



American Dental Association
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Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

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Media representatives are invited to cover this event:

Friday, Feb. 7 between 9:45-11 a.m.: Pediatric Dental Specialists (Dr. Johnnie Hunt & Dr. Brooke Wood), (225) 769-1969, 9804 Bluebonnet, Suite A. Dr. Hunt represents the Greater Baton Rouge Dental Association and chairs its GKAS Day project.

Friday, Feb. 21 between 9:45-11 a.m.: Just Kids Dental (Dr. Billy Hall, et al); (225) 330-6622, 5151 Plank Road, Suite 28, Baton Rouge, LA 70805

Local Dentists Team Up with Health Centers in Schools to Donate Services for Students in East Baton Rouge Parish Schools

Baton Rouge, LA – Parents agree that education is a priority for their children, but when children are in pain from unhealthy teeth, school isn't first in their young minds. During "Give Kids A Smile Day every Friday in February, National Children's Dental Health Month", local dentists are teaming up with *Health Centers in Schools* to donate services to help many *East Baton Rouge Parish School System* (EBRPSS) children stay healthy and remain in school and learn.

Every Friday during the month of February, many first and second graders will have big smiles when area dentists close up their offices to take care of the dental needs of nearly 1,000 EBRPSS students selected for assistance. At elementary schools near participating dental offices, consent packets are sent home with qualifying students. Parents or guardians must return the completed forms for children to be able to participate in this free dental program.

The *Louisiana Dental Association* (LDA), the *Greater Baton Rouge Dental Association*, *Health Centers in Schools* (HCS), *Our Lady of the Lake Children's Hospital* and *EBRPSS* are collaborating to provide educational materials and dental screenings, as well as preventative care, to selected low-income children who do not have access to proper dental care. The effort is part of the *American Dental Association's* (ADA) National Give Kids A Smile (GKAS) program and is also, in part, to acknowledge February as National Children's Dental Health Month. The ADA's and LDA's roles in the GKAS project is to function as an umbrella for the numerous charitable education, screening, prevention and comprehensive treatment programs already in existence. According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, nearly one in four children between the ages of 2 and 11 years old have untreated cavities in their baby teeth. Many children enrolled in Medicaid receive no dental services throughout the year.

From 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. on Fridays in February, 7 area dental offices' dentists, hygienists and assistants are volunteering to screen and provide oral hygiene instruction and supplies. In addition, sites may do a general dental check-up, cleaning

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and/or apply sealants (protective coverings for the outside of the teeth) to children in need. The value of the donation totals nearly \$50,000 in time and services.

“Give Kids A Smile Day provides children with dental services that keep them healthier in general,” said Sue Catchings, chief executive officer, Health Centers in Schools. “When students have unhealthy teeth causing them pain, they can’t learn well, so their grades may suffer. They can also get terrible infections that cause many more health problems. Prevention through proper dental care and sealants can save children and parents a lot of future pain and money to treat more serious dental issues that may develop. Helping students with oral health is another way that HCS helps kids stay healthy and in school ready to learn.”

The school district will be busing the selected children from specific elementary schools to participating offices for dental services. The work is completely free and donated. The dates and the participating dental offices in the Baton Rouge area are:

February 7: Pediatric Dental Specialists (Dr. Johnnie Hunt and Dr. Brooke Wood)

February 7: Fallin and Fallin Family Dentistry (Dr. Lance E. Fallin and Dr. Shelly F. Fallin)

February 7: Bocage Care Dental (Dr. Ashley Landry Griffon)

February 14: TWINKling Smiles (Dr. Kredenna Beverly)

February 21: Just Kids Dental (Dr. Billy Hall, Dr. Ryan Shinska, Dr. Anne Rob Sommers, Dr. Lauren Vedros, and Dr. Suzanne Fournier)

February 28: Louisiana Center for Restorative Dentistry (Dr. Nelson Daly and Dr. Ann B. Uzee)

February 28: Distinctive Smiles (Dr. Sancerie O’Rourke-Allen, Dr. Breah Burkhalter, Dr. Courtney Perkins Jones, & Dr. Stephen C. Brisco, Jr.)

Making the programs possible nationwide are generous corporate co-sponsors: Henry Schein Dental, Colgate’s Bright Smiles Bright Futures, and Dexis.

For more information, call Sue Catchings of Health Centers in Schools at (225) 343-9505 or (225) 721-1748, visit www.ladental.org or call Annette Droddy at Louisiana Dental Association at (225) 926-1986 or at info@ladental.org.

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