

Delta Dental of Oklahoma Honored for Its Statewide Charitable Efforts

Oklahoma's largest provider of dental benefits receives Beacon Award for its ongoing support of dental health and educational outreach initiatives.

OKLAHOMA CITY, Okla., July 16 (SEND2PRESS NEWSWIRE) – Delta Dental of Oklahoma was recently honored for its contributions to the state's nonprofit community. The Beacon Award honors 24 statewide businesses that have played instrumental roles in supporting nonprofit programs that help so many Oklahomans in need; the program recognizes finalists in six categories, with a Beacon Award winner in each category. Delta Dental of Oklahoma received the overall Beacon Award for philanthropic impact in the small business category, which represents companies of 100 employees or fewer.

This Beacon Award honor helps demonstrate the fact that Delta Dental of Oklahoma (DDOK) is even more than the state's largest dental benefits provider. DDOK's core mission is to facilitate the delivery of dental care to as many Oklahomans as possible – with or without dental insurance. The Delta Dental of Oklahoma Charitable Foundation was established in 1998 to help fulfill that mission, as well as to advance oral health education.

“There is so much need in Oklahoma, and we are in a unique position to dramatically improve the availability of more care and education,” said John Gladden, Delta Dental of Oklahoma president and CEO. “Our hope is to be able to grow funding to provide further support to dental professionals volunteering their time and make our charitable foundation the hub of benevolent dental care for all Oklahomans. We believe it's our responsibility to do so.”

In its first 10 years, the Delta Dental of Oklahoma Charitable Foundation contributed nearly \$2 million to dozens of dental health and education projects and initiatives statewide. Realizing that even more could be achieved with additional funding, the DDOK board of directors amplified funding to the Foundation to nearly \$1.4 million for 2009. This represented an increase of more than 300 percent over the previous year.

“For more than a decade, the Delta Dental of Oklahoma Charitable Foundation has increasingly supported oral health and education throughout the state. This has resulted in significant social and economic benefits, and it has helped improve the lives and oral health of countless Oklahomans,” said Terrisa Singleton, Delta Dental of Oklahoma Charitable Foundation Specialist.

Some of the outreach programs include Captain Supertooth, who has helped more than 125,000 grade school children across Oklahoma take pride in their teeth and understand the importance of oral health. The Foundation also supports the Special Olympics Healthy Athletes/Special Smiles Program, as well as numerous Give Kids a Smile projects in which volunteer dental professionals take oral health education, screening and dental care to disadvantaged grade

school students.

In addition, the Delta Dental of Oklahoma Charitable Foundation works to expand access to dental care by providing grants to free and low-cost dental clinics and programs statewide. These programs make oral health accessible to thousands of uninsured, underserved and low-income Oklahomans. In addition, the Foundation demonstrates its commitment to the advancement of dentistry by providing \$100 thousand in annual support of the OU College of Dentistry's clinic, where faculty-supervised dental students gain valuable hands-on experience. The Foundation also provides \$50 thousand in scholarships annually to 10 OU College of Dentistry students.

The [Delta Dental of Oklahoma Charitable Foundation](#) is the philanthropic affiliate of Delta Dental of Oklahoma and is the state's single largest contributor to dental health and education-related projects and initiatives. [Delta Dental of Oklahoma](#) is a not-for-profit corporation providing dental coverage to individuals, families, small businesses and Fortune 500 corporations located across the state and nation.

For more information about the Foundation or to download a directory of free and low-cost dental care resources throughout the state, visit www.DeltaDentalok.org/foundation.

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