Orthodontist changes a boy’s life

A specialist orthodontist has won first prize in a national competition for changing a boy’s life through orthodontic treatment.

Orthodontist, John Costello at Total Orthodontics in Tonbridge, Kent, was awarded the trophy for ‘Against the Odds’ at the British Orthodontic Society’s annual conference.

Mr Costello was given first prize for his orthodontic work on 14-year-old James McAuliffe.

James first visited Mr Costello a few days before his 11th birthday in early 2004 when it was discovered he would not develop four adult teeth - the two either side of his contrastingly large front teeth.

X-rays revealed that four upper front teeth were missing and when his milk teeth fell out he would be left ‘Bugs Bunny-like’ with two front teeth in isolation.

The first thing, Mr McAuliffe did was make James a temporary removable retainer brace which had four false adult-sized teeth fixed to it.

The false teeth were shaped in such a way that they slotted over James’ milk teeth and gave him the appearance of a complete dentition and to anyone else he looked like any normal 11-year-old boy with a retainer brace.

James wore the retainer for about a year during the day and had a head brace at night which was designed to make more space conditions for the teeth that would be created to replace his own baby incisors.

The bradgear was attached to the molars at the back of his mouth and helped to draw these backwards opening up space for the front teeth to be moved using braces and bands.

Mr McAuliffe created an orthodontic appliance with a fixed plate that was moulded to the top of James’ mouth, which again had false teeth affixed to it.

With his natural teeth now in the right position and firmly settled, James finally had a bridge fitted to allow permanent replacement teeth to be fitted, and these were fixed to his natural teeth which had been moved to allow space for the four new teeth. This completed the stream-lined appearance of his upper teeth allowing him to smile for the first time in years.

James said: ‘My teeth now look, absolutely amazing. It’s so hard to put into words what a difference my treatment has made. I am now a really confident person and always love to flash people a smile - all thanks to John. All the hard times have been finally worth it and thankfully the bad memories are already fading.’

London dentist treats Cambodians

Lydia Pink, a dentist at Ammol’s dental practice in Tower Bridge Road was accompanied on the trip by two dental therapists. On arrival they worked alongside the Sultan of Brunei’s former dentist who set up the project in Cambodia.

He is working full-time with nurses to help the children, many of whom are orphans or are disabled. Most of the children have HIV and are working in rubbish tips to survive.

Much of Ms Pink’s work included preventative treatment and the team was able to present a year’s supply of fluoride treatment to 10 schools in the country.

Many patients from the Tower Bridge Road practice gave money to help finance the trip.

In 2005, during her final year at King’s Dental Institute at Guy’s Hospital in London, Ms Pink ran a mobile dental clinic in Vietnam with two fellow students. On their trip they performed a hundred extractions and filled 150 teeth. None of the children had seen a dentist before.

Ms Pink is planning to return to Cambodia in six months. Anyone wishing to donate towards further equipment can contact Lydia Pink at thepinkdentist@googlemail.com.

Cycle ride raises £5k

Cyclists raised over £5,000 for the oral health charity Denaid by completing the G2C cycle across the north of the UK.

The ride was organised as part of the Denplan partnership, with the majority of the riders from Denplan practices.

It followed the famous 140 mile route, starting in Whitehaven travelling through the northern Lake District and finishing in Tynemouth.

Jenni Phillips, part of the support team for the cyclists said: ‘The nine cyclists not only battled some huge hills, but also the harsh elements, as they continuously faced heavy rain, gales and flooding I would like to say a big thank you to everyone who supported Denaid and took part in the bike ride, it was great to see everyone’s enthusiasm and commitment to the ride and Denaid’s work. There were some tough conditions but everyone did amazingly well.’

YouTube dental advice

More and more Britons are watching their pennies because of the credit crunch and are trying to do their own teeth whitening after taking advice from YouTube.

Dr Prav Solanki, founder of the Cosmetic Dentistry Guide – a website that offers guidance and information for anyone considering cosmetic dental treatment, claims people are putting their health at risk by getting advice from YouTube rather than a qualified dentist.

‘Our dentists have reported more cases of people turning up with damaged teeth and gums after trying to do their own teeth whitening,’ said Dr Solanki.

He called YouTube home videos ‘irresponsible and dangerous’ for showing people how they brush hydrogen peroxide straight onto the teeth.

Dr Solanki added that some over-the-counter products are ‘fine in principle’ but without the expert guidance of a dentist, he warned that patients could be causing themselves damage that will cost more in the long run.