

## New Haven Register

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### New Haven dentist donates services for 'Give Kids A Smile' day

By Bridget Albert, Register Staff



New Haven-- Hygienist, Katie Lopez cleans 5-Year-old Angie Juarez's teeth during the annual "Give Kids A Smile" event. Even with the stormy weather, the Levy Dental Group saw over 100-kids from low income families. Juarez is from West Haven. Peter Casolin

NEW HAVEN — Nearly one in four children ages 2-11 have untreated cavities in their baby teeth says dentist John Levy, and on Saturday, he set out to make a dent in that statistic.

Levy, owner of the Levy Dental Group on State Street, participated in the "Give Kids A Smile" day, a national program first held in 2003 by the American Dental Association.

This is the sixth year the dental practice has participated. Last year, it treated more than 150 children. They saw 58 patients and did \$20,000 worth of dental work



New Haven-- 3-Year-old Jesus Vasquez of Wallingford smiles after receiving three fillings from Dr. John Levy during the annual "Give Kids A Smile" event. Even with the stormy weather, the dental office saw over 100-kids from low income families. Vasquez, of Wallingford, received three fillings from Dr. Levy. On the right, is dental assistant, Nancy Hamilton. Peter Casolino/New Haven Register 01/21/12

Each child receives a dental cleaning, exam, fluoride treatment, X-rays and necessary fillings. At least one child also received a root canal.

They also receive goodie bags filled with dental care supplies and a toy.

"We will see and treat everyone who comes through the door. We have no set hour for closing," said dental hygienist Sherri Fucci.

Any child who needed dental care was treated.

"No questions are asked. You just have to fill out a medical questionnaire and sign a waiver," Fucci said. There were no income guidelines.

Erik Vazquez, 16, was one such patient treated. He has been coming to the free clinic for the past three years.

"It is a blessing as we don't have insurance," mother Graciela Morales of East Haven said through an interpreter.

"The Levy Dental Group is a blessing. They help the Spanish community who don't have the money or insurance to bring their children to the dentist," Morales said.

Lynne Resnick of Prospect also brought her three children.



New Haven-- Dr. John Levy works on 3-Year-old Jesus Vasquez of Wallingford during the annual Levy Group's involvement in the national "Give Kids A Smile" event. Even with the stormy weather, the dental office saw over 100-kids from low income families.

It took her an hour to make the drive in the snow, she said.

She has no dental insurance

“This helps us financially; it is huge,” she said.

“As a mother, I want my children to have good teeth. This is the only way we could do that,” she said.

She also said they treat people well.

“They don’t make you feel inadequate or funny about coming. It can be humbling,” she said.

Supplies for the day were donated by Colgate-Palmolive, Henry Schein Dental, DEXIS Digital X-ray and Barry Vine of Vine Products.

Levy’s staff of 25 donated their time along with a Spanish-speaking interpreter and family members.

Also volunteering were two workers from the state’s Department of Social Services.

They were there unofficially, they said, assisting undocumented residents who work and pay taxes in the state, helping to see if the patients qualified for assistance with various state programs such as food stamps and the HUSKY program.

“You hear about people going to Haiti and the Dominican Republic to help; but people in our own backyards need help, too,” Levy said.

“If every office does their part in the community, then there wouldn’t be anyone without dental care,” Fucci said.