

# DENTAL HEALTH



Shammam

## Different Back to School Preparations Amid COVID-19 Pandemic

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Co-Chair, Dental Health Committee

As the summer months come to a close, communities all around the Greater Houston area begin their back to school preparations to get ready for another academic year. During this same time, our Dental Health Committee at the Greater Houston Dental Society is usually occupied partnering with our allied organizations to help host area Back to School programs. Each year, we extend our efforts to draw smiles on children's faces and their families while helping in health fairs whether it is with the Children's Assessment Center, Mayor's Back to School Festival, Alief ISD Health Fair, or San Jose Clinic Back to School events.

These Back to School programs help alleviate some of the financial burden experienced by many local families. Essential items are being provided to participating children and teens such as backpacks, school supplies, clothes, healthcare and more. All this is critical to support our communities' youth to be successful in their educational journey.

The GHDS has taken part in these annual programs with volunteers from the GHDS, the University of Texas School of Dentistry-Houston ASDA Chapter, the University of Houston ASDA Pre dental Society, and other organizations who help represent our Society at the onsite booths. In addition to their onsite presence, these individuals worked tirelessly to assemble goodie bags with educational oral hygiene instructions and donated supplies such as toothpaste, floss, along with information for parents seeking dental care for their children. Furthermore, there have been events where the GHDS volunteers provided other opportunities for free exams, sealants, and fluoride varnishes. Last year, we treated more than 240 children in combination at these events.

This year has been different in many aspects due to the COVID-19 pandemic. Among those challenges are the limitations we are facing to physically provide our helping hands to serve our communities. As uncertainty remains regarding reopening plans across the country, we are saddened that many events have been canceled and we were not able to provide help this year as we always have. On the other hand, we are always an open door for any organization that is in need of help from our committee to benefit the community.

As news and events continue to unfold in those coming months, we hope that we will be back to volunteering soon to serve our community, once again. We welcome your ideas on how we might continue to serve our neighbors and promote the image of the dental profession via Ms. Smith, Dental Health Staff Liaison, (713) 961-4337 or email [jsmith@ghds.org](mailto:jsmith@ghds.org).



(Top and R) Children attending with their families are pictured with our volunteers having fun learning about good oral health habits at past years Back to School events around the Greater Houston area.



(Bottom photo, far L) Dr. Rana Shammam is pictured as a dental student volunteering with Dr. Amanda Wolf and again (Top photo, far R) with student volunteers at the annual Back to School Program, Children's Assessment Center.

