

IMPROVING THE ORAL HEALTH OF ALL AUSTRALIANS

ANNOUNCING THE 2011 WRIGLEY COMPANY FOUNDATION ADA COMMUNITY SERVICE GRANT RECIPIENTS

The average Australian will suffer serious tooth decay in at least 10 teeth by the time they reach their 30's,¹ with the worst affected being low income, single parent families and rural and indigenous communities. This year, the ADA and Wrigley joined forces to launch The Wrigley Company Foundation ADA Community Service Grants program, which aims to address the gaps in oral care among some of our neediest communities.

During Dental Health Week 2011, seven outstanding community service projects were each awarded a grant of \$5,000 to help them raise the standard of oral healthcare within their communities.

"I was extremely impressed by the number and quality of applications that we received in the pilot year of our partnership with Wrigley; the Grant Review Panel had a tough time choosing just seven recipients, but I believe that this year's projects will make a direct and very real difference to the communities where they are working," said ADA Federal President, Dr Shane Fryer.

PARTNERING WITH INDIGENOUS COMMUNITIES

The oral health situation in many remote Indigenous communities is at crisis point. Indigenous children experience significantly poorer standards of oral health, with Indigenous four-year-olds having three times the number of decayed teeth compared to their non-Indigenous counterparts.² Indigenous communities have reduced access to fluoridated water and greater exposure to risk factors such as poor diet, alcohol and diabetes.

- **Filling the Gap** provides recruits volunteer dentists to be placed for 1–2 weeks in the two fully equipped – but unstaffed – dental rooms in Wuchopperen, Far North Qld. Filling the Gap will use their grant to help expand the success of this model to another remote Indigenous community in northern NSW. www.fillingthegap.com.au
- **The Tooth Mob** volunteer program facilitates dental health treatment and trains staff in remote Indigenous communities of the Katherine, NT. The grant will secure and place two dentists and two dental nurses in local clinics for up to ten days. www.perkinstrust.com.au
- **HOPE4HEALTH**, a student-run Griffith University initiative, has established an Emergency Dental Clinic at Cherbourg, QLD to provide dental care and oral health education. The Grant will fund the transportation of volunteers to Cherbourg and assist in providing basic equipment for dental treatments. www.hope4health.org.au

HOMELESS AND LOW INCOME PEOPLE IN METROPOLITAN AREAS

The Australian Bureau of Statistics estimates that on any given night some 105,000 people are homeless or without adequate shelter. Despite their proximity to some of our most

affluent areas, these vulnerable people simply cannot access oral healthcare when they need it. Dental treatment can help pave the way to becoming productive and self supporting members of the community again, by improving oral health, speech, presentation and self esteem.

- **The National Dental Foundation NSW's** Dental Rescue Days provide a simple way for dentists to volunteer their time to provide care to patients from a range of charities. The Grant will provide transportation for patients to the volunteer dental surgeries and provide dental materials for up to 20 practices. www.nationaldentalfoundation.org.au
- **The University of Adelaide** is setting up a clinic that aims to provide access to basic oral healthcare services for homeless people in Adelaide, staffed by students and volunteer dentists. The grant will help develop educational materials for dental personnel at the new CBD clinic.
- **Absolute Dental Care** in QLD aims to educate children and adolescents from disadvantaged families on the importance of oral hygiene and prevention of dental problems before they arise. The Grant will help to fund the training sessions and the materials required to conduct them.

IMPROVING ACCESS TO SPECIAL NEEDS DENTISTRY

Providing dental care to people with a physical or intellectual disability can present many challenges. Many dental surgeries are simply not well-equipped to treat people with special needs. For children or adults with cerebral palsy, the associated muscle spasms, teeth grinding and swallowing difficulties can make a routine dental check-up painful and uncomfortable. Due to the nature of the disability the transfer between wheelchairs and dental chairs makes treatment, at times, impossible.

- **The Cerebral Palsy Alliance** is building a specialised dental clinic for people with cerebral palsy: the first of its kind in Australia. The Grant will fund a specialised wheelchair ramp that will allow dentists to treat patients in their wheelchairs. www.cerebralpalsy.org.au

WRIGLEY
A Subsidiary of Mars, Incorporated

ADA
AUSTRALIAN DENTAL
ASSOCIATION INC.

Further information about The Wrigley Company Foundation ADA Community Service Grants program can be found at www.ada.org.au

References supplied by the author are available on request from newsbull@ada.org.au