

WAYS TO SERVE YOUR COMMUNITY

| BY DEBBIE JONES, RN MN, MAADOM

“You have not lived today until you have done something for someone who can never repay you.” ~John Bunyan

As a member of the administrative team, you may feel that because you don't share the same skills as the clinical team, you might not be able to serve in your community. This couldn't be further from the truth; administrative team members have unique gifts and talents that absolutely can be shared with others. Those who reach out to serve others, strengthen their connection with their community, and help to make a difference in the lives of others can be personally rewarding.

If you would like to serve in your community and don't know where to start, begin by considering where you work and live. Is there a need that you have not noticed previously? Start local, and then consider expanding your reach to serve those across the globe. Here are a few ideas to get you started:

VOLUNTEER AT A LOCAL DENTAL CLINIC OR ORGANIZATION

Do you love interacting with people? You might consider using your interpersonal skills to help at a local dental clinic, school, or hospital. If you are passionate about the legislative process, get involved with the American Dental Association (ADA)¹ or your state/local county dental association. Request information regarding opportunities, requirements, and application process. For the more adventurous, consider a short-term medical-dental mission trip.

DONATE SERVICES AND PRODUCTS

Can you and your practice help the underserved in your local community or abroad by providing needed dental services and products? Ideas may include, but are not limited to, providing toothbrushes to local schools and organizations, offering dental services to the underserved in the local community, or providing dental products abroad through

overseas mission trips. Sometimes physically going on a trip is impossible, but there are other ways to help, by serving locally, donating dental products, or providing funds for those who can go instead.

Can your practice take on pro bono dental work for those in need in your community? Is there a certain population that is very important to you, your practice, or your dentist?

- **Veterans.** If your practice is located near a large community of military veterans, you might consider offering free dental care for veterans on or near Veterans Day in November.
- **Servant Leaders.** Pastors, chaplains, and missionaries often fall through the cracks regarding fringe benefits like dental coverage. Consider offering dental care to the leader(s) at your place of worship.

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- **Children.** Are there children in your community who need dental care, toothbrushes, and oral health care education that you could help coordinate? With your experience as a manager you might be able to assist a local clinic in implementing systems and processes to help the clinic run more efficiently. Office managers can share their administrative expertise in organizational skills and problem solving. I was able to use my managerial experience and nursing background to help lead mission trips where we provided medical outreach to local refugee camps and dental supplies to school-age children in Uganda.
- **Food and School Supplies Drive.** Before school starts or during the holiday season, host a food and supplies drive in your dental practice to provide food, school supplies, hygiene, and dental care products to those in need in your community.
- **Oral Cancer Screening.** Coordinate a free oral cancer screening day in your practice during the month of April, Oral Cancer Awareness Month.²

If you are not able to offer free services or reduced fees in your dental practice, assemble a list of resources of free dental care clinics,

the local dental society, community health centers, the United Way, and resources to assist special populations such as children, retired, veterans, and survivors of domestic abuse.

OFFER YOUR SKILLS TO TRAIN OTHERS

Consider offering opportunities for students to learn about the dental field. In our practice, we hired a high school student with no dental experience and invested in her, training her to be our sterilization tech. Consider implementing a student volunteer program in your practice to train students in the field of dentistry during summer or school vacation periods. Many dental assisting programs are looking for dental practices for clinical externships. As the manager, I help coordinate externships in our practice for students in our local assisting program. Consider collaborating with your Regional Occupational Program (ROP) to help train high school students to learn the foundations and entry-level skills to begin working in a dental office.

There are endless ways dental administrative team members can serve in their communities. As a busy office manager, with the myriad of tasks and responsibilities, volunteering might seem impossible. By pausing and looking at the community that is closest to your work or home, you



MEET THE MEMBER

Debbie Jones, RN MN, MAADOM, is the Practice Administrator for her husband Mike Jones' General Dental Practice in Newport Beach, CA. Debbie has been an AADOM member 2018 and in 2021 she earned her Fellowship (FAADOM) designation. In 2022 Debbie completed the requirements and successfully received her Mastership (MAADOM) designation. She is currently enrolled in the diplomate program and is on track to receive her DAADOM designation at the 2023 conference. Debbie loves learning and has attended every AADOM conference since she first joined the association in 2018.

might discover an area you have a particular passion for or a heart for helping. When you offer your time and skills or donate your resources, you help to make the community a better place and you reap the rewards, becoming a better person in the process. ■

¹ <https://www.ada.org/about/volunteer-and-get-involved-with-the-ada>
² <https://oralcancerfoundation.org/april-is-oral-cancer-awareness-month-2022/>