

Thank you for considering me for The Dr. Mary K. Beyrer Graduate Student Scholarship. I am currently a practicing Dental Hygienist and am starting my second semester in the MS for Health Education with a Dental Hygiene Emphasis. I am carrying a full-time load of classes and am working part-time while maintaining a 4.0 GPA. I plan on starting my fellowship journey with the American Academy of Oral Systemic Health after I graduate with my MS in May 2024. I also plan to obtain a Ph.D. and Create a position in a hospital system as Oral Systemic Health Liaison (OSHL).

I am passionate about the oral-systemic link and love educating my patients. I have dedicated my career to educating my patients and want to expand that education outside of the dental clinic. There are very few dental hygienists in hospitals. Most that do work inside hospitals work as clinical dental hygienists. I want to break that mold and work alongside doctors and nurses, assisting in diagnosing systemic ailments that manifest in the oral environment.

I was an active member of the Fort Worth chapter of the American Dental Hygienist Association (ADHA) from 2014-2021. While a member I served as a Trustee for one year and the Vice President for two years. I attended almost every ADHA/TDHA Annual meeting as a voting delegate while a member and attended most of the monthly meetings held at the local level. I also organized the calendar of events and meetings for the two years as the VP. I am currently an active member of the International Association of Oral Medicine and Toxicology and have attended their spring conference in 2021 in Washington and will be attending their 2022 conference that will be here in Allen, TX in March.

My passion for advocacy and mission work began in dental hygiene school in 2013 when I was blessed with the opportunity to serve in Romania between my first and second years. I have since been blessed to complete five dental mission projects overseas, two of which were with TWU, and will be attending my sixth overall and third with TUW in January 2023. I have volunteered at Mission Arlington, a free dental clinic in Arlington, TX, and am a yearly donor to Public Health Arlington. God has blessed me with the ability to serve with my hands and knowledge and I will continue to serve and advocate for those in need for the rest of my life.

I am applying for this scholarship because working part-time, unfortunately, does not pay all the bills, especially with inflation increasing every bill, including the escrow to my mortgage on my home. I do not live an extravagant lifestyle, pride myself on paying every bill in full every month and maintaining a good credit score. This scholarship will allow me to continue working part-time so I can maintain a high GPA, continue to attend professional meetings, afford worthwhile continuing education classes, and volunteer in underserved communities. Thank you again for your consideration.

Heidi Weber, BSDH, RDH