



Press Release

For immediate release

For more information:

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Give Kids A Smile, Something To Smile About

Moline, Illinois – Bethany for Children & Families is pleased to announce they will be acting as the new fiscal agent for the Give Kids A Smile (GKAS) program designed to provide preventative and restorative care to underserved children who do not have access to oral health care.

GKAS is a national initiative by the American Dental Association to focus attention on the epidemic of untreated oral disease among disadvantaged children from at-risk families. In 2003, United Way Success By 6 coordinated the first Give Kids A Smile Day in the Quad-Cities that served 303 children. Since then, approximately 85 community-oriented dental professionals in the Quad-Cities have teamed up to provide free, comprehensive dental care that includes examinations, cleanings, sealants, restorations, extractions, orthodontics, and oral surgeries. In early 2009, United Way concluded operational support for the program.

“Tooth decay is a winnable public-health problem,” Bill Steinhauer, President/CEO of Bethany for Children & Families said. “Studies show that cavity-related childhood malnutrition and infection can impair mental and physical development and ‘since the poor are most vulnerable to the impacts of illness, they should be afforded a greater degree of protection’.”

Medicaid recipients have difficulty locating a dental practice who accepts that form of insurance because the reimbursement rates are very low. Uninsured and under-insured children are the ones who suffer most. Untreated cavities hamper children’s growth and learning as they miss school or deal with painful distractions.

The team of dental professionals in the GKAS program have given over 1 million dollars of in-kind services to over 2,700 children since 2003. Bethany for Children & Families looks forward to aiding the GKAS program in eliminating the silent epidemic of dental disease for the thousands of children who find it challenging to eat, sleep, or simply smile.

Bethany for Children & Families is a community service organization that has provided voluntary, not-for-profit services to children and families in western Illinois and eastern Iowa since 1899.

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