



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dental School Leaders Show Enthusiastic Response For Innovative Approach To Teaching Children About Dental Health

Baltimore, MD. - The Maryland Children's Oral Health Institute received applause after presenting the "*Lessons In A Lunch Box: Healthy Teeth Essentials & Facts About Snacks™*" program to the American Dental Education Association's, (ADEA), Council of Dental School Deans on Saturday, March 29th in Dallas, Texas. By the end of the presentation many of the deans had completed the preliminary registration forms necessary to introduce the initiative at their schools. Dr. Winifred J. Booker, CEO & Director of Development and Dr. Leslie E. Grant, Director of Advocacy & Outreach, addressed the room filled with distinguished educators. Dr. Booker, also a practicing pediatric dentist offered a brief overview of the twelve-year old 501c3 organization and development of the lunch box program. Booker went to explained how the project has been made possible through in-kind support and grant funding with the principal endowment from the Dental Trade Alliance Foundation. Dr. Grant, a school-based dentist for the past seven years, exhibited every aspect of the lunch box and product filled "Dental Care In A Carrot" case. She demonstrated how the exclusively crafted lunch container will teach elementary school children about proper dental health care, careers in dental medicine, good dietary choices and the supporters who have helped to make the initiative possible. Grant displayed a copy of the lesson plan compiled to encourage teachers to continuously include classroom instruction and home assignments about oral health in their core curriculum.

The dental school leaders eagerly awaited the power point presentation that provided a chronological history of the *Lessons In A Lunch Box* program since the January launch in Baltimore. The collection of photographs documented the tremendous excitement of some 1,135 Maryland school children. The pictures capture the benevolent mindset of the many dental students participating in the initiative. Dental students from the University of Maryland and Howard University are seen in the footage supporting the effort in considerable numbers. Dr. Booker also spoke about interest in the program expressed by dental students at Meharry Medical College.

Last month, Deans Leo Rouse, Howard University College of Dentistry and Christian Stohler, University of Maryland, Baltimore College of Dental Surgery applauded the introduction of the promising dental education program. The two dental school leaders were first introduced to the initiative when just a prototype of the lunch box existed and the lesson plan for teachers was still in rough draft form. Both attended the February 11th Press Conference & Media Reception at the National Museum of Dentistry and communicated being pleased to see "*Lessons In A Lunch Box*" debut after much due diligence.

Prevention that Empowers!

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The Maryland Children's Oral Health Institute provided the deans in attendance with their very own lunch box and a presentation portfolio explaining how dental schools can get involved. The presentation documents also included a copy of the letter from Senator Benjamin L. Cardin praising the initiative along with the press releases produced so far this year.

For some, the death of 12-year-old Deamonte Driver from a diseased tooth continues to seem surreal one year after the needless tragedy. It was then that students began to learn more about the unmet oral health care needs of so many children. The access to dental care challenges facing the profession also became an objectionable reality for the soon to be colleagues. Dental school deans and academicians could impact the number of graduating doctors willing to provide care in underserved communities by including programs like *Lessons In A Lunch Box* as part of the curriculum. A movement by the stewards of dental education to require grassroots, community outreach prerequisites may exponentially accelerate the progress in the struggle to improve access to care.

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