

DDS DENTAL NEWS

Newsletter

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One Thing Leads to Another: Living the Mission

By Izabella Pulvermacher, DDS Dental Coordinator

Several months ago I participated in the Family Resource Fair in the South Region to promote the importance of oral health to families, individuals and anyone who would listen. There I met, Hugh Caldwell, Director of Adult Programs for Easter Seals. We discussed the new DDS Mission, dental care and how vital it is to take care of one's teeth. We both agreed that some individuals have a huge fear of going to the dentist which makes it difficult to receive proper care. Additionally, dental health needs to start at home with proper mouth care, such as tooth brushing and flossing.



A week later I was invited by Corinne Renaldi RN Supervisor, from Easter Seals, to talk to the day program participants about proper tooth brushing, why we need teeth and why visiting a dental professional is important. Many participants said that they did not like going to the dentist. After our conversation, many individuals promised to try to brush better and said that they would consider going to the dental office for a checkup. It was a delightful afternoon of learning, sharing, listening and brainstorming.

Corinne and Kathy Buck, the Assistant Director of Adult Programs, also gave me a tour of the facility and showed me a sensory room that is used by individuals for relaxation and to develop new life skills. While discussing the sensory room we both wished that we could create a Dental Sensory Room which would allow the individuals to see, feel, touch and sit in a dental chair in a pleasant and happy environment.

We found a donated dental chair and a dental cart. The Easter Seals Staff transformed an empty room into a beautiful, mock dental office. Parents and guardians were notified and permission was obtained for individuals to experience the "Dental Sensory Room".

Virtually overnight my dream of a "Dental Sensory Room" became a reality. The goal of the program is to introduce the individual to the dental office environment and to make it fun. I come twice a month. Each person who signs up for the program comes with staff and I introduce myself, tell them why they are there, and ask them to sit in the dental chair. Then I put on gloves and gently touch their face. Then I proceed to ask them to open their mouth and if they are willing I proceed to brush their teeth. I always take a break between each step; making sure that the person is comfortable. I always start with the same steps each time and only move forward if the person is ready. We always make sure to end on a happy note. (Continued on next page)





One Thing Leads to Another: Living the Mission (continued)



The progress has been amazing! On the first day of my visit, several individuals only came to the door, peaked in, and left. Now these individuals actually come in, sit in the chair, and allow me to brush their teeth. During my last visit, one individual brought her friend, so she could check out the room. Each visit has been a very productive experience for all. I know I'm not supposed to have favorite places, but Easter Seals is becoming one of my special places to visit.



NEW SMILES IN THE DDS DENTAL WORLD

Dr. Alesia Burge graduated from the University of Connecticut with a Bachelor's Degree in Biology and earned a Master's degree in Public Health from the University of Connecticut. It was during her Master's program that she truly began to delve into the many facets of public health and dentistry by shadowing, volunteering and through hands-on enrichment programs. Furthermore, she published scientific articles in addiction science and became fascinated with dental medicine. Dr. Burge went on to graduate from Tufts University School of Dental Medicine. While pursuing degrees in higher education, she worked in direct care at numerous group homes in Connecticut and Massachusetts. Following dental school, Dr. Burge has worked in both private practice and nursing home settings. She is an active member of the American Dental Association, the National Dental Association and the Connecticut Dental Association. Dr. Burge feels blessed in fulfilling her lifelong dream of being a dentist and making a difference in her patients' lives daily. In her spare time, Dr. Burge enjoys reading and traveling.

Julie Michalski joined the DDS Norwich Dental Clinic three months ago. She has over twenty years of diverse dental assisting experience. Her first dental practice experience included working in private practice. Following private practice, she held positions at Generations Health Center and United Community and Family Services (UCFS). Her experience at these public health clinics gave her the opportunity to work with individuals from various backgrounds. At Generations and UCFS, she was able to further polish her dental assisting skills in denture fabrication, fillings, crown and bridge, root canal therapy and sedation procedures. She has also worked in geriatric care with individuals with dementia, Alzheimer's and various neurological conditions. Mrs. Michalski is married with two children, ages 15 and 13. In her spare time, she enjoys camping with her family and taking walks with her two yellow Labrador Retrievers, Eli and Osi.

DDS West Region welcomes **Kyle Brasile** to the Ella Grasso Dental Team. Kyle has been a dental assistant for over 35 years. According to Kyle, "I love what I do, and every day working at Ella Grasso with Sherry makes me love it more!" Her attitude and passion is contagious and she is becoming a wonderful advocate for the individuals who receive services from DDS. When she is not at Ella Grasso, she works with Dr. Stephen Stanley in Hamden, who according to her and Sherry is the best dentist in the world! Kyle has been married for almost 30 years and has two wonderful children. Kyle we are thrilled that you are part of our team!