

First Teeth First

Nov. 2021
Newsletter Edition 7

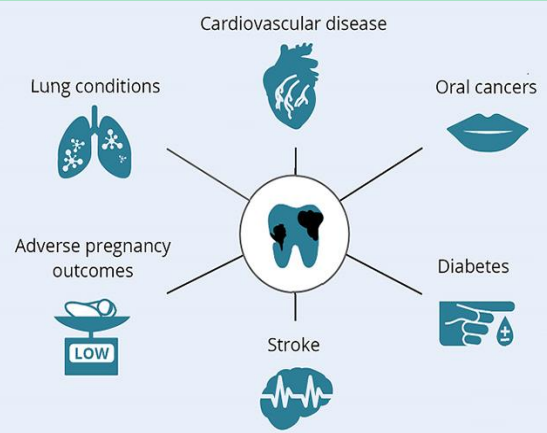
Coordinator's Corner



Collaboration – “The action of working with someone to produce or create something.” First Teeth First is seeking partners to collaborate so we can provide our dental screenings, referral, and navigation services to families with children 0-5 years and expectant mothers. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, our program’s ability

to reach children where parents can be present has been severely impacted. The closure of the Women, Infant, and Children (WIC) offices has been detrimental to our services and the families we serve. The pandemic has caused many families to put oral health on the back burner, and decay does not pause because of a pandemic. We are here to help those families but need your help in reaching them.

We are happy to report that we have been able to increase our screening events at childcare centers, preschools, and community events. If you are interested in collaborating with First Teeth First, please contact me at Berenise.Bauer@maricopa.gov or 602-372-4650.



Success Story

Mmeet Lian, a child full of resiliency in search of a smile. Our program screened Lian in Feb. 2020 pre-pandemic without any signs of decay. At the time, FTF attempted to establish a dental home for the child, but lost communication with the family. Fast forward, a year and a half later, the mother came urgently searching for our FTF program due to Lian being unable to eat solid food and experiencing tooth pain. She was concerned that her child was losing weight and unable to sleep at night due to the pain. Lian was re-screened by our program in Sept. 2021 and determined that he had urgent dental needs. During the screening, the social worker and hygienist observed that Lian was verbally delayed for his age and exhibited erratic mood swings. The mother confirmed that Lian’s lack of sleep was affecting his mood and school performance. Previously the child was receiving low-cost dental services at a Community Health Center but was referred to a private clinic due to his behavior and the need for general anesthesia. Yet, the family could not afford care from the private clinic due to the high cost of treatment. Given his conditions and lack of insurance, the mother committed to working with our social worker to seek dental care for Lian. The social worker connected the child with the **PDS Foundation Dentists for Special Needs**, who kindly and patiently provided services at no cost. Lian received care from Dr. Jourabchi, who avoided using general anesthesia to treat Lian’s dental needs. The mother and FTF are very thankful to Dr. Jourabchi and the staff for showing compassion to the most vulnerable children we serve!

Poor families spend **10 Times** more of their income on dental care than wealthier families. - CareQuest

93% of individuals living in poverty have unmet dental needs, compared with 58% in high-income families. - CareQuest

Compassion Fatigue by Dara Flores, MS, RDH

What is compassion fatigue? It is work-related exhaustion that can cause depression, loss of energy, feeling disconnected from work and/or home life, and a whole host of other concerns.

Over the last year and a half, the overall health of most patients seems to have declined. We see firsthand the complications of the pandemic and how it has impacted oral health. As we care for patients, we must remember to take a moment to focus on why we do what we do and how vital our role is. Oral health essential to overall health, and our services are needed now more than ever. Your compassion for others helps you keep doing your best work while providing the necessary care to make a genuine difference.

Whether you are in a direct clinical role, a social worker, or another role behind the scenes helping our programs run - I want to say your work matters and thank you! Below you can find a link to learn more about compassion fatigue theory and tools, along with excellent resources.



Professional Quality of Life

<https://proqol.org/>



Note from the Social Worker Elizabeth Payan, BSW

I was born and raised in Phoenix, my husband and I have three children. I have been part of the FTF team for two and a half years. As a Social Worker, I work closely with expectant mothers, assisting them with the referral navigation process. While meeting expectant mothers at their initial dental visit, I have learned that they want to be their healthiest during their pregnancy. The most common concern expressed; Is it safe to visit the dentist during pregnancy? I want expectant mothers to know **IT IS SAFE**; in fact, before delivery it is an important part of prenatal care. The message I want expectant mothers to take with them is that receiving dental care during pregnancy is one of the things they can do to have a healthy pregnancy.

The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away.

Office of Oral Health – Outreach Specialists

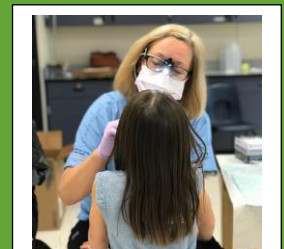
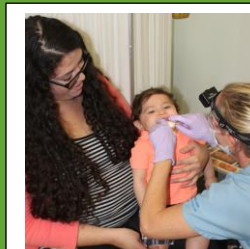
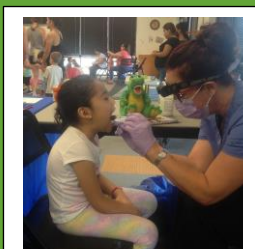
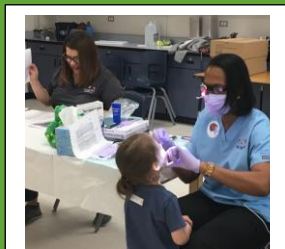
First Teeth First recognizes the essential contributions of the outreach specialists in assisting underserved communities and promoting oral health one child at a time. They perform a vital role in empowering, educating, and advocating about dental health issues in a culturally sensitive and non-judgmental manner. The outreach specialists collaborate with the program administrators to challenge existing obstacles to reach as many children in need as possible, especially conducting outreach in low-income regions. They also diligently support a team of public health hygienists, social workers, and site assistants to address oral health concerns. They consistently strive to develop and implement new strategies to improve the community's oral health with eagerness and a smile!

“Use your Smile to change the world, don’t let the world change your Smile”



(L - R): Sandra G., Jiny D., Gladys A.

First Teeth First in Action



Together we all can help eliminate the nation's No. 1 chronic childhood illness: pediatric dental disease!