

Giving and Receiving

A diverse group of 2,295 children and adults have been served by dental school students and faculty members during community outreach projects in 2011. Among those served were suburban moms and their children, adults with developmental disabilities, teenage moms, inner city children and AIDS patients living in hospice care.

“Our students need to be prepared for the full spectrum of life when they graduate,” says Dr. Henry Gremillion, dean of LSUSD. “As educators, we need to be sure they are experienced

with a diverse patient population. One of the things I appreciate most about my years as a general dentist in the small Louisiana town of Cottonport was the satisfaction of treating all the people who came to us for care. Those experiences shaped me as a professional and as a person.”

According to a survey of dental students conducted by the American Dental Association, one of the top four reasons for choosing dentistry as a profession is the opportunity to serve others. One of the major community endeavors of LSUSD was a project called “Making Impressions,” a student initiative led by Dr. Raj Diwan. A 2011 graduate of LSUSD, Dr. Diwan is now a resident in the LSUSD General Practice Residency program in Baton Rouge. “Because of the ‘Making Impressions’ program, our team of students had the chance to educate teenage moms about the dental consequences of the prenatal stage,” Dr. Diwan said. “We also sat down one-on-one with AIDS patients living in hospice and shared what they could do to help themselves with their dental health.”

During his graduation last May, Dr. Diwan was honored with the Student Servant Leadership Award presented by the Academy of Dentistry International (ADI), an international honor society. The purpose of the award is to recognize senior dental students who have excelled in volunteerism and student leadership.

“The award was great but it’s not about me, it’s about the tremendous need for care and students who want to serve,” said Dr. Diwan. “When I sent out my first e-mail asking for student volunteers, I got 106 responses. How great is that! My parents came to America from India to receive an education at LSU and live the American dream. Their early years in India fit the American ideal of caring for each other.



For “Sealant Smiles” at Esperanza Elementary School in New Orleans, volunteers from LSU School of Dentistry screened 55 first-, second- and third-grade students, then provided sealants to 35 children and prescribed follow-up care for cavities to 25 other children.

They taught me that when we give, we receive, so we should never stop caring. It is how we are nourished as individuals and how we fulfill our purpose in life.”

In 2009, the ADI chose another LSUSD graduate, Dr. Marshall Green, to receive its Terry Tanaka Student Humanitarian Award, citing his work to improve the lives of people around the world. Dr. Green participated in several dental missions in Central and South America.

Community Outreach Programs in 2011

- 1,000 screenings of inner city children at New Orleans schools for Louisiana’s “Sealant Smiles” program
- 77 screenings for adults with disabilities at Magnolia School, a residential facility on River Road in New Orleans
- 120 screenings at six child care centers in Central City
- 598 screenings for Special Olympics athletes in Louisiana
- 125 children received sealant treatments at Cox Elementary School in suburban New Orleans
- 125 children received free dental services during “Give Kids A Smile” events in Baton Rouge and New Orleans
- 250 screenings and educational sessions through “Making Impressions”



Volunteers for “Sealant Smiles” included, from left, Patrick Knoell, DDS (LSUSD), Erin Maturin, DDS (LSUSD), Anna Wanko Villeret, RDH, MPH (Louisiana Office of Public Health) and Karissa M. Page, MPH (Tulane).