

NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Jan Badger, Communications Manager

Email: communications@ncohf.org



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

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

30,000 Kids Will Learn Healthy Dental Hygiene Habits

\$75,000 Grant from the Delta Dental Foundation will support America's ToothFairy's Storytime Smiles Initiative

(February 6, 2023) — Although it is largely preventable, tooth decay remains the number one chronic childhood disease in the United States. In an effort to educate families about the importance of brushing and flossing daily, America's ToothFairy has partnered with the Delta Dental Foundation to host Storytime Smiles events at public libraries across Michigan, Ohio and Indiana.

"After a small-scale pilot of Storytime Smiles, an initiative that was overwhelmingly well-received by libraries in our home state of North Carolina, we are excited to expand to libraries in the Midwest to help families in communities with restricted access to dental care learn how to keep their smiles healthy," said Jill Malmgren, executive director of America's ToothFairy, a nonprofit organization that provides resources to expand access to dental care and oral health education in marginalized communities across the United States.

The initiative, made possible by a \$75,000 grant from the Delta Dental Foundation, provides superhero-themed education kits for libraries that include:

- Three dental-themed books that promote good oral health behaviors.
- Storytime lesson plan.
- Activity booklets that include oral health tips and age-appropriate activities.
- A brochure for caregivers with oral health tips for the whole family.
- Bookmarks with oral health tips.
- Superhero capes and masks.
- Brushing chart magnetic dry erase boards.
- Toothbrushes.

Storytime Smiles will kick off on Saturday, Feb. 18, at the Indianapolis Public Library, during a community oral health event co-hosted by the Indiana Department of Health that will include free dental screenings for children.

“Libraries are one of our most underrated public health resources,” said Holli Seabury, EdD, executive director of the Delta Dental Foundation. “Storytime Smiles will be a fun and unique opportunity to offer critical health education and help more people find a dental home.”

“By partnering with Delta Dental and America’s ToothFairy, we are helping to give more Indiana children the gift of a lifetime - a healthy smile,” said Dr. Nelly Chawla, Director of the Indiana Department of Health’s Division of Oral Health. “Through our Hoosiers Give Kids a Smile events during National Children’s Dental Health Month, we are enhancing oral health education in Indiana to give children access to the information and resources they need for a lifetime of healthy teeth and gums.”

Education kits will be provided to public libraries with enough resources to reach 30,000 kids and their caregivers.

About Delta Dental Foundation:

The Delta Dental Foundation is a nonprofit, charitable organization established in 1980, which serves as the philanthropic arm of Delta Dental of Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and North Carolina. DDF is dedicated to developing and enhancing partnerships and programs to improve oral and overall health and health equity. For more information, visit www.deltadental.foundation.

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 \$23.6 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.

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