

# Free dental care at annual Give Kids A Smile Day at SIU School of Dental Medicine on Oct. 8

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ALTON - Southern Illinois University's School of Dental Medicine (SIU SDM) invites parents of qualified children between the ages of 3-13 to attend the 13<sup>th</sup> annual Give Kids A Smile Day from 7:30 a.m. to noon on Columbus Day, Monday, Oct. 8 at the School's main clinic in building 263, 2800 College Ave. in Alton.

Children qualified to participate in the event are those eligible for free and reduced-priced meal programs. Pre-registration is not required. Registration begins at 7:30 a.m. in the gym, building 281, located on Annex St. off College Ave. and closes at noon.

A parent or guardian must accompany each child in order to be treated. 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 a healthy snack with them for young children. First-year dental students from the SIU School of Dental Medicine will host a variety of "Smile Stations" featuring fun, educational activities and games to help children learn the importance of a good diet and oral hygiene.

Give Kids a Smile Day offers [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, and Lewis and Clark Community College dental assisting and dental hygiene faculty and students. Professionals and volunteers from the community also participate.

"Our annual Columbus Day event provides a wonderful opportunity to provide treatment to hundreds of children," said Dr. Katie Kosten, assistant professor in the SIU SDM and director of community dentistry. "The holiday affords those needing urgent dental care to come see us. Children have their dental concerns addressed and have some fun at the same time."

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.

Because Give Kids a Smile Day is held on a holiday when school is not in session, an annual average of more than 200 children receive care from dental professionals at the SDM. 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.

For more information, contact Valerie Donahue from the School of Dental Medicine at (618) 474-7200 or [vdonahu@siue.edu](mailto:vdonahu@siue.edu).

[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.