

# Free dental care at annual Give Kids a Smile Day at SIU School of Dental Medicine

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ALTON - Southern Illinois University's School of Dental Medicine (SIU SDM) is urging parents of qualified children between the ages of 3 and 13 to bring their children to its 12<sup>th</sup> annual Give Kids A Smile Day from 7:30 a.m. to noon, Monday, Oct. 9 at the School's main clinic in building 263, 2800 College Ave. in Alton.

Setting Give Kids a Smile Day apart is [free comprehensive dental care](#), including examinations, X-rays, cleanings, fluoride treatments, fillings and extractions. All dental services will be provided by SIU SDM faculty, students and staff, members of the Madison and St. Clair district dental societies, and Lewis and Clark Community College dental assisting and dental hygiene faculty and students. Professionals and volunteers from the community will also participate.

Children qualified to participate in the event are those eligible for free and reduced-priced meal programs.

“We are excited and prepared to provide treatment to hundreds of children. We especially hope those needing urgent dental care will come see us. This is a wonderful opportunity to have dental concerns addressed and have some fun at the same time,” said Dr. Katie Kosten, assistant professor in the SIU SDM and director of community dentistry. “Each child must be accompanied by a parent or guardian in order to be treated. Apart from dental treatment, we’ll provide education, games, and some additional health screenings for all children who participate.”

Give Kids A Smile Day is a national event sponsored by the American Dental Association to provide free dental treatment for underserved children. The event is organized to promote community awareness of the need for dental services among the underserved.

In Alton, the one-day event allows an average of more than 200 children to receive care from dental professionals each year. The volunteer dentists and staff offer an annual average of more than \$50,000 in preventive, restorative and surgical treatment for the children who participate.

Fun activities for children will take place throughout the event. As the wait and treatment may sometimes take several hours, parents are encouraged to bring food with them for young children. First-year dental students from the SIU School of Dental Medicine will host a “Smile Station” featuring fun, educational activities and games to help children learn the importance of a good diet and oral hygiene.

For more information, contact Valerie Donahue from the School of Dental Medicine at [\(618\) 474-7200](tel:(618)474-7200) or [vdonahu@siue.edu](mailto:vdonahu@siue.edu). While pre-registration is preferred, it is not required. Walk-ins are welcome between 7:30 a.m.-noon.

[The SIU School of Dental Medicine](#) students manage approximately 35,000 patient visits each year at its patient clinics in Alton and East St. Louis. In addition, students offer oral health treatment, screenings and education to more than 10,000 people annually through a wide variety of off-campus community outreach events. These opportunities provide students the training they need to graduate and become highly skilled dentists. The School of Dental Medicine is a vital oral health care provider for residents of southern and central Illinois, and the St. Louis metropolitan region.