

Leaders for Change



Ashley Dunn
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I learned the true value of medicine at an early age. I was born with a craniofacial deformity called bilateral cleft lip and palate, and I spent my adolescent years in awe of the surgeons who had the ability to fix me. In the process, they gave me hope for a normal, healthy life.

I saw no better way to repay the gift my doctors had given me than by using my experience to serve others, and becoming a doctor myself. This was not easy. No one in my family had ever gone to college. I had to rely on financial aid and scholarships to cover tuition.

I founded a chapter of Operation Smile at Cal to support international medical relief and teach about current health care disparities.

I developed an interest in health policy when I saw how political changes and social attitudes affect medical care.

Currently, I am conducting research at UCSF to explore the molecular mechanisms of wound healing in diabetics, examining the impact of embryonic stem cells and Hox gene therapy in the wound environment.

My work has contributed to the publication of two clinical papers to date.

My experiences have strengthened my conviction that *through medicine I can be a public health advocate and improve lives on both the individual and societal levels.*

