

# THE FACES OF HDA



**Estela Gomez Licea, D4**  
**University of Washington**  
**School of Dentistry**

**Change Agent committed to**  
**Pediatric Oral Health &**  
**underserved communities**



Estela Gomez Licea, is a D4 Dental Student, who aspires to complete Training as a Pediatric Dentist. Estela is the eldest of five (5) siblings. Her parents are from Michoacán Mexico. They are originally from Jalisco, Mexico, and they later moved to Michoacán. Estela was born in La Placita, Michoacán, but was raised in a village called La Barranca del Potrero until the age of nine (9). Her parents then migrated to the United States and located themselves in Grandview, Washington during most of her youth. She later moved to Seattle once accepted to dental school.

Her inspiration to be a Dentist, has continuously grown due to living the reality of oral health care disparities in rural communities. Watching those close to her suffer oral disease, particularly children, has ignited her passion to return to her community hopefully as a Pediatric Dentist. She wants to improve access to care, expand interdisciplinary collaboration and hopefully serve as an example of what members of her community can aspire to. A former anatomy and physiology professor at her Community College, asked her what she believes is unequivocally the most important question of her life; “why don’t you ever talk about yourself as a doctor?” This sparked her to question herself - why not, me? Although she was accepted into a dental hygiene program, she decided to continue the path to become a Dentist and was accepted at the School of Dentistry (SOD) at University of Washington. Currently Estela is waiting for her match results. She aspires to continue post graduate training to become a Pediatric Dentist, and hopefully obtain a Master Degree in Public Health.

She’s was recognized this year with the University of Washington, School of Dentistry Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Service Award, and is a 2019 recipient of a HDA Foundation Procter & Gamble Scholarship.

Estela wishes to be an agent of change. She wishes to contribute to the well being of underserved communities, by offering her skills and expertise to meet families where they live and provide oral health care for their children. Estela mentions that her lived experiences as a first-generation immigrant and a mother, have shaped her commitment to families in underserved areas.

She wants to be an inspiration for her son. Being the first Hispanic and first female pediatric dentist in the community will hopefully be a testament to the potential we all have, and inspire the next generation of health care providers.

Estela’s message to the world is and we quote: *“We are all capable of creating change, no matter how we do it, we must do something.”*