clark College Foundation has received in its 39-year history. Other large financial contributions include Roy and Virginia Andersen (\$28 million) and the estate of Hilma Speights (\$4 million).

Established in 1973, the Clark College Foundation is a nonprofit, tax-exempt public charity. It serves as the fundraising arm of Clark College to support student access to educational programs and services. It is nationally recognized for excellence in superior fundraising programs.

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