

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SMILE DRIVE CAMPAIGN HELPS MORE KIDS ACCESS DENTAL HYGIENE PRODUCTS

(Charlotte, NC, August 17, 2021) Although they're preventable, cavities are the leading chronic childhood disease in America. Many low-income families lack basic dental hygiene products in their homes. When kids can't brush every day to keep their smiles healthy, the pain of tooth decay can keep them from eating, sleeping, and attending school. Their poor oral hygiene habits contribute to the vicious cycle of poverty.

America's ToothFairy believes every child should have what they need to prevent tooth decay. Through their nationwide Smile Drive campaign, volunteers help kids protect their teeth from decay by collecting oral care products for families in need and teaching their communities about the importance of healthy dental hygiene habits.

During the 2021 Smile Drive campaign, which ended June 30th, Smile Drive volunteers and corporate partners came through during an exceptionally challenging time.

- A total of 185,257 dental hygiene products were donated to help struggling families.
- Generous oral care product donations from SmileMakers, Crest, and Oral-B were distributed to 159 charitable organizations through America's ToothFairy.
- 857 volunteers collected 34,255 oral care products benefitting an additional 95 nonprofit organizations serving families in need in their own communities.
- To date, a total of 254 nonprofit organizations have received dental hygiene products to distribute to the families that need them the most. Remaining items are being delivered to organizations hosting back-to-school events.

2021 Required Flexibility and Creativity from Volunteers

Since COVID restrictions varied by state, Smile Drive volunteers had the option to hold in-person and Smile Drive-Thru collections, or online campaigns, while others did both.

"I believe every child should have the opportunity to take care of their oral health. If I can provide the tools for preventing oral diseases, I think it's half the battle," said volunteer Taheya Asad, of Ormond Beach, Florida. She collected 200 toothbrushes and toothpaste and included them in oral health treat bags that also contained brushing charts, a tooth coloring page, crayons, and stickers, and donated them to local Head Start programs.

Girl Scout Troop 90115 in Bristow, Virginia collected 1,200 items, which they sorted into dental hygiene bags and donated to Haymarket Regional Food Pantry in Gainesville, Virginia.

“I’ve done food drives with my troops in the past but never this. We feel great about providing such a special need,” troop leader Erin Blankenship reported. “Since our girls are younger, they cannot go to the store and buy, but they could talk about it, and they could help sort materials into bags so that the food pantry can provide a family with toothbrushes, toothpaste, and floss.”

Volunteers who chose to raise funds online received access to free digital tools to track their donations from family and friends. Jillian Miu of Jericho, New York raised \$1,797 during her virtual campaign—enough to donate more than 5,000 toothbrushes to the Charles B. Wang Community Health Center in New York City. Jillian got her school’s National Honor Society Chapter involved. “I proposed this idea as a way to give back to our community,” she said. “Most of our events this year were virtual, so this was perfect.”

Generous Product Donations

SmileMakers, which has donated toothbrushes to support the Smile Drive campaign since it began in 2014, gave more than 110,000 toothbrushes to America’s ToothFairy to distribute to organizations across the country, including nonprofit dental clinics, public health departments, schools in low-income communities, the Salvation Army, food banks, and other organizations that serve families in need.

Crest and Oral-B, the Official Smile Drive Sponsors through this December, partnered with America’s ToothFairy during two campaigns; the first as part of their *12 Days of Crest Smiles* that identified two nonprofit dental service providers to each receive 5,000 toothbrushes and 5,000 tubes of toothpaste along with \$5,000 grants to support their missions.

The second campaign encouraged families to pledge to brush for two minutes, twice a day with a fluoride toothpaste. For every pledge, Crest and Oral-B Kids donated a Conquer Cavities kit that included toothpaste, toothbrushes, and educational materials. In all, 10,000 kits were donated to five nonprofit dental clinics that serve children with restricted access to dental care.

When kids can take care of their smiles, they perform better at school, lead healthier lives, have higher self-esteem, and experience more opportunities for future success. Since 2014, more than 2.2 million oral care items have been given to families in need through the Smile Drive campaign.

The 2022 Smile Drive launches runs through June 30, 2022. To find out how to volunteer or donate to the campaign, visit SmileDrive.org.

About Crest

A trusted leader in oral health, Crest was the first oral care brand to secure the ADA Seal of Acceptance for a clinically proven fluoride toothpaste. Since first introducing fluoride toothpaste

65 years ago, it is estimated that Crest has helped prevent countless cavities in the United States.

About Oral-B

Oral-B is the worldwide leader in the over \$5 billion brushing market. Part of the Procter & Gamble Company, the brand includes manual and electric toothbrushes for children and adults, oral irrigators and interdental products, such as dental floss.

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

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 \$23 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.



(Above) Girl Scouts from Troop 90115 in Bristow, Virginia pose with their Smile Drive collection. The girls donated 1,200 dental hygiene products to Haymarket Regional Food Pantry in Gainesville, Virginia. (Below) Healthcare workers from Charles B. Wang Community Health Center in New York City accept 5,000 SmileMakers toothbrushes donated on behalf of Jillian Mui, who raised more than \$1,700 during her Virtual Smile Drive.

