

On The Road Again: A Tooth Taxi Update

March 2009

by Mary Daly, Program Manager, Tooth Taxi

Summary

The Tooth Taxi moves into a new phase as we travel further from Portland, target schools in one region and park the Tooth Taxi locally over the weekend. This calls for a new set of travel logistics. Thank you to **Holly Spruance** from The OEA Choice Trust for arranging our secure weekend parking spots.

Our first venture was successful. After leaving Coos Bay, we drove to Yoncalla and parked the Tooth Taxi in the bus parking area for the weekend. Monday morning Dr. Heringer, James and Geneva returned to Yoncalla, while I remained in Portland to work. They were able to screen additional students and do further treatment on students seen the previous week when we were parked in Drain. The new team had a successful week and great reception from the school. The students delivered pound cake and a fruit basket to Tooth Taxi staff with thank you notes from the students and the school.

Charlie LaTourette came down to Yoncalla to meet **Erik Jacob** from the Ford Family Foundation (out of Roseburg) and showed him the Tooth Taxi and our program model. Erik was aware of the development of the Tooth Taxi, so we were pleased to have the opportunity to share it with him finished and in service.

Another idea we were able to put in place last week was to have Geneva do cleanings and sealants in the front operator on students that fall in the “no obvious decay” category, while James chairside assisted Dr. Heringer in the back operator. This is a great way to treat more students and utilize the front chair when we don’t have a volunteer dentist on board.

The story of the week was a high school senior in Yoncalla who came for the last appointment of the day. He brought his girlfriend with him, and he was very nervous. James seated him in the front chair while Dr. Heringer was finishing up in the back chair. The patient began to cry as his girlfriend tried to calm him down and convince him “this is something you need to do.” When he was asked for his paperwork (his health history was incomplete and had been returned to him) he responded by leaving the Tooth Taxi, getting in his vehicle and speeding away with his girlfriend. The irony is that he had a pierced lower lip.

Yoncalla stats

Monday 2/23-Wednesday 2/25

- 19 students screened (34 screened on the first visit)
- 29 students treated in the van
- \$14,152 value of free dental services provided



Dr. Michael Biermann and Molly Morse, RDH with a happy Tooth Taxi patient.

On Friday, the Tooth Taxi returned to River Mill Elementary school in Estacada for Multnomah Dental Society Give Kids A Smile (GKAS). Pediatric dentist Dr. Michael Biermann joined Dr. Heringer to treat students and Molly Morse, RDH volunteered to chairside assist Dr. Biermann. Molly's husband is in dental school at OHSU. Estacada was a successful finish to our busy National Children's Dental Health Month.

GKAS stats

River Mill Elementary, Estacada, Friday 2/27

1 student screened (other students previously screened in Nov. '08)

12 students treated in the van

\$5,540 value of free dental services provided

Summary

Tooth Taxi, September 2008 - February 27, 2009

1,351 students screened

306 students received oral hygiene education in the classroom

632 students treated in the van

\$411,077 value of free dental services provided

While in Portland I met with **Mardica Hicks**, the Executive Director of the Children's Community Clinic. The clinic is located in North Portland and serves ages birth to 21 years. The clinic is very interested in providing more dental services to their clients. We will look at scheduling the Tooth Taxi for a visit this summer.

Next week on the road: Hermiston

Next week's recap: Milton-Freewater