



Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

February 1, 2012

****MEDIA: We are recommending media coverage take place at this date & location:**

On Friday, Feb. 3 between 9:45-11 a.m.:

Dr. Johnnie Hunt, (225) 769-1969, 9804 Bluebonnet, Suite A. Dr. Hunt represents the Greater Baton Rouge Dental Association and chairs its GKAS Day project.

Area Dentists Join Health Centers in Schools to Donate Services to Students in East Baton Rouge Parish Schools

Baton Rouge, LA – Most children have a ready smile for their school pictures, but often bad teeth and gums can cause pain or embarrassment that keep them from smiling. Recent research also has shown that unhealthy teeth and gums can cause many other health problems such as diabetes and heart disease. **Give Kids A Smile Day** this February and March will help many East Baton Rouge Parish School System children keep smiling and help prevent dental issues.

On three Fridays this February (3, 10 and 24), and on Friday, March 2, many first and second graders will have a lot to smile about when **area dentists close up shop just to take care of the dental needs of over 1,000 East Baton Rouge Parish School System (EBRPSS) students selected for assistance. At elementary schools near participating dental offices, consent packets were 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), the Children’s Coalition of Greater Baton Rouge and EBRPSS are teaming up 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 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 national Center for Disease Control, 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 about 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Fridays in February, according to the schedule, 9 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 and/or apply sealants (protective coverings for the outside of the teeth) to children in need. **The value of the donation totals over \$50,000 in time and services.**

“Give Kids A Smile Day can make a tremendous difference in many children’s lives,” said Sue Catchings, chief executive officer of Health Centers in Schools. “When students have mouth pain due to unhealthy teeth, they may not be able to concentrate on learning, and they may become very self-conscious of their teeth resulting in poor self-esteem. 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.”

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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 3: Dr. Johnnie Hunt

February 3: Associates in Pediatric Dentistry (Dr. Robert L. Delarosa, Dr. Bradley S. Comeaux, Dr. Paige Sigsworth and Dr. Brynn L. LeRoux)

February 3: Dr. Nelson Daly

February 3: Fallin and Fallin Family Dentistry (Dr. Lance E. Fallin and Dr. Shelly F. Fallin)

February 10: Dr. Tom Foster

February 24: Dr. Farrell Fruge'

February 24: Dr. Lee Koschel

February 24: Just Kids Dental (Dr. Billy Hall, Dr. Caroline Black, Dr. Clare Berthelot and Dr. Ryan Shinska)

March 2: LSU Health Sciences Center Dental Clinic (Dr. Ben Record and residents)

Making the programs possible nationwide are generous corporate co-sponsors: America's Dentist Care Foundation (Mission of Mercy), Colgate's Bright Smiles Bright Futures, Henry Schein Dental, TeamSmile, American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry's Head Start Dental Home Initiative, National Museum of Dentistry, Smiles Change Lives and the National Association of School Nurses.

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 the Louisiana Dental Association at (225) 926-1986 or at info@ladental.org

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