The National Children’s Oral Health Foundation: America’s Toothfairy (NCOHF) and Boys & Girls Clubs of America have announced a partnership that will expand oral health-care access to millions of underserved children through Tomorrow’s SMILES and the America’s Toothfairy Dental Home Program.

Tomorrow’s SMILES was created and initially funded by a gift from Dr. Ronald Goldstein, a clinician, author and lecturer.

NCOHF has developed partnerships with leading dental organizations to identify caring professionals in communities across the country willing to provide promising at-risk teens with pro bono care.

Through this program, eligible Boys & Girls Club members will receive comprehensive aesthetic and restorative services, transforming their smiles, renewing their self-esteem and ensuring that they are better prepared for healthy and productive futures.

In return, Tomorrow’s SMILES students will share valuable oral-health lessons with younger club members through the program’s Pay-It-Forward component, ensuring that good hygiene habits are instilled early in a child’s life.

Through the America’s Toothfairy Dental Home Program, NCOHF will work with its national volunteer network of dental professionals to ensure Boys & Girls Club members can receive regular, comprehensive dental care in a compassionate health-care environment.

NCOHF volunteer professionals donate their ongoing services to a child or children in need, giving them a “dental home” and laying the foundation for proper oral-health practices and increased opportunities for future success.

“A beautiful smile can truly enhance a child’s life,” said Sharon Hemphill, Boys & Girls Clubs of America’s senior director, health and life skills. “Through our partnership with the National Children’s Oral Health Foundation, we can help our club members learn healthy habits that last a lifetime.”

Fern Ingber, NCOHF president and CEO, stated: “We are proud to partner with the Boys & Girls Clubs of America, a celebrated national organization that shares our commitment to ensuring all children have the building blocks to reach their full potential.”

“Our collaboration will not only expand access to life-changing care for deserving youth, but America’s Toothfairy educational messaging will give both Boys & Girls Club members and their caregivers the tools to establish healthy habits at home that last a lifetime.”
Campaign to help Haitian dentists is getting results

By Javier M. De Pisón, Dental Tribune Hispanic and Latin America Edition

The American Dental Association’s campaign to rebuild dental practices in Haiti was in full swing at the 2010 Annual Session from Oct. 8-11. In just a few months, the Adopt-a-Practice campaign has collected more than $62,000 to help Haitian colleagues who lost their practices in the Jan. 12 earthquake. The goal is to collect a total of $300,000 to rebuild 50 dental offices in Haiti.

A clear sign of ADA’s commitment to humanitarian aid is that the association designated a special exhibit area to honor volunteer efforts during the 2010 Annual Session and World Marketplace Exhibition, featuring the Adopt-a-Practice: Rebuilding Dental Offices in Haiti and Give Kids a Smile programs.

Sponsored in part by SS White, the Volunteer Celebration Area on the ADA exhibit floor was a focal point for dental professionals wanting to learn how to make a difference and a source of information for national and international access-to-care volunteer opportunities.

The campaign to help Haitian dentists began when Dental Tribune Hispanic and Latin America brought the president of the Haiti Dental Society, Dr. Samuel Prophete, to ADA headquarters in Chicago during the 2010 Chicago Midwinter Meeting to discuss strategies to repair Haiti’s devastated health practices, initiating the Help Haiti campaign.

About 50 dental practices in Port-au-Prince — nearly a third of the city’s dental offices — were damaged or destroyed. It’s estimated that approximately $10,000 can help rebuild each practice.

Your support is essential

The Adopt-A-Practice initiative addresses the need to restore a sustainable system for oral-health delivery in Haiti. A shortage of good dental care already existed before the earthquake in Haiti.

Without help, most Haitian dentists will be unable to rebuild their practices on their own because they don’t have the protection of casualty insurance and their incomes are not comparable to those in more developed countries.

With approximately 550 dentists for a population of 9 million, Haiti has the lowest ratio of dentists per capita in the Western hemisphere. Due to the depressed economy in Haiti, even a small contribution can make a difference.

New York University School of Dentistry’s Dr. Henry Schein has already shown their support by donating chairs and sending technicians. Nancy Kelly, executive director of ADA’s Health Volunteers Overseas, said that several companies have said they will match donations.

To donate to Adopt-a-Practice: Rebuilding Dental Offices in Haiti, please contact Health Volunteers Overseas (HVO) of the ADA foundation at www.hvousa.org or call HVO at (202)-296-0928.

For more information you may also contact the ADA Division of Global Affairs at international@ada.org.

ADA conference to seek oral-health solutions for vulnerable older adults

The American Dental Association (ADA) is extending invitations to those concerned about the oral health of vulnerable older adults and people with disabilities to attend a national conference and help shape the future of oral health care for this underserved and growing population.

The national coalition conference, titled Oral Health of Vulnerable Older Adults and Persons with Disabilities, is scheduled for Thursday, Nov. 18, at the JW Marriott in Washington, D.C.

“We look upon this conference as the first step in building a consensus among a multi-disciplinary group of professionals in seeking solutions about oral health care for the vulnerable older adult and the disabled,” said Dr. Raymond F. Gast, ADA president.

“We are looking for attendees’ ideas, collaboration and support in helping frame the conference’s recommendations that could be used by many sectors, including educational institutions, professional organizations and policy makers.”

Professionals concerned about oral health for vulnerable older adults and people with disabilities, including dentists and dental hygienists, geriatricians, nurses, oral-health advocates, long-term care providers and policy makers and legislative staff, are encouraged to register for the conference.

Dental experts will present topics of critical importance in meeting the oral-health needs of special populations, including collaboration between disciplines, oral-health delivery systems, policy implications, medical-dental considerations and coalition building.

Responding to each presentation will be an expert from outside dentistry, representing geriatric medicine, long-term care, aging advocates, state health and policymakers.

Active audience participation will follow as attendees have the opportunity to provide input as they discuss the presentations.

“The conference is a unique opportunity to help shape the future of oral health care and improve the quality of life for vulnerable older adults and those with disabilities,” said Gist. “We highly encourage interested professionals to attend.”

(Source: American Dental Association)