



For Immediate Release

‘Lessons In A Lunch Box’ Educational Program Teaches Children to Practice Good Dental Hygiene And Much More!

Program by the Maryland Children’s Oral Health Institute launches in Baltimore

Baltimore. Thursday, February 28, 2008 – Recently at the National Museum of Dentistry in Baltimore, The Maryland Children’s Oral Health Institute (MCOHI) officially introduced the ***“Lessons In A Lunch Box: Healthy Teeth Essentials & Facts About Snacks”*** initiative to help elevate oral health education for students.

In response to the numerous health and behavioral issues seen in children with dental caries, Pediatric Dentist and CEO of the MCOHI, Winifred Booker, created the ***“Lessons In A Lunch Box: Healthy Teeth Essentials & Facts About Snacks”*** program to ensure teachers, parents and children are all working together to help eliminate this potentially deadly, yet completely preventable, disease. “Tooth decay remains the most common chronic disease of children ages five to seventeen. No child should be at-risk for dying from complications arising from dental caries, when all it takes is education and preventative maintenance to keep children’s teeth healthy,” Said Dr. Booker.

“Lessons In A Lunch Box: Healthy Teeth Essentials & Facts About Snacks,” is an oral health literacy program designed to empower children and families with the proper knowledge on routine dental care, oral health maintenance, good dietary choices and more. Grant funding obtained by the MCOHI will afford close to 5,000 Baltimore City Public School children the educational lunch box this school year.

During the launch at the dental museum, Dr. Booker spoke about the numerous causes of Early Childhood Dental Caries, from Baby Bottle Tooth Decay to poor oral hygiene and unhealthy diets. The dental destruction caused by the over consumption of sugary beverages like soda by young children and teenagers alike were also demonstrated.

(more)

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MCOHI Officially Introduces Lessons In A Lunch Box/Page 2

Mrs. Sherry Holland-Senter, a Baltimore City Public Schools second grade teacher, Education Resource Consultant and Board member of the MCOHI, addressed the gathering, sharing her personal experiences with children in the classroom who suffer from advance dental disease.

Dr. Leslie E. Grant, past president of the National Dental Association and also a Board member of the MCOHI, discussed the political and legal initiatives related to the enormity of the dental caries crisis in children.

Also on hand were 2nd grade classes from John Ruhrah Elementary School in Baltimore who received the bright orange lunch boxes containing *Dental Care In A Carrot* (toothbrush, toothpaste, dental floss and rinse cup), and a sand timer. The lunch box includes labels on every visible surface that include demonstrations of flossing and brushing, tips for eating right, and a list of the 56 U.S. Dental Schools. The lunch box also includes a reflective sticker that reads, "*See Yourself Becoming a Dentist*" to encourage elementary school students to consider dental medicine as a career and to promote the profession. Children may go to the dental organizations listed on the front of the lunch box, as well as to sponsor web-sites on the back, to find additional information and resources.

When implemented in schools, the "***Lessons In A Lunch Box***" program begins with a dentist explaining how all children can have beautiful smiles by flossing and brushing their teeth after meals, eating healthy foods and avoiding harmful oral habits. A dental hygiene video is then shown. Finally, the oral health professionals demonstrate proper flossing and brushing before awarding every child the treasure-filled lunch box.

Teachers receive a teacher's guide compiled by the Maryland Children's Oral Health Institute Board, including activities for math, science, reading, health care, and careers in dentistry that allow educators to cover one, or multiple, subjects each day for a week. Activities include Fun with Tangrams, Make Your Own Toothpaste, What is a Cavity? and a Book List among others.

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MCOHI Officially Introduces Lessons In A Lunch Box/Page 3

The Maryland Children's Oral Health Institute obtained their foremost financial support from the Dental Trade Alliance Foundation, the American Dental Hygienist Association's Institute for Oral Health, and the Henry Schein Company. Boxed Out Graphx, Brushtime Products, Colgate, Doral, National Dental Association, National Museum of Dentistry, SunStar Americas and We Teach and Tutor all provided in-kind support for this promising oral health program. Booker and the MCOHI will apply for more grant funding to bring the program partnerships to elementary and dental schools around the country.

To receive the ***“Lessons In A Lunch Box: Healthy Teeth Essentials & Facts About Snacks”*** lunch box and teacher's guide, contact Kathleen Pomorski or Megan Palmer at 410-975-9638 or via email at kathleen@kehcomm.com or megan@kehcomm.com.

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