



## Mara Sand, Nelson, British Columbia

Mara is an amazing advocate for oral health not only of her clients but for all members of our community. She was instrumental in the establishment of our community's low cost dental clinic as a founding board member of West Kootenay Community TEETH Clinic Society. As non dental volunteers, we had much to learn about setting up a clinic and operating it. She has worked tirelessly for the past seven years to ensure that we able to increase access to dental care. She made a video that earned the society \$50,000. Mara enlisted support from the local dental professionals to donate \$5,000 for the work of the society. As a board member she helped set up all of our operational policies and communication strategies. Mara has helped the society to establish working relationships with all of the dental supply companies, other dentists, CDAs, and Hygienists in the region to work at the low income clinic on their days off by sharing her passion for oral health for all. We are so very grateful that she shared her expertise and her connections in the dental field to make it possible for us to provide quality dental care for our low income residents. She is our superhero!

From the moment that I arrive for my appointment to the moment that I leave, I feel warmly taken care of. Mara's sunny disposition can brighten anyone's day who has to lie back in a chair, unable to talk and with your mouth wide-open for at least an hour. Always an offer of a heating pad or a kitty cat to sit on my lap. Very bubbly conversation ensues, albeit not from my mouth, and before I know it the appointment is over. Although being an adult and woefully delinquent at flossing my teeth every day one story sticks out the best. It was the time that Mara sang me the song that she created and sang at for kindergarten classes to help make flossing their teeth. There is a line about making sure it's squeaky with that floss in between every tooth. And with that little jingle carefully crafted by herself and relayed to me, I in my late 40s now finally understand the dental floss game. I love to hear that squeaky clean and proud that she has served our community in such a wonderful way.

Dental Hygienist Mara Sand is a key player in my dental health and oral care. I have been seeing her regularly over decades and will very much miss her skill, warmth and optimism. She retires after this year. Mara has been a tireless advocate for community access to dental care. With no small thanks to Mara we now have a low cost dental clinic operating two days a week in Nelson BC!



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Mara is thorough. She is pleasant during the visit and we enjoy sharing stories and catching up. She gives good and friendly advice on dental hygiene and provides a comfortable environment in which she welcomes her patients. I am grateful to have Mara on my personal wellness team. I should also mention how safe I have felt going to see her during COVID. She takes all the precautions and that is appreciated.

Mara is a ray of sunshine and has taught me basic facts about dental health and physiology that I can't believe I'd lived 28 years without ever being told before! She takes the time to ensure her clients understand what's going on, which is a breath of fresh air. Thanks Mara!

Faithfully, Mara reminds me several times per year that its time for a cleaning. I appreciate the reminder and the care and attention and advise that I get each session inspires me to take better care. For nearly 26 years she has kept my oral health in tip top shape even with complicated structural changes to my jaw and teeth from a car accident. She has perfected her craft to such a degree I can actually fall asleep while getting a cleaning.

Mara is a great dental hygienist, who has a home practice in Nelson BC. She is so kind and encouraging of healthy dental care.

Mara has the skill and bedside manner to put any patient, at ease. Her knowledge and gentle, efficient touch are the best I have experienced in my 55 years of keeping my teeth in healthy condition.

Mara is a total tooth nerd! She is passionate about teeth and dedicated to providing amazing dental hygiene! She works tirelessly to aid access to dental care having set up the West Kootenay Community TEETH Clinic which provides access to more affordable dental care, including dentures, for low income individuals. She sees patients at her home and makes sure everyone receives dental care. I have heard a story of her exchanging manure for her garden in exchange for a dental hygiene visit. How many dental hygienists would do that!! In a rural community with limited access, this is so important! Thank you Mara! The community will miss you when you retire soon!

Mara runs a warm & welcoming home practice and has provided exceptional care to me and other family members. I have only lived in Nelson for 5 years, but I have heard from many of my new friends and acquaintances here that Mara has been a well respected health care provider for almost 3 decades. I know she has cared for many seniors and provides her services at a reasonable rate to those in need. As she approaches her retirement, I think it would be fitting for her to receive recognition from her profession for her dedication to excellence.



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Being a pretty nervous person on a dentist chair i find Mara to be the best person to attentively clean my teeth but also make me feel confident and relax. i totally would refer her to anyone, kids included.

Mara has saved my teeth. Actually my sister is a dental hygienist and she did the early work but Mara over the last few years has really worked hard to keep my teeth in great shape. I really appreciate all the work she does and I'm so happy I can nominate her in this competition.  
Noreen

Mara Sand does great work and is full of entertaining stories.

Mara has been absolutely incredible to have for my dental hygienist! Very caring and understanding, Mara does great work and has helped me come back form very serious gum issues... The best hygienist I've ever had.

Mara is a true professional dental hygienist and she's the best i had in my life, after i met her all my dental hygiene problems were over. She doesn't hesitate to take her own time to explain to her clients the important steps of dental hygiene in a very personalised way. You feel that she really cares for them and she likes to spend time in their company, each individual is special for her. I'm not surprised that she cofounded the west Kootenay community teeth clinic that provides access to more affordable dental care for low income clients.

Mara has been doing my teeth for years. She helps me feel so calm after feeling terrorized at the dentist office years ago, cracking out my wisdom teeth. Her environment is soothing and nurturing and fully understands my fears and concerns and takes her time with me. Right now she is cleaning my daughter's teeth and I can so how comfortable she makes her feel. My teeth always feel so amazing afterwards and now I look forward to coming to see her (I used to cling onto the arm rests and sweat profusely). She is so professional in a relaxed way. I am not looking forward to her retirement! I would love to see her be recognized for all her hard work and fabulous personality!

Mara is a sweet kind amazing hygienist. She taught me the proper way to vare for my teeth and I will b forever grateful



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Mara is so much more than a dental hygienist superhero. She is a therapist, counsellor, and dental health care provider rolled into one. When one steps into her home, one feels immediately welcome and in good hands. She begins by asking for details of all that has been significant in your life since your last visit. Mara is aware that small events can impact dental health. She carefully measures for any progress or deterioration among your teeth and gums and gently makes recommendations. Her cleaning is conducted with a constant stream of encouraging words. One wonders how a visit to a dental hygienist could be so comforting. I have come to call it Mara's Way. It is with deep sadness I learn that after 29 years, 2021 will be her last as my dental hygienist superhero.

Best hygienist ever. Mara explains everything she is doing for you. She makes your visit easy with her gentle touch. You leave with a solid plan to take care of you teeth and gums. Love this lady.

Just the best ever!

Mara has been my hygienist for many years. She is Super thorough and professional in her approach. She always does an extensive assessment of the tissue around the face and neck area before cleaning my teeth and is always calm and kind for the duration that I'm in her care. I would highly recommend Mara to anyone who may be apprehensive about having dental work done

Mara is a passionate dental hygienist who has been in the field for a committed lifelong career. She believes so much in her patients, and often describes her treating them as a way to promote deep overall healing. She loves improving people's lives! She has been an advocate for community dental health for many years and even inspired me to start working at the community low cost dental clinic in our hometown. Mara is a worthy candidate for your award!

Mara, has always gone above and beyond in taking care of my teeth and bringing them back into good health with kindness and good humour! She has made it possible to me to access the dental hygiene care I need. I am a low income senior and this is a great benefit for me. Not only did she help to start the low cost clinic in Nelson, but she continues to help folk in her own practice who otherwise would not access dental hygiene care.

Mara is incredibly meticulous, gentle and caring.

Mara is a wonderful, patient, dental hygienist. She is the first dental hygienist who has been able to explain flossing to me in a way that I understand why we need to do it and how. So now I actually do it! Only took 36 years! Others have tried and failed. Thanks Mara!



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I Think Mara is an excellent ambassador for Dental Hygiene. Mara is an exceptional professional and well skilled Hygienist. Mara is full of happiness, caring and so welcoming, she makes you feel at ease and at home. It's like visiting a close friend. Mara has so many great tips on hygiene,.. and gardening too !!!

Mara is the best hygienist, thorough, clear and empowering on my self care.

Mara's dental care is above and beyond what any other Hygienist has ever done for me. She listens to my needs and concerns and follows through on my requests. She is impeccably thorough, and I always feel confident in her hands. Mara is also 100% reliable in terms of being on time and always meeting her commitments to her clients. I feel she has "gone the extra mile" for me every time I've seen her. Knowing that she will be retiring soon saddens me no end. She's The Best!!

Mara was able to nurse my teeth back to health after pregnancy where my gums were in poor health. She gave several thorough cleanings and advice. I purchased a sonic toothbrush and floss regularly and my teeth are now in great shape!

In 44 years I had only been to the dentist twice. With no dental coverage, and a ongoing suspicion of upselling, money hungry dentists, I did the best I could on my own. A good friend told me he knew someone he trusted that I could go to and the moment he texted me I pulled my car over at Mara Lake to check my phone, only to see her name was Mara. Serendipitous. When I called Mara, I was literally looking at Mara Lake. She took me on very short notice and did a full check up and cleaning. Without making me feel belittled, she went over proper brushing and flossing techniques. I was sent a follow up assessment of my teeth and gum health, with recommendations of the actions I should take next to keep things healthy in there. Her mission was clearly to educate me and make me feel comfortable with dental care. Dare I say I even had FUN at my visit...? Spots on my teeth that caused me stress and concern were cleaned away and my teeth looked healthier. I feel grateful to have met her.

The best, most caring dental hygiene in my vast experience!

I would like to nominate Mara Sand as my superhero. Mara has been a driving force in our community in creating a low-cost dental clinic for income qualifying people. She has donated a great deal of her time to help provide dental care for lower income patients. She has done this personally in her own practice and also through the creation of the low-cost clinic. She has helped so many people get good dental care that otherwise would not be able to.



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Mara Sand has been my dental hygienist for several years now. I haven't experienced many practitioners in any field who are as thorough as she is. She has a sincere interest in her patients' well being and recognizes the specific needs of the individual that she is serving.. Sessions with her are very pleasant; her friendliness, kindness and the relaxing atmosphere of her clinic make it so. To top it off, I usually leave the session with gifted vegetables from her abundant garden and a better idea of what I can do to preserve my dental health.

Mara Sand has been my hygienist for 15 years at least. She encourages, inspires and cajoles me into every better dental care. Just know, I hadn't been to a dental hygienist for about 30 years before I came to Mara. My teeth weren't too bad then but, as I age, my teeth have actually been getting healthier under her very careful and personal attention! Plus I know this woman does this work for many disabled and handicapped people. She's compassionate and so in service to her profession that she will work with people who may not get dental care without her...sometimes at little or no cost. She's amazing in her care for others as well as her skill as a hygienist - a great, encouraging, loving human being as well - a superhero for sure!. Someone the dental hygienist association might be very proud of. She supports anything that will get people care.

I've gone to dental hygienists who have been kind and one who was cruel and insensitive and hurt me and bad-mouthed all the hygienists who worked on my teeth in the past, so I know what I'm writing about. Mara Sand is more than sensitive (I have a very well-developed gag reflex to be considered), she's kind, funny, and also she's thorough enough to get the job done before I know what's happening. I was traumatized as a child by a dentist, but Mara has made my experience almost pleasant. And she helps me keep my teeth in good shape so I won't need to go to the dentist. She deserves this award. Mara has also decided to retire after this year and I don't know what I'll do when she's not taking care of me and my teeth. So please give her the award 'cause she deserves it. Maybe I can go to her dental hygienist, but it won't be the same.

Lara is a hygiene superhero because she always takes extra time to make sure people are comfortable with bolsters, pillows or blankets. She does a very thorough exam of your mouth and also palpates throat and neck for any irregularities. She is inquisitive and kind and always connecting the pieces if there is a change in your health history. She recently helped a friend to follow up with a doctor in regards to swollen thyroid gland. Her dental hygiene skills are apparent in the amount of care and time she gives each person. She is thorough and also very compassionate and gentle. My teeth feel amazing after a hygiene visit with Mara. She cares deeply about her work and about people she works with. I have past trauma with my mouth and I am extremely sensitive, but trust Mara completely and always come away feeling healthier and more educated.



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Mara has spend the last 3 decades advocating for access to dental care and empowering people with knowledge and skills to better their own oral health. She is compassionate, understanding and does not pass judgment about others. She is a truly caring, and altruistic dental professional. She is never stops dedicating her time, knowledge and skills help the underserved access dental care. Mara started The Dental Access Fund in the West Kootenies many years ago to help those who had no other means of accessing emergency or urgent dental care. She was one of only 2 people who raised money and administered the funds. Without this fund many people in her community would not have been able to access urgent dental treatment for pain or infection. Mara was a founding member of the TEETH Clinic in Nelson, BC, a non- profit, low-cost clinic. She has held the rolls of clinician, board member and administrator over the years. Mara volunteers countless hours in her home dental hygiene studio, providing care to people who otherwise would not be able to access dental hygiene services to help them manage their chronic health conditions.

Mara is calm, kind, and compassionate. She has a genuine interest in the overall health and well-being of her clients and her community. Mara Sand embodies what it means to be a Dental Hygiene Superhero.



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