



Connecticut State Dental Association

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LOCAL EVENT HIGHLIGHTS DISADVANTAGED CHILDREN'S NEED FOR DENTAL CARE

The American Dental Associations Give Kids A Smile® kicks off on February 4, 2011

SOUTHINGTON, CT— The [Connecticut State Dental Association](http://www.cdda.com) (CSDA) is proud to announce that February 4, 2011 marks the kick-off of Give Kids A Smile® day, a national program sponsored by the American Dental Association. This year marks the eighth year that the CSDA has participated in the program which provides children from local low-income families with free dental services ranging from screenings and cleanings to fillings and sealant applications.

Last year, more than 44,650 dental team members nationwide participated in Give Kids A Smile®, a program first held in 2003 by the American Dental Association (ADA) to provide care and raise awareness of the importance of access to dental care for poor children.

“It’s heartbreaking to see a child’s smile destroyed by severe tooth decay,” said Dr. Elise Cozzi, CSDA Give Kids A Smile Chair. “Imagine not being able to eat, sleep and pay attention in school because you have a mouthful of toothaches. Some children have reached the point where the only alternative is a mouth full of crowns or pulling the teeth that can’t be saved.”

Nearly 1 in 4 children, aged 2 to 11 years, has untreated cavities in their baby teeth, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). While poor diet and oral hygiene certainly play a role, cavities are actually caused by a disease called caries, which is five times more common than asthma.

The National Institutes of Health report that 80 percent of tooth decay is found in just 25 percent of children, primarily from low-income families.

“Give Kids A Smile is about preventing dental disease before it begins. The program allows us to help some children get the dental care they need, but a one-day event will never be enough,” said Dr. Cozzi. “Our event is not a cure all, it’s a wakeup call. Charity is not a health care system. Children’s oral health is everyone’s business—not just dentists. We need to participate

as a community and as a nation. We need to find a solution for this problem. It won't happen overnight, but if enough people start working on it, it will happen."

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Editor's Note: Due to the need for signed parental permission and other documentation, most Give Kids A Smile events can only see children who are registered in advance, in most cases through schools and social service clubs and agencies. Please do not indicate to the public that the event is open to unregistered children.

Give Kids A Smile® would not be possible without the generous support of our corporate sponsors, who provided more than \$2.8 million in products and services for the 2010 event. Visit the Give Kids A Smile home page at <http://givekidsasmile.ada.org> for information regarding our 2011 sponsors, Colgate-Palmolive, Henry Schein Dental, and DEXIS Digital X-ray.