



For Immediate Release

The Ideal Treat Presented By Meharry Dental Students On Halloween

The Lessons In A Lunch Box program delights the children at Inglewood Elementary School.

Nashville, TN (October 31, 2008) The entire third year class of dental students had descended on Inglewood Elementary School by 9 o'clock on Halloween. The fifty-eight Meharry Medical College student dentists took charge and unpacked the sixteen cases of bright orange lunch boxes that read, "Lessons In A Lunch Box: Healthy Teeth Essentials & Facts About Snacks™." The very excited pre-k through fourth grade classes were looking forward to receiving the ideal treat. School of Dentistry faculty members, Dr. Edwin Hines, Department Chair of Pediatric Dentistry and Dr. Walter Owens, Assistant Professor, in the Department of Oral Diagnostic Sciences, joined the community service effort coordinated by the students. Dr. Walter Owens is also the President-elect of the National Dental Association. Both Hines and Owens are members of the Pan-Tennessee Dental Association.

The student doctors treated the children to the informative, dental hygiene videos: *It's Dental Flossophy Charlie Brown and Toothbrushing with Charlie Brown*. The videos were followed by a dazzling toothbrush demonstration using a plush dinosaur with a full complement of teeth. The lunch boxes containing oral hygiene instructions, the USDA Food Pyramid, a dental carrot case that provides a rinse cup and stores a toothbrush, toothpaste and dental floss were then given to some 375 delighted children. The educators also received A Five Day Lesson Guide compliments of the National Dental Association.

The Meharry professionals spent the remaining time thoroughly explaining the contents of the multifunctional containers in a cafeteria filled with the voices of hundreds of ecstatic children. The student dentists surrounded the tables covered in orange and gave one-on-one demonstrations. They explained how to remove the rinse cup from the carrot case and place the toothbrush and toothpaste inside. The food pyramid was discussed in detail. Brushing and flossing instructions were again reviewed. The dental students showed the children where to print their names, how to find a dental school and finally how to look into the metallic sticker located at the opening of the lunch box to "See Yourself Becoming A Dentist."

The resourceful lunch box and nifty dental carrot will help to fortify the oral hygiene practices of the many children who will transform into trick-or-treaters after school. These incentives make ideal treats at Halloween and have the extraordinary potential to encourage children to brush more in the days following their door-to-door journeys to gather sweets.

Lessons In A Lunch Box is an oral health program created by The Maryland Children's Oral Health Institute. The program officially became a national initiative in September when the University of Nebraska Medical Center, College of Dentistry received the first shipment of 250 lunch boxes. Meharry Medical College, is the second of the twenty-eight dental schools that registered to offer the community service program via their dental students. For more information visit The Maryland Children's Oral Health Institute, www.mycohi.org.

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