Annual Dental Home Day Brings Smiles to Children in Seattle
Volunteers and residents brought smiles to underserved children and their parents during the third annual Healthy Smiles, Healthy Children Dental Home Day, held May 20, at The University of Washington Center for Pediatric Dentistry in Seattle. Sponsored by Sunstar Americas, Inc., 60 AAPD members and affiliated volunteers from across the country helped provide free dental care to 152 children during Dental Home Day.

Dental Home Day is more than just a day of service; it’s a year of care. Patients receive ongoing care supported by HSHC grants. The University of Washington received a grant for $30,000 to provide ongoing care to participating children for the next year.

“We’re incredibly grateful for Sunstar’s support for a third year of Dental Home Day. We could not have done this without them,” said HSHC President Dr. Beverly Largent. “We are blessed to have such amazing volunteers working diligently to improve the quality of life for children in Seattle.”

Volunteers and residents formed inspiration for 15-year-old Kwatje Schmidt from Beacon Hill. “I went to Haiti with a medical dental team and their teeth are bad out there but not as much as here. People in Haiti eat sugar cane and chew more natural sugars. I want to be a dental assistant and help people have healthier teeth.” Her mother, Saskia Schmidt, was very impressed with the care during Dental Home Day.

Patients were also very pleased with the care they received. Five-year-old Morgan Weller said “It has been excellent and an awesome experience! I’m doing great! I just like the X-rays.” Dental Home Day provides an opportunity for the Academy to give back to its Annual Session host city. Patients receive preventive and restorative services, oral health instruction, thanks to Sunstar.

Dr. Mario Ramos reflected on his experience, “I have been a part of all of the HSHC, Dental Home Days and have enjoyed every minute of those special days! The real reward that I get from participating is the interactions with the kids and the smiles and hugs. I get after they have an exciting and caring experience! These experiences, both for the AAPD member and the families that participate, are made possible by the hard work and dedication of the HSHC staff, the AAPD staff and of course by the hosting facility. The greatest benefit that is gained by these Dental Home Days is that we as a group of professionals have brought together a child and family that need dental care with a facility that they can go to for that care knowing they will find a warm and caring pediatric dental professional waiting for them! I can’t wait for next year!”

The University of Washington Center for Pediatric Dentistry will report quarterly to HSHC through May 2016, the number of children returning for care along with their siblings. They will track children who do not return for care and those who receive occasional follow-up visits.

Dental Home Day makes a lasting impact on patients, families, volunteers, residents, pediatric dentists and within the community. Largent says “This ongoing care for the other 364 days of the year helps improve children’s quality of life, development, overall health and well-being.

Dental students and residents had an opportunity to work with seasoned professionals and receive one-on-one instruction. Volunteers, patients, and dental professionals described Dental Home Day as a key element to improving children’s overall oral care and health. Ongoing treatment heightens children’s social development, mental and physical health, self-esteem, school performance and sleeping habits.

AAPD Secretary-Treasurer Dr. Joe Castellano shared his experience with one family. “During Dental Home Day in Seattle, I had a parent who brought her two children to the clinic, a boy and a younger sister. The children were Spanish speaking as was the mother. As they were checking in, the children seemed very apprehensive. The mother was somewhat confused due to her limited English speaking ability. I noticed
that mother was having trouble communicating so I began translating for her. She became more at ease. I also talked to the children in Spanish to see if it would help ease their anxiety. Everyone we encountered during the appointment spoke to them, making them feel welcome and safe. As we continued through the appointment, I continued to speak to the children in Spanish, and they began to warm up and also feel more at ease. The children saw Dr. Seminario, who also spoke to them in Spanish, and helped make their treatment a great experience. The little girl went from allowing only mom to hold her, to allowing treatment, and to eventually allowing me to carry her around the clinic. The mother was amazed at the service and care provided. She could not believe the focused attention we gave to her. She and the children left with a positive experience of the care givers and the school. It is a testament to the care, compassion, and accommodation that the folks at U.W. (and AAPD) have for the children they treat.

Dental Home Day at AAPD 2016 will take place in San Antonio on May 20, 2016. To learn more about Dental Home Day and how to become involved please contact Vice President for Development and Charitable Programming Paul Amundsen at (312) 337-2169 or pamundsen@aapd.org.

“It has been excellent and an awesome experience! I’m doing great! I just like the X-rays.”

Morgan Weller, age 5

Sponsored by Sunstar Americas, Inc., Dental Home Day is our annual service day held in conjunction with the AAPD Annual Session. In partnership with a clinic or dental school in the AAPD host city, AAPD members from across the country volunteer and HSHC provides grants covering the cost of the event and ongoing dental care for participating children. Dental Home Day applications are by invitation only.

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