Nominations open until Feb. 15

Crest® + Oral-B® continues to recognize registered dental hygienists (RDHs) who go above and beyond the call of duty with the third year of the Pros in the Profession award program. This award acknowledges the pivotal role hygienists play in their patients’ lives, in addition to their unwavering personal commitment to promoting good oral health.

“We have seen extraordinary entries over the past several years, which is why we must continue to honor those hygienists whose passion shine through in their everyday work,” said John Scarchilli, Global Scientific Communications for F&G Oral Care. “These individuals dedicate countless hours to furthering the oral health cause, so we are pleased to be able to applaud them publicly.”

Two winners have been named thus far for the Pros in the Profession year three award, Michelle Vacha and Heather Steich.

Michelle Vacha, winner one

Vacha, RDH, BS, received her degrees from Northern Arizona University and has been practicing in Colorado Springs, Colo., for the past 24 years. Here is what she had to say.

Why did you nominate yourself for the Crest + Oral-B Pros in the Profession award?

I am passionate about our profession and want to show what dental hygienists are capable of. I am one person making a difference for an underserved population, but we hygienists are capable of providing so much more to our communities through our valuable work.

What do you plan on doing with the award?

I am so honored to be receiving this award. I am hoping the attention from it will bring awareness to the public and other hygienists who care for older adults. Through my work, I help seniors deal with specific health factors they face due to lack of dental support. We want to ensure all of the good work to maintain oral health throughout one’s life is also preserved once insurance is no longer available through retirement or fixed income.

What fuels your fire to be the best dental professional possible, both in the office and out?

A majority of the general public does not realize all that hygienists do, all that we encounter and practice on a daily basis. We have similar training as other medical professionals, yet still maintain a lower overall recognition profile. I, for one, take such pride in my degrees that I’ve placed RDH, BS after my name on my personal checks, and I appreciate it when others ask what they stand for. My goal is to one day see the hygiene profession become self-regulated, like the nursing profession.

What is the No. 1 product you recommend to your patients? Why? Oral-B power brushes! When power brushes came onto the market, the improvement in plaque and calculus control was immediate. Without asking, I could tell which patients were using an Oral-B power brush and which were not. The mechanics of Oral-B power brushes take the issue of manual dexterity out of the equation. Combine that with the Pro-Health line of products and the alcohol-free benefit of the rinse on a population whose mouths are already altered with the medications, it’s a win/win solution.

What are you most looking forward to now that you are a Crest + Oral-B Pros in the Profession winner?

I chose the profession of dental hygiene because I love making people smile. I strive for positive health outcomes for each patient. When they feel confident in their healthy mouth, they smile more, share more and get closer to others.

What is the No. 1 product you recommend to your patients? Why?

The No. 1 product I recommend to my patients is an Oral-B power toothbrush. There are a variety of options for them, depending on their preferences and pricing needs. They will get the value of a healthier smile, which is rewarding for both of us.

What are you most looking forward to now that you are a Crest + Oral-B Pros in the Profession winner?

Now that I am a Crest + Oral-B Pros in the Profession winner, I am looking forward to the professionals I will meet in the future. I am thrilled that Crest + Oral-B recognizes that dental hygienists are an integral part of the dental health care team, and I’m sure there will be new opportunities to share experiences with others.

Lastly, I am so excited to travel to Germany to Oral-B’s German Innovation Center to learn more about the science behind the products!

Nominate today

Nominations for the Pros in the Profession awards program are open until Feb. 15. Crest Oral-B will identify one last exceptional RDH in the coming month. The winner will receive:

• An all-expense paid trip to visit the Procter & Gamble German Innovation Center in Kronberg, Germany.
• A $1,000 monetary prize
• A recognition plaque
• Recognition in dental periodicals and announcements on the Crest Oral-B for Dental Professionals Facebook page and on www.dentalcare.com.

Nominees must be:

• RDHs with two years or more of clinical/ professional experience after graduation from dental hygiene school.
• RDHs who participate in community service.
• RDHs with work that goes above and beyond the call of duty.