

On The Road Again: A Tooth Taxi Update

January 26, 2009

by Mary Daly, Program Manager, Tooth Taxi

I would describe our first week in the New Year as a patchwork quilt. Flexibility was key as we pieced together fragments from the December inclement weather and school closures.

On Monday, we screened students at two schools in the David Douglas School District in Portland (Gilbert Park and Lincoln Park). On Tuesday we headed to Willamina to screen and treat students that were on our December schedule. Thursday evening we returned to Portland and on Friday we parked at Gilbert Park in Portland and treated students.

Willamina was hit quite hard by the storm; many students and staff were without power for a week. The school is perched atop a hill, so students had a great sledding venue. Volunteers **Pat & Bill Zepp** joined us for a morning in Willamina to help sterilize instruments and "run" students.



The Zepps were witnesses to a case of mistaken identity. The school office sent out "Elijah" with our volunteer. **Dr. Heringer** seated the patient and started nitrous for treatment. Dr. Heringer noticed that the x-rays did not match

the teeth of the child in the chair. When we asked the kindergartner his name, "Elijah" was clear but not the last name. I phoned the office and the secretary told me, "I didn't really look at him when he came to the office, I'll come out." She comes out and says "That's him!" A young boy with a shaved head. I considered that his x-rays might have been attached to the wrong file, but we didn't find any to match him. We moved him to the front chair for x-rays just the Tooth Taxi door flew open and the secretary shouted "Have you started, yet?!" It was the wrong Elijah! Dr. Heringer moved Elijah to the back chair and started oxygen to eliminate the nitrous. Elijah left the Tooth Taxi with a sticker and a prize for being such a good sport. The real Elijah, with a full head of hair was brought in for treatment. Never a dull moment.

More from the student gallery:

- Another kindergartner rescued our doctor and assistant as they hit the wrong button on the monitor to see his x-rays. Our little student reached up, hit "the" button on the keyboard and we were back in business.
- The "Nose". Peggy asked Dr. Heringer about the timing to "take off the nose" (the nitrous nose mask). Our little patient asked, "I already have a nose, you're going to take off my nose?"

Willamina Stats

- Forty-one students screened
- 16 students treated in the van
- \$10,493 value of free dental services provided.



Principal **George Bryson** visits with **Dr. Heringer**.

Gilbert Park is in the David Douglas School District in Northeast Portland. In our one day there treating students we had an array of visitors. The principal, **George Bryson**, helped us park the van and came out to visit us. He was grateful for our services and did not know that we'd be at his school that day.



Hygienist **Rachael Traan** clowning with a *Tooth Taxi* patient.

Rachel Traan, a recent hygiene grad, joined us for the day cleaning students teeth. The kids really enjoyed her, see att photo of Rachel clowning with Austin.

Cara Kao-Young, a PCC Hygiene school instructor, came by to see the van and our set-up since some of her students will be interning with us in the near future.

Dr. Mills from Willamette Dental came by to check out the Tooth Taxi for volunteer potential. **John Van Leeuwen** of The Partners Group and his assistant, **Emily**, also visited us on Friday. John has offered to drive the Tooth Taxi to the Parkrose School District next week when Dr. Heringer is in Honduras on a dental service trip.

Gilbert Park Stats

- 26 students screened
- 14 students treated in the van
- \$6,841 value of free dental services provided.

The students screened at Lincoln Park will be one of our "back up" schools, for a later visit.

Service Summary

Tooth Taxi , September 2008 - January 9, 2009

- 688 students screened
- 306 students received oral hygiene education in the classroom
- 347 students treated in the van
- \$226,752 value of free dental services provided