



## Event aims to improve dental care for Q-C kids

Deirdre Cox Baker | Posted: Friday, February 5, 2010 11:45 pm

Morgan Lamp sat patiently in the dentist's lobby Friday morning, waiting her turn for a checkup.

"I brush my teeth every day because I don't want plaque to build up," said Morgan, 10, who is in the fourth grade at Monroe Elementary School in Davenport. She and about 350 other children took part in the eighth Give Kids a Smile Day, an event to promote dental health care for underserved children.

"I don't have any cavities that I know of," she said, adding that it was a bit boring in the waiting room shared by four Bettendorf dentists among the 92 volunteer professionals in the Quad-Cities who treat the youngsters as part of the annual effort.

"What's so nice about this program is that it is helped by school nurse recommendations," said Dr. Fred Burnham, whose Bettendorf practice has been involved with the event from its beginning. "It is a collaboration on both sides of the river."

The event was organized this year by Bethany for Children and Families. The Moline-based agency partners with area schools to identify eligible youth. The 92 dentists and their staffs give oral exams, take X-rays, clean the teeth and spray on fluoride to prevent cavities. They also provide follow-up treatment in more difficult cases.

"About one-third of the kids will have serious decay," said Dr. Kyle Gagliardo, who practices with Burnham.

Donated dental supplies, including a new toothbrush, were given to each young participant.

Give Kids A Smile Day was begun in 2003 and has served 2,300 children in the Quad-City area. The dentists and their staffs have donated more than \$1 million worth of services.

The National Institutes of Health reports that 80 percent of tooth decay is found in 25 percent of children, mostly from low-income families. "With a down economy and shrinking dollars in the social services sector, this year's event proved to be our most challenging," said Jim Bishop, the chairman of the event's advisory board.

"Our national model of donated dental services was in jeopardy, but thanks to Bethany for Children and Families, we were able to pool our resources and bring everyone's talents together. We are once again looking at ways to improve the program and expand our reach."