

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Jan Badger, Communications Manager
Phone: 704-719-9068
Email: communications@ncohf.org



4530 Park Road, Suite 320 / Charlotte, NC 28209
AmericasToothFairy.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SMILE DRIVE REACHES 2 MILLION MILESTONE

(Charlotte, NC, August 12, 2019) Many children from low-income families share two challenges: there is not enough food in their home and also not enough oral hygiene products. After hearing too many stories about children sharing a toothbrush with a family member—or having no toothbrush at all—America's ToothFairy took action in 2014.

"The stories we were hearing from our member clinics and from children at our outreach events were heartbreaking," America's ToothFairy Executive Director, Jill Malmgren said. "We know the devastating consequences of poor oral hygiene and we know that children from low-income families suffer more from lack of access to care and preventive services. Many also lack basic oral care items in their home and that is a big part of the problem. We decided that if food drives were a good way to help families living with food insecurity, we could create a similar program for oral hygiene products."

America's ToothFairy began their Smile Drive campaign in 2014 with two goals: raise awareness of the nation's most common untreated disease—tooth decay; and engage community volunteers to collect toothbrushes, toothpaste, floss, and other oral care items for children in need. The nonprofit organization announced that those volunteers, in addition to generous corporate donors, have reached a major milestone. In just six years, more than two million oral hygiene products have been distributed to help kids prevent the pain and embarrassment of tooth decay and keep their smiles healthy.

During the 2019 campaign, which began last July and ran through June, 96 Smile Drives were held in 27 states, collecting more than 51,500 oral care items. Volunteers distributed the donated items to 56 organizations that serve children in need such as shelters, Title 1 schools, and Boys & Girls Clubs across the country.

In addition, dental corporations contributed toothbrushes and other preventive care products to the campaign to help reach this milestone. America's ToothFairy distributed the corporate donations to their Dental Resource Program member clinics that provide access to care and oral health education to kids in underserved communities.

"Our most valued donation from America's ToothFairy this year has been the toothbrushes," Virginia Commonwealth University Dental Pediatrics' Clinical Manager, Kimberly Richbourg, RDH, reported. VCU is a member of the Dental Resource Program. "When we discover that families have been using one brush that has months of old frayed bristles for a family home of 6-plus, we realize that our impact to their world is more than just a routine cleaning, fluoride and goodie bag, but the support of oral and body health that will make a difference in their overall wellness for life."

The 2020 Smile Drive campaign will officially begin in September with more fun and easy ways for volunteers to raise money to support the campaign. A new text-to-give feature will provide donors with an additional way to help. For every dollar donated, three toothbrushes will be purchased. New contests are planned to make holding a Smile Drive more fun for volunteers. Details can be found at SmileDrive.org.

About America's ToothFairy: National Children's Oral Health Foundation

America's ToothFairy is a nation-wide nonprofit organization based in Charlotte, NC. As a resource provider, America's ToothFairy increases access to oral health care by supporting nonprofit clinics and community partners delivering education, prevention and treatment services for underserved children. Since its inception in 2006, America's ToothFairy has distributed more than \$19 million in donated products, educational materials and financial grants to improve oral health outcomes for children and youth in need. For more information, visit AmericasToothFairy.org.



A young patient from Healthy Smiles of Orange County in Garden Grove, CA is happy to receive his new toothbrush from America's ToothFairy's Smile Drive campaign. SmileMakers donated 50,000 toothbrushes to the campaign to help bring the six-year distribution total to two million.

<https://thecharlotteweekly.com/news/2019/08/smile-drive-reaches-milestone/>

<https://www.dentistrytoday.com/news/industrynews/item/5215-smile-drive-reaches-2-million-milestone>

<https://www.dentaltown.com/news/details/11650/smile-drive-reaches-2-million-milestone>

<https://www.aegisdentalnetwork.com/news/2019/08/13/smile-drive-reaches-2-million-milestone>