



# St. Lucie County Oral Health Coalition

Volume 1, Issue 2

May 2010

## The St. Lucie County Oral Health Coalition

The St. Lucie County Oral Health Coalition continues to focus on providing Oral Health education to the community.

- On February 9<sup>th</sup> with the assistance of County Commissioner Chris Dzadovsky, an oral health presentation was given to the St. Lucie County Board of County Commissioners. A proclamation was made declaring February as Children’s Dental Health Month in St. Lucie County.
- On February 19<sup>th</sup> Mary Pelletier and Elizabeth Pantano were interviewed by Aron G on WFLM. They provided information about good oral health care practices for children and information about the Oral Health Coalition.
- A letter declaring our support of Students Against Tobacco was written and given to Victoria Faconti
- A letter was written to St. Lucie County School Health Advisory Committee recommending that a “candy free” policy be implemented in St. Lucie County schools.
- Oral Health education is being provided to elementary students by Department of Health School nurses in conjunction with Dr. Arias and Dr. Decambre’s education specialist.
- Presented oral health education at high school health fairs, reaching over one-thousand children.

Join Our Partnership  
 Next Meeting June 7th, 2010  
 12:00 PM, Board of County Commission Conference room #3  
 2300 Virginia Ave. Fort Pierce

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## SMILE

Two years ago, Page Hoskins founded SMILE (Smiling Makes It a Little Easier) as a way to provide dental supplies to orphanages around the world. Each year, she hosts an open house to collect supplies. She has supplied children with a year’s supply of dental products in several orphanages in Africa, Haiti, India, Guyana, Antigua, and Florida. This year, Page, a senior at Lincoln Park Academy, expanded her focus to include St. Lucie County school children. She has supplied more than 750 St. Lucie County children with dental supplies.



## St. Lucie County Health Access Network Inc.

HANDS is a 501 (C) (3) Corporation formed on October 28, 2008. HANDS of St. Lucie County is a member of the Volunteers in Medicine Alliance, a national organization. The purpose is to provide primary health care services to the indigent, medically uninsured and underinsured residence of St. Lucie County.

HANDS has established a Family Health and Dentistry Program and plans to reach 1200 preschool and elementary school children in the 2010-2011 school year. The program will provide education and tooth brushes to children and caregivers. Dental screenings will be conducted and data will be collected and reported quarterly. The HANDS dental project will employ a Health Navigator to refer identified children to a dental provider.

The St. Lucie County Oral Health Coalition will act as the team leader for the project with additional team members including the St. Lucie County School district, St. Lucie County Health Department and the Treasure Coast Dental Society. The program will begin this fall. Grants have been applied for from St. Lucie County Children's Services Council, United Way of St. Lucie County, Scripps-Howard Foundation, and the United Way-Stanich Grant.



Rep. Adam Fetterman & Dr. Ardalan

On February 4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> the Oral Health Coalition participated in Give Kids a Smile. The team was again lead by Dr. Reeza Ardalan. The event was held at Indian River State College and participants included Doctor's Mindi Hall, Francisco Arias, Stephen Blank, Alexander Van Ovest, IRSC Dental Hygiene students and their instructor Mary Pellitier, IRSC Dental Assistant students and their instructor, Karen Allen, Dental Hygienists from Dr. Mark Fedele's office and St. Lucie County Department of Health School Nurses. The event was visited by Florida State House of Representative Adam Fetterman. Dental Cleaning, assessment and restoration was provided for forty eight children. \$23,145 in pro-bono dental services was provided. Again this year many dental abscesses were seen. Many of the children required further services. Dr. Arias volunteered to provide the follow up care required. The restorative dentistry will be provided at the IRSC dental clinic.

## Oral Health around the World

Jayne Pagano, a member of the St. Lucie County Oral Health Coalition visited Haiti in April with Haiticlinic.org. They provided medical and dental care. In 2 days they extracted 50 teeth, drained abscesses, cleaned teeth, and provided treatment with dental equipment, antibiotics and Tylenol that they brought with them. Jayne plans to return to Mission Ranch in Cite Soleil, Haiti in the near future.



## St. Lucie County Student Working Against Tobacco

Students Working Against Tobacco (SWAT) is a youth-led organization working to de-glamorize the tobacco industry. Tobacco companies are spending billions of dollars enticing youth to try their products. Ninety percent of adult tobacco users started under the age of 18. In 2009, the Food and Drug Administration banned the sale of fruit/alcohol flavored cigarettes; however there are several other flavored tobacco products that still exist. Flavors such as apple, grape, berry, cotton candy, whiskey, wine and many others are in spitless tobacco products better known and chew or smokeless tobacco. Use of these products can lead to tooth abrasion, gum recession, tooth decay, tooth discoloration, and oral cancer. SWAT youth in St. Lucie County are working towards a resolution to ban the sale of all candy/fruit/alcohol flavor tobacco products that lure kids into using them.

**FACT:** According to the Florida Youth Tobacco Survey in 2008, the percentage of St. Lucie County High School students who reported using smokeless tobacco one or more times in the past 30 days was 6.3 percent that is an increase from 4.1 percent that was reported in 2006.



## Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County

Results of recent dental screenings indicate just how badly St. Lucie County's young children need dental care and education. 78% of the fifty-five young children recently screened at Indian River State College as part of the preschool dental program sponsored by the Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County were diagnosed with severe dental problems. These children are only 3 and 4 years old and their pain hinders them from learning skills they will need throughout their lives.

The Early Learning Coalition is helping St. Lucie County's families avoid dental problems and/or help keep existing problems from becoming worse by bringing an oral health curriculum to 8 preschools. The goal is to educate the teachers, parents and the children in order to improve oral health throughout the county.

The coalition is working towards this goal in several ways.

- Colgate's "Bright Smiles, Bright Futures" oral health and early literacy program for preschool children was selected as the curriculum and introduced by a dental hygienist.
- The Coalition provided a teacher's guide and classroom posters as well as training to participating childcare sites.
- Two toothbrushes with cases and two tubes of toothpaste were provided for all 3 and 4 year olds at these sites. The children will use them to brush after lunch each day. Each classroom received one large toothbrush holder.
- Parents can attend meetings with a dental hygienist to learn about their children's dental needs. Families will receive a toothbrush and toothpaste for each 3 and 4 year old participating in the program so they can brush at home.

For more information about the Early Learning Coalition of St. Lucie County, call 772-595-6424