



For Immediate Release

Dental Health Month Celebrations Focus On Oral Health Literacy Initiative

Lessons In A Lunch Box programs presented by dental schools around the country during February.

Owings Mills, MD (March 1, 2010). The Maryland Children's Oral Health Institute is pleased dental schools around the country have presented the *Lessons In A Lunch Box: Healthy Teeth Essentials & Facts About Snacks*® program throughout February. National Children's Dental Health Month (NCDHM) is when dental and medical professionals especially focus on initiatives to help improve the oral health of children. Give Kids A Smile (GKAS) is the annual centerpiece of NCDHM, usually celebrated the first Friday in February. This observance provides the perfect platform for dental schools to utilize the project. It is a wonderful opportunity to encourage dental students to secure required community service learning hours and to present the educational oral health literacy initiative to elementary schools.

The month began with Creighton University School of Dentistry presenting the *Lessons In A Lunch Box* program at Field Club Elementary School in Omaha, Nebraska on February 8th. Programs sponsored by dental schools and others have been crisscrossing the country all month - the University of Detroit Mercy, the University of Mississippi, the University of Maryland, the University of Nevada Las Vegas and A.T. Still University Arizona, to name a few. They have all had student dentists and student hygienists help to present the program to elementary school children, educators and parents.

Case Western Reserve University School of Dental Medicine was all set to present *Lessons In A Lunch Box* at Mayfair Elementary School in East Cleveland when 10 inches of snow blanketed the state overnight last Thursday. Devastating winter weather in many states has forced the postponement of some GKAS and NCDHM festivities. The University of West Virginia Dean, Dr. Louise Veselicky, has said they will wait until the snow ends and the ice has melted to go the Green Bank and Hillsboro Elementary Schools.

On Friday, February 26th dental students presented *Lessons In A Lunch Box* programs in Boston and Washington, D.C. The Harvard University School of Dental Medicine volunteers gave out the lunch boxes filled with the child-friendly dental care products at Fletcher Maynard Academy while the Howard University College of Dentistry volunteers did so at H. D. Cooke Elementary School.

By the end of February, teams of oral health professionals had bestowed on hundreds of anxiously awaiting school children the exclusively designed dental health lunch boxes and oral hygiene carrot cases. These volunteers, the future of the dental medicine, have graciously spent time teaching about proper flossing, brushing and making good snack choices. They encouraged the youth to "See Yourself Becoming A Dentist."

The Maryland Children's Oral Health Institute looks forward to maximizing the learning experiences the lunch box offers for both elementary school children and matriculating dental students. If the *Lessons In A Lunch Box: Healthy Teeth Essentials & Facts About Snacks* program is able to be sustained, the CEO and Director of Development has stated that the Institute will target October, National Dental Hygiene Month.

For more information about The Maryland Children's Oral Health Institute and the Lessons In A Lunch Box: Healthy Teeth Essentials & Facts About Snacks® program, visit www.mycoshi.org.

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