Smiles by the Thousands

Imagine the Saints’ old Midway Stadium with the bleachers filled with beautiful, smiling children. Collectively, that’s the impact of Give Kids a Smile, the Minnesota Dental Association’s annual charitable program just for children. This year’s event, on Feb. 6 and 7, served about 4,000 children.

“If you could see those thousands of kids gathered in one place, it would be an overwhelming sight. Instead, you’ll find them in schools and communities throughout Minnesota, free to smile without embarrassment, free of pain,” says Carmelo Cinqueonce, Executive Director of the Association. “I hope each and every one of the more than 2,400 volunteers who made this happen are as proud as I am of this accomplishment. To serve our youngest, most vulnerable is truly an honor.”

“Give Kids a Smile” is a charitable outreach event coordinated each year by the Minnesota Dental Association. Next year’s event is Feb. 5 & 6. Learn more at mndental.org.

Sponsors

For 13 years, 3M ESPE Dental Products and HealthPartners have been loyal sponsors of Give Kids a Smile, enabling the Minnesota Dental Association to purchase television and radio advertising to promote this charitable program to families in need across the state.

Please also join us in thanking the Minnesota Dental Foundation for its support.

Partners

United Way 2-1-1 serves as the Give Kids a Smile call center, kindly and professionally directing parents to local participating clinics to make appointments.

Dental Experts, a Minnesota dental staffing agency, works with the Minnesota Dental Association to help make sure clinics are fully staffed with volunteers and ready to serve children.

Thank you to these and countless other community partners across the state!
A special thanks to these dentists, who volunteered with Give Kids a Smile 2015!


Community-based clinics
Apple Tree Dental, Fargo Falls; Caring Hands Dental Clinic, Alexandria; Central Lakes College, Brainerd; Children’s Dental Services, Minneapolis; Community Dental Care, Maplewood; Community Dental Care, Rochester; Community Dental Care, St. Paul; Lake Superior College, Duluth; Minnesota State Community and Technical College, Moorhead; Minnesota State University, Mankato; Normandale Community College, Bloomington; NorthPoint Health and Wellness Center Dental Clinic, Minneapolis; Northwest Technical College Dental Assisting Program, Bemidji; Rice Regional Dental Clinic, Wilmar; Saint Cloud Technical College; Union Gospel Mission, St. Paul; and University of Minnesota Dental School, Minneapolis.

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We asked volunteers: What memory stands out from your Give Kids a Smile event?

Anupam Gatecha, BDS
Reflections Dental Care, Brooklyn Park
At the end of cleaning patients’ teeth, we gave them a toothbrush and toothpaste. One of the patients looked inside the bag and was extremely excited, as he never had his 'own' brush. That was a heart-melting event for everybody in my office. It was mixed emotions from everybody. But, at the end of the day, we felt good.

Cindy Upton, Clinic Coordinator
Lake Superior College Dental Hygiene, Duluth
One that sticks out for me is when a mother of a 10-year-old boy stopped me and said that this is the best experience her son has had going to the dentist.

Nicole Novitzki, RDA
Pearl Dental, Sauk Rapids
We saw two children who were refugees from Somalia. This was their first dental appointment, and they were so thankful that we could see them.

Craig Adelmann, DDS
Adelmann Dentistry, Savage
We had a patient who came over from Ukraine to escape the war and had not had much dental care. He and his father were very appreciative of the services we provided for them.

13 years into program, extent of dental disease in children still alarms providers

Thousands of Minnesota children receive free dental treatment at participating Give Kids a Smile locations. And each year — and this year in particular — the amount of decay and the lack of regular dental care leaves volunteers concerned.

“All of our patients had numerous areas of decay, some quite deep,” says Michael Furey, DDS, of Furey Dental Group in North Oaks. “Many of our patients had not seen a dentist in the past.”

Like others this year, Furey’s clinic decided to go above and beyond, continuing treatment on all patients over time until their treatment was complete.

MDA President Daniel Rose, DDS, hosted a Give Kids a Smile event at his clinic in Pillager.

“We saw one family with four children and all had extensive caries, including permanent first molars that will need to be extracted. The children told us that they did not have any toothbrushes at home,” says Rose. “The MDA works to improve public policy for all children in the state. It’s top of mind, all of the time. Through Give Kids a Smile and other charitable works, we not only say we care, we also show it.”
So much to smile about!

It all adds up to 3,990 kids, served by 438 dentists and 2,402 total dental volunteers. Estimated monetary value is $1.7 Million.