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## Whittier dentist raising money for hearing-impaired students

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Posted: 02/22/2011 05:03:50 PM PST



Dr. John Sudick talks about raising money for new computers as students work on a reading program on a 10-year-old computer at Oralingua School in Whittier on Tuesday. (Keith Durlinger Staff Photographer)

WHITTIER - When first-grade teacher Krista de Sant'Anna complimented her dentist on the new computers he had installed at his office, little did she know it would start to benefit her students.

A few months after that observation, de Sant'Anna's dentist, Dr. John K. Sudick, is

spearheading a fundraising effort to buy new computers, monitors and projection units for the 74 students at Oralingua School for the Hearing Impaired.

"I can't believe he is doing this," de Sant'Anna said in her classroom Tuesday, just having finished a reading lesson using a 12-year-old computer.

"It would mean so much to our students," she said.

Oralingua, which means "oral language," was established in 1969 by eight families who partnered with professionals in the field of oral-deaf education to begin the school.

These families had children who were profoundly deaf, officials said. At the time, students with significant hearing impairments were graduating from traditional high school with very limited language and reading skills.

Determined to change this outcome, they developed a program to help students understand and express themselves using both written and spoken language and eventually be mainstreamed into public schools.

The student body includes infants to 12-year-olds from area schools districts, Los Angeles Unified School District and others from Riverside and Oxnard.

Students in each classroom cram around their

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teachers' desks to participate in lessons.

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This is a typical scenario, officials said.

"The computers are antiquated," said Oralingua supervisor Alice Love. "We cannot run math or language software programs on them."

The monitors of the PCs are huge, taking up space on teachers' desks.

Some of the computers don't work.

"There are rare opportunities in our community," Sudick said, that come along and can make profound changes in young impaired children's lives."

Sudick, who hopes to raise \$14,000, is putting his money where his mouth is.

For every \$600 raised, he will contribute \$100 to upgrade the network capabilities of the classrooms, up to \$1,200.

"The new computers will benefit our students by aiding our teachers in giving the best classroom instruction," Love said.

Anyone who wants to make a donation can log on to [www.whittierdentaloffice.com](http://www.whittierdentaloffice.com) and click "Community News" or call Oralingua at 562-945-8391.

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