



Delta Dental Health Theatre to host Great Candy Exchange - Nov. 5

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ST. LOUIS, MO., OCTOBER 17, 2011... With approximately 598 million pounds of candy sold during the Halloween season - it's no wonder children are able to acquire an overabundant stash of sugary treats. To encourage healthier Halloween habits, fight dental disease and support our troops, the Delta Dental Health Theatre is hosting its second annual Great Candy Exchange event. On Saturday, Nov. 5, area children and their families are invited to the theatre (727 N. First Street in downtown St. Louis on Laclede's Landing) for a free day of active fun from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. where guests can exchange their unopened, packaged candy for chances to win great prizes. All collected candy will be sent to the troops, along with toothbrushes, through A Soldier's Wish List.

The Great Candy Exchange will feature interactive games, face painting, balloon art, shows, prizes and a meet and greet with Delta Dental's Tooth Wizard and PlaqueMan characters, as well as a host of other characters including the Tooth Fairy, Buzz Lightyear, Dora the Explorer and Diego. Guests are encouraged to come in costume and have their pictures taken in the fun photo booth.

A Soldier's Wish List will also have a booth set up to talk about their volunteer opportunities and "adopt a military family" holiday program to help kids of military personnel get gifts from their parents serving overseas. And, they will have a large monitor connected to Skype so costumed kids can connect with their loved ones stationed abroad.

"Candy is what Halloween is all about, and there is nothing wrong with an occasional sweet treat, as long as it's enjoyed after a nutritious meal and followed by a thorough cleaning," stated Shannon Woodcock, executive director of the Delta Dental Health Theatre. "The problem lies in the volume of candy received by today's trick-or-treaters.

Kids are left munching on candy for weeks, even months, which is bad for their teeth and their bodies. This event will not only help to get children excited about turning their candy in for prizes that encourage healthy habits and active play, it also gives us a chance to send treats to our troops to help show our appreciation for their service."

Area schools, clubs and organizations are also encouraged to get involved. The participating classroom, club or organization that surrenders the most candy by weight will receive free admission to a 2012 show at the Delta Dental Health Theatre. The school with the highest attendance will receive a \$250 donation to buy books for their library, courtesy of Delta Dental of Missouri.

The Delta Dental Health Theatre will be collecting canned food items during the event for Operation Food Search.

"At our inaugural Great Candy Exchange we collected 350 pounds of candy," commented Woodcock. "While we are aiming to exceed that amount, our goal is to reinforce the importance of making healthy food choices, eating a full nutritious meal before indulging in sugary treats and understanding how one's dental health and overall health go hand in hand."

To learn more about the Delta Dental Health Theatre, its programming or the Great Candy Exchange event, call 314-241-7391, visit www.ddhtstl.org or follow us on Twitter @YoucanToucan.

The Delta Dental Health Theatre was originally organized as a program under the Foundation of the Greater St. Louis Dental Society in 1977. In 2002, it was incorporated as an independent 501(c) (3) not-for-profit organization. Six years ago, Delta Dental of Missouri became a major corporate sponsor supporting the theatre's mission to improve the overall oral health and healthy habits of children and families. The theatre is located on Laclede's Landing in the same building as the Old Spaghetti Factory.