

GNHC HOSTS NEXT ROUND OF PROJECT SAVING SMILES



Good Neighbor Healthcare Center and the Houston Department of Health and Humans Services (HDHHS) are once again joining forces to host the second of three one-week missions by Project Saving Smiles (PSS). The PSS provides free dental screenings, dental sealants, fluoride varnish, and oral health and nutritional education targeting second grade students who are enrolled in the Free or Reduced Lunch Program.



The PSS is a unique collaborative effort among numerous private and public entities, including six universities (University of Texas Dental Branch at Houston; the University of Texas, School of Public Health; University of Texas Dental Branch at San Antonio; Texas Southern University; Prairie View A &M University; and the University of Houston); the Women of Rotary; Houston Wellness Association; the Texas Department of State Health Services; Memorial Hermann Health Center for Schools; Harris County Public Health and Environmental Services; Texas Oral Health Coalition – Houston Region; GNHC; and the HDHHS. In addition, private dentists and dental hygienists from around the area have also signed on to assist with the project. For PSS – Mission #1, the second graders came from three local districts – Houston, Aldine, and North Forest.



Mission #1, which was held in November, 2008 at GNHC, was a rousing success, serving 626 second graders – that, in spite of the fact that Hurricane Ike and its aftermath disrupted much of the pre-event planning time. The average value of the dental services provided for each child was \$124.05.



“I can’t say enough good things about Project Saving Smiles,” remarked Janet S. Donath, Executive Director of Good Neighbor. “As a community collaborative, it brings so many of the key agencies and private providers together for a week of concentrated work addressing a major need among our low-income school children. As a team, it is exciting to provide evidence-based and population-based preventive strategies. And, of course, the kids learn all about the importance of good dental health in a fun atmosphere, while getting the dental sealants and varnish that will help their teeth to resist tooth decay. Project Saving Smiles really is a wonderful concept!”



With Mission #3, the final mission for School Year 2008-09, scheduled for March 30th through April 3rd, PSS has high hopes to serve as many as 2,500 second grade students during the course of the school year.