

First Teeth First

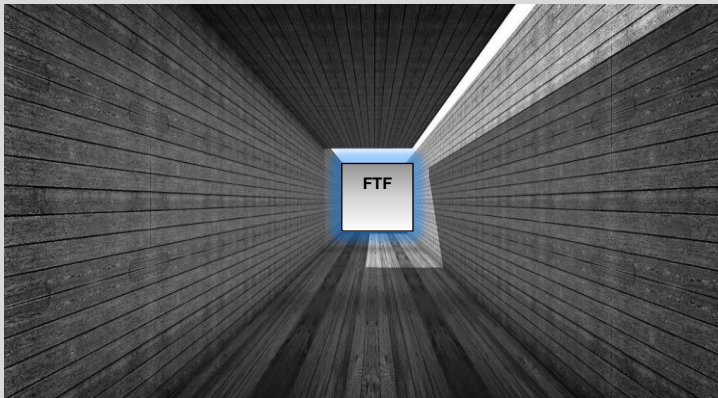
April 2021
Newsletter Edition 6

Coordinator's Corner



There is light at the end of the tunnel...truer words have never been spoken. With an increase in vaccine distribution, we are beginning to see that light. I am happy to report that the First Teeth First program is seeing this light also. We have been able to go back into childcare centers and preschools and participate in community

events. January through March, we provided over **2,100** dental screenings to children 0-5 years and 64 expectant mothers. We completed over 230 referrals to assist families in establishing a dental home, of which 16 referrals were urgent oral health cases. We participated in 30 outreach events providing services to our community in childcare centers and preschools. More than ever, programs like ours are of great importance to help families that have been impacted during this Covid-19 pandemic. I am excited for you to read the great work our program is doing. We are committed to serving those communities most in need and are happy to partner with any agency that provides services to families of young children. If you are interested in partnering with our program, please contact me directly at Berenise.Bauer@maricopa.gov or at (602) 372-4650.

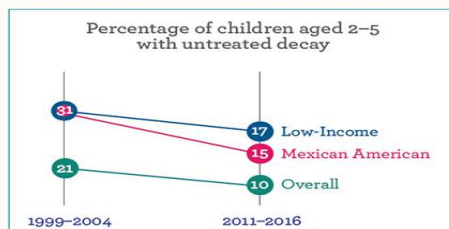


"There is a light at the end of every tunnel. Some tunnels just happen to be longer than others."

Untreated tooth decay declined in young children



Since 1999-2004, the prevalence of **untreated tooth decay** in primary teeth of children aged 2-5 years **has dropped by half.**



Mexican American and low-income children saw the **greatest declines.**

- CDC



Zoom in with a Registered Dental Hygienist

- Need help finding a dentist?
- Concerned about your oral health during pregnancy?
- Need to learn more about your baby/child's oral health?

Many of the children and expectant mothers that First Teeth First serves are facing unprecedented barriers to oral health care, including cost, lack of insurance, transportation, and accessibility to quality providers. Those barriers are often the largest for underrepresented expectant mothers living in multi-generational households due to family obligations. There is no one solution for all these problems. Still, First Teeth First uses the innovation of teledentistry to educate and empower while providing quality virtual oral screenings by a registered dental hygienist. Interested in a free virtual appt. or more information contact:

(602)-506-6842 - Central Phoenix
(480)-728-5709 - East Valley



Children's Oral Health Care Commitment

William's Success Story by Elizabeth Payan

It is impossible for First Teeth First (FTF) to fully help the most vulnerable children in our community without our partnered and community dentists' committed support. The benefits are not only to the children's immediate oral health but also to the direct impact on their overall health and social well-being.



FTF would like to share the success story of William as an excellent example of the dedication from our partnered pediatric dentists. William and his family immigrated to the U.S. two years ago from Guatemala. Blanca, William's mom, shared that the past two years have been difficult for her and her husband. Blanca found support through Child Crisis Arizona, an organization dedicated to helping children and families. Child Crisis Arizona reached out to Elizabeth Payan (FTF Social Worker) and referred William to our program. In September of 2020, William and his mom came into the Roosevelt Clinic. During the screening, we learned William had visited our services previously in July of 2019, and the hygienist found possible decay on four teeth. He was referred to a community dental clinic, where his parents took him for a dental exam. Unfortunately, his parents could not afford the cost of treatment, and William did not receive the dental care he needed.

Now a year later, Amber Malone, RDH, found that William had still not had his dental needs met. We knew William required immediate dental care to avoid further decay. With the assistance and support from Elizabeth, she connected the family to Kids Klub Pediatric Dentistry. In November 2020, Elizabeth contacted the clinic and agreed to schedule a dental exam for William. William received a dental exam from Dr. Sara Bukhari, and it was determined that William would need to be put under general anesthesia. Dr. Bukhari would be providing the dental treatment for William at no cost; however, the parents would be responsible for general anesthesia. William's mom acknowledged not having the means to pay for the procedure and asked for time to think. Elizabeth offered the idea of setting a goal to save money for William's treatment. Blanca discussed the idea with her husband, and they both agreed this was important for William's well-being. They agreed to begin saving money and decided that a time frame of 4-5 months would allow them to reach the goal. Elizabeth placed monthly follow-up calls to check in with Blanca on their progress. In February 2021, Elizabeth was so happy to hear that they had reached their goal of saving the anesthesia cost for William's treatment. In March 2021, William had treatment completed by Dr. Bukhari at no charge. During the appointment, we received great news; the anesthesiologist decided to also waive his fee. The treatment included two crowns, five fillings, and four sealants. Blanca was very thankful for Dr. Bukhari, her dental team, and the anesthesiologist, Dr. Asaad Khan.

Our partnered pediatric dentists, such as Dr. Bukhari and her team of professionals, have aimed to provide, without hesitation, urgent oral health care to those children in the community that are most in need. FTF is grateful for the firm and respectful relationships with our partnered dental professionals.

Dr. Sara Bukhari is a diligent and conscientious certified pediatric dentist serving children ages 1 through 18 at Kids Klub Pediatric Dentistry in Phoenix, Arizona.



Farewell From Micki Banks, RDH, AP

For the last four years, I have called the FTF program my home. I have been abundantly blessed to work with incredible people who exemplify what it means to "lead with love." Working for FTF has been the most fulfilling and insightful time of my 37-year career. I am thankful to the internal staff for "not clipping my wings." Allowing me to fly close to the sun, gave me the awareness of my talents and potential. The FTF style of leadership needs to be emulated by other organizations.

Our site assistants are the backbone of FTF. What a fantastic group of intelligent, compassionate, and skillful women. Their stories brought me to a place of understanding of people that I could not have come to on my own. The decision to leave a job I love was difficult, only eased by the knowledge that I will take the lessons of leadership, kindness, and friendship with me on my next adventure. Until we meet again, Micki Banks.

The Impact of Covid-19 Children's Oral Health

First Teeth First Perspective by Sandra Gorayeb and Jahaziel Linare, LMSW

It is well understood that low socioeconomic status, limited oral health awareness, and physical factors such as poor nutrition and lack of oral health care access are associated with poor oral health. Yet, these areas of concern have been overexposed more than ever during the Covid-19 pandemic. First Teeth First (FTF) has noticed many families lacking dental insurance due to the job loss from the pandemic, and unfortunately, leaving some children more prone to dental issues. Also, the FTF hygienists have observed children consuming more unhealthy food alternatives out of convenience and accessibility. These concerns have directed our hygienists to be more sensitive and creative in their approach with families. Our program was also impacted due to school closures, thus leaving any opportunities for preventative care or early interventions in the dark. Lastly, throughout our referral process, some parents noted being anxious about going to the dental office during a pandemic and potentially exposing their kids or themselves to the virus. To conclude, oral health agencies and specialists need to be culturally and financially aware of the long-lasting effects of the pandemic on children's oral health. From a First Teeth First perspective, the drawing below illustrates the constant battle between our team of professionals and the pandemic.

First Teeth First Vs. Covid-19 Pandemic



First Teeth First in Action



Together we all can help eliminate the nation's No. 1 chronic childhood disease: Dental Caries!