



EDITORIAL

IFDH partners with the National Children's Oral Health Foundation

In our ongoing efforts to reduce childhood caries worldwide, the IFDH has partnered with America's ToothFairy, National Children's Oral Health Foundation (NCOHF). The NCOHF is a non-profit organization designed to provide an aggressive response to eliminate children's preventable suffering from paediatric dental disease. The organization has many preventive programmes including Back to School with America's ToothFairy, the Smile Drive, and the Esther Wilkins Education Program.

The Back to School with America's ToothFairy programme is a project designed to help children return to school at the start of the academic year with the tools they need for a healthy smile in addition to the traditional school supplies of papers and pencils. Complimentary programmes include tips from the ToothFairy and invitations for young children to join the free America's ToothFairy Kids Club.

The Smile Drive is a programme offered that focuses on collecting oral care products for at-risk children in the community. This programme takes place throughout February as part of National Children's Dental Health Month and is currently featured in the United States and Canada. Plans are underway to expand this programme in other countries. The programme involves collecting toothbrushes and toothpaste at a local pharmacy, school or organization with an opportunity for community engagement, and delivering the products to a local non-profit shelter, programme or organization serving children and teens in need. The products must be delivered on or before March 20th, World Oral Health Day. Participants of the Smile Drive programme complete a brief survey to inform NCOHF how many products were collected and where they were delivered.

The Esther Wilkins Education Program is designed to improve oral health literacy through outreach activities in local communities and mission trips around the world. This

programme includes a tool kit with a magnetic display board, oversize toothbrush and magnetic stickers that help children learn about healthy foods, biofilm, mouth safety, tobacco, infant care and basic prevention strategies. Purchase of the kit (US\$50) requires a commitment to conduct a minimum of four community education activities annually.

The IFDH envisions that the 'Every Child has a Toothbrush' programme can be combined with the NCOHF Esther Wilkins Education Program. The small grant awarded through 'Every Child has a Toothbrush' can be used to purchase the Esther Wilkins Tool Kit, and educational resources from the tool kit will enhance preventive education provided to children.

Readers may have noticed in these columns that IFDH is committed to social responsibility and changing the oral health status of the public. We have recognized the value of forming partnerships with other organizations that share core values of prevention and improved oral health. Working together, we are taking steps to ensure improved health outcomes in community settings. We are not going to prevent childhood caries across the globe overnight, but we are going to pursue avenues that create change. The organizational efforts of the IFDH are growing stronger, but we cannot achieve success without the individual efforts of dental hygienists. Therefore, we implore you to join us as we identify ways to prevent and eradicate caries in children. All of the programmes described in this column can be found online by visiting www.ifdh.org and www.ncohf.org. Take the time to research the preventive programmes available and implement those that are most appropriate to your community. We are going to make a difference. Join us!

JoAnn R. Gurenlian RDH, MS, PhD
President, IFDH

Copyright of International Journal of Dental Hygiene is the property of Wiley-Blackwell and its content may not be copied or emailed to multiple sites or posted to a listserv without the copyright holder's express written permission. However, users may print, download, or email articles for individual use.