



Maryland Dental Society

A Component Chapter of the National Dental Association

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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2008 GKAS Successfully Launched In Maryland

Commitment and Compassion of Organized Dentistry Evident

Baltimore, Friday January 18, 2008. The Maryland Dental Society (MDS) and the Maryland State Dental Association (MSDA) have collaborated on oral health initiatives since the early seventies. True to their commitment to underserved communities, the doctors of dental medicine successfully launched the **2008 Give Kids A Smile (GKAS)** on Friday, January 18th. While the previous day's snowstorm threatened to ruin the event, attendance was good at Franklin Square Elementary School, with more than two thirds of the children marked present.

Students were screened for tooth decay, given oral hygiene instructions and presented with the **"Lessons In A Lunch Box: Healthy Teeth Essentials & Facts About Snacks"** program. 75 children were evaluated and 183 lunch boxes containing *Dental Care In A Carrot* (toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss and a rinse cup), a sand timer, information about proper dental hygiene, healthy diets and the 56 U.S. dentals schools were given to the children.

The children were extremely excited to receive the lunch boxes and especially liked the reflective, metallic sticker on the box that reads, *"See Yourself Becoming A Dentist."* Grant funding obtained by The Maryland Children's Oral Health Institute will afford close to 5000 Baltimore City Public School children the educational lunch boxes this year.

The teachers as well received a lunch box along with a Five Day Lesson Plan compiled by The Maryland Children's Oral Health Institute Board. The elementary school educators were encouraged to use the teaching manual to offer oral health education throughout the school year. Teachers were also urged to carry the lunch box to continually reinforce the creative messages and to help remind students about the importance of proper dental care and healthy diet choices.

The spirit of benevolence within organized dentistry in the state of Maryland was clear at the 2008 GKAS event. The participation of the Maryland State Dental Association president, Dr. Garner A. Morgan, president elect, Dr. Marc Nuger, past president, Dr. Arthur C. Fridley, immediate past president of the Maryland Dental Society, Dr. Winifred J. Booker and past president, Dr. Gladstone Davis emphasizes the compassion and dedication of the leadership and members of both organizations. The past president of the National Dental Association, MDS and MSDA member, Dr. Leslie E. Grant rolled up her sleeves providing numerous oral examinations. The president of the Baltimore College of Dental Surgery, Student National Dental Association, Elijah Holiness demonstrated flossing instructions to the children with the assistance of MDS member, Dr. Lenora Caldwell.

Dr. Morgan drove during the early morning hours on Friday from Southern Maryland along with his staff to support the GKAS initiative. MSDA member, Dr. Kim Haskell also traveled from Prince William County. Staff and family of MSDA members graciously assisted the dentists providing the dental screenings. MDS member, Dr. Michele Dozier volunteered without hesitation to transport the lunch boxes and teacher lesson plans to the school after the hired truck was delayed because of the inclement weather.

The Executive Directors of the MSDA, Mr. Frank McLaughlin, Southern Maryland Dental Society, Mrs. Valerie Fridley and Donated Dental Services, Ms. Lillian Marsh all pitched in to help make the day a tremendous success. Mr. Peter Holmes, Director of Public Policy at MSDA was instrumental in coordinating the GKAS event.

These dentists and their professional organizations are to be applauded for their caring and kindness. Their volunteerism is especially moving in the aftermath of losing 12 year-old resident, Deamonte Driver, to the ravages of dental disease last January. Maryland is indeed fortunate to have oral health professionals who are willing to donate of their time to provide oral healthcare outreach to children and families in our state.

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