



Give Kids A Smile Volunteer Event

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OVERVIEW

- The Give Kids a Smile (GKAS) event is a national program sponsored by the American Dental Association.
- The GKAS program launched nationally in 2003 and provides underserved children with free oral health care.
- Each year approximately 6,500 dentists and 30,000 dental team members volunteer at local GKAS events to provide free dental care to over 300,000 children.
- At UOP, the GKAS event was sponsored by the Pediatric Department, with whom we worked closely to orchestrate the finer details of the event.
- To raise awareness for this event we passed out flyers around San Francisco, put advertisements on the Muni Bus, and got in touch with FQHCs to promote the event.



GIVE KIDS A SMILE MISSION

The core mission of Give Kids a Smile is to create a positive impact on the oral health of children in underserved communities. This mission can be divided into 4 main goals.

1. Education - increase the oral health literacy in the SF community to create a long-lasting impact on families.
2. Prevention - give free fluoride treatments and oral hygiene materials to promote prevention of caries and good dental habits.
3. Care - provide prophies to remove dental plaque and calculus to combat prevalence of oral disease.
4. Access to Care - distribute resources to help families establish a dental home in the Bay Area.



EVENT FEATURES

The event was hosted on the first and second floor of UOP's clinic. Over 100 student volunteers and 10 faculty were present to run the 22 operatories and three main sections of the event. In the Education Section, patients and their families were provided with oral health education in 6 stations. The stations included brushing, flossing, caries process, nutrition, meet the dentist, and a Q&A. Completion of the Education Section was required before patients could proceed to the Clinical Care Section. In the Clinic, a screening exam, prophy, and fluoride varnish were provided to the patients. After their visit with a student dentist and faculty check, patients were given information for any needed orthodontic referrals and clinics in San Francisco to establish a dental home. In the Entertainment Area, face painting, balloon animals, and a 360 dance area were available to help show the kids that a trip to the dentist can be fun!



SIGNIFICANCE

Tooth decay persists as a widespread issue among children in the US, notably impacting San Francisco. Despite dental care advancements, accessibility remains a challenge, especially for vulnerable groups. San Francisco's statistics show only 45% of Medi-Cal enrolled children under 11 received dental care in 2017. Additionally, a 2016 assessment revealed 32.1% of SFUSD kindergarteners had caries, 14.5% had untreated decay, and 61 needed urgent dental care. These numbers underscore the need for accessible oral health services, prompting our initiative. We mobilized 100+ volunteers to offer free dental screenings, cleanings, fluoride treatments, and education to 94 children aged 17 and under. Our goal is to break down barriers to dental care, fostering lifelong oral health habits within our community through early intervention and education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

We are grateful for the pediatric clinic DAU team, pediatric dental faculty volunteers, dental student volunteers, dental hygiene student volunteers, dispensary workers, and building operations team for helping us organize the GKAS event. The overwhelming support for this event is truly appreciated and we could not have done this without everyone's help!

REFERENCES

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2. San Francisco Department of Public Health. Kindergarten Dental Assessment Data. Published 2016. Accessed April 22, 2024. Available from: <https://www.sfdph.org/dph/files/dentalSvcdocs/Kindergarten-Dental-Assessment-Data-Brief.pdf>

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