

## Comfort and Joy

The spirit of helping others has a special intensity during the holiday season. We look for ways to give comfort and joy, especially to those who are hurting. In the process of helping others, we find ways to nourish ourselves.

It's good to remember that the need for oral health care, especially to alleviate suffering, exists all year long. During 2010, more than 1,900 children, teenagers, adults with disabilities, seniors and vulnerable adults have been helped through direct care provided by LSUSD students and faculty at community outreach events.

Each year dental hygiene students provide services to adults with disabilities at the Magnolia School in Jefferson. Students also care for seniors residing in nursing homes.

This past February, as part of nationwide "Give Kids A Smile" (GKAS) day, 240 school-age children in Baton Rouge and New Orleans were provided checkups, cleanings and sealants. GKAS day has become a signature event for the dental profession across America. Services in Louisiana were provided by community dentists along with dental students, dental hygiene students, residents and faculty.

With the enthusiasm of an entrepreneur, dental student Raj Diwan started "Making Impressions." Student volunteers in this organization have helped unwed mothers, AIDS patients, the working poor and people who simply have no idea where to turn for dental health care. They have also spent many weekends educating parents and children as part of community health fairs.

In the spring, Deidra Foret, a member of the dental hygiene faculty, finds the resources to help 200 school



Alumni, faculty and students volunteered dental services for national Give Kids A Smile day at the New Orleans campus ( pictured here) and in Baton Rouge.

children in the community. This year the group came from Cox Elementary School in Gretna. Money to pay for the buses that brought the children to the dental school was raised by the schoolchildren themselves.

In July LSUSD teamed up with the Academy of General Dentistry during its national convention for the first-ever national outreach event. Dentists and their assistants attending the conference joined their local counterparts in providing services to 200 homeless people and residents of shelters for battered women. The event was organized by Dean Henry Gremillion and Dr. Kay Jordan, an LSUSD alumna who practices in Marrero.

Special Olympics and Jennifer Hew, assistant professor in the Department of Comprehensive Dentistry, have become almost synonymous. Over the years, Jennifer has tirelessly organized teams of students, faculty and community dentists to travel on weekends to places like Baton Rouge, Hammond and Carencro to help the special athletes. She also works with TeamSmile, the New Orleans Saints and other groups to provide dental services and products to children who do not have access to health care. Jennifer estimates that her teams have helped more than 900 people in 2010.

As 2010 comes to a close, we look forward in the new year to continuing the LSUSD tradition of offering vital dental health services to the community.



Shannon Boudreaux, RDH, and Jennifer Hew, RDH, pose with Saints team mascot, "Gumbo," at a TeamSmile outreach event.