Dear alumni and friends,

It is truly a pleasure for me to inform you about the recent activities of the Department of Pediatric Dentistry of The University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston (UTHealth) Dental Branch.

UTDB faculty, staff, pediatric dentistry residents, dental students and dental hygiene students—along with private practitioners and other community lay people—volunteered to provide oral screenings, nutritional counseling, hygiene instructions and fluoride varnish applications. Dr. Cathy Flaitz and Dr. Bhavini Acharya coordinated the event.

Dr. Regina Lewis, part-time clinical assistant professor, was selected as one of 38 dental educators nationwide for the 2010 American Dental Education Association/Academic Leadership Institute for Teaching and Learning. This intensive faculty-development program is for those professionals transitioning from private practice to full-time academic careers. Dr. Lewis maintains a private pediatric dentistry practice in Houston. She completed the training program in October. Congratulations, Regina!

Dr. Bhavini Acharya, full-time assistant professor, was appointed UTDB Houston Medical Center Pediatric Dentistry Clinic Director in December. (See related story Page 2)

Dr. Jennifer Hill was the featured speaker at the Head and Neck Spore Investigator’s Meeting at the UT M.D. Anderson Cancer Center in Houston in June. Her presentation was entitled: “A new mutagenesis tool identifies treatment resistance in head and neck cancer.” She was also recently awarded two Career Development Grants, one for the same topic as her presentation, and the other for “Transposon Insertions Uncover Driver Genes in Salivary Gland Carcinogenesis.”

Dr. Robert Tate, full-time associate professor, completed the board certification process of the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry and has been awarded diplomate status. Congratulations, Bob!

Forty-five UTDB and Greater Houston Dental Society volunteers worked at the Special Olympics Houston Area Family Resource and Health Fair, screening children and adults with intellectual disabilities. Students, residents, pediatric dental faculty and community dentists and dental hygienists provided oral health screenings, nutritional counseling, hygiene instructions and fluoride varnish applications. Dr. Cathy Flaitz and Dr. Bhavini Acharya coordinated the event.

From the Chair’s Desk

Sanford J. Fenton
DDS, MDS

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UTDB faculty, staff, pediatric dentistry residents, dental students and dental hygiene students—along with private practitioners and other community lay people—volunteered to provide oral screenings, nutritional counseling and oral hygiene instruction for athletes participating in the inaugural Greater Houston Special Olympics Health Fair on the University of Houston campus in September. Residents, students and faculty also volunteered to provide oral health information during the Teddy Bear Check-Up Event at the Houston Health Museum in December.

In 2010, departmental faculty conducted 33 continuing education programs to local community-based study clubs, the UTHealth Pediatric Medicine Residency Program, Pediatric Education Dental Society (PEDS), UT M.D. Anderson...
Featured Faculty Member: Dr. Bhavini Acharya

Bhavini Acharya, BDS, MPH, has been appointed clinic director of the UTHealth Dental Branch HMC Pediatric Dentistry Clinic. In this new position, Dr. Acharya will oversee the daily operation of the pediatric dentistry residency clinic, ensuring efficiency in patient appointment scheduling, clinic supply inventory and monitoring the professional staffing pattern.

Dr. Acharya joined the Dental Branch Pediatric Dentistry faculty in August 2008 as a full-time assistant professor. She received her dental degree from Ambedkar Dental College in Bangalore, India in 1999. She was awarded a master’s degree in public health from University of Alabama-Birmingham in 2004. Dr. Acharya earned both a general practice residency certificate (2006) and a certificate in pediatric dentistry (2008) from LSU.

Dr. Acharya supervises the department’s cleft lip and palate patient program, including the fabrication of nasoalveolar molding appliances for those young infants who would benefit from this procedure prior to lip closure. A diplomate of the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry (AADP), she has presented her research at the AAPD annual meeting and published the results in the December issue of the Texas Dental Association Journal.

Dr. Acharya is an avid animation movie aficionado and enjoys recommending to the faculty, residents and staff the many great Indian restaurants that can be found in the Houston area.

Just the Facts

- New Dental Branch Building is slated for completion in 2012.
- The Pediatric Dentistry Clinic will be located on the first floor of the building.
- The Pediatric Dentistry Clinic will have 12 operatories including one quiet treatment room.
- The clinic is earmarked for brand new state-of-the-art dental equipment.
- All operatories will be plumbed for central nitrous oxide analgesia.
- Flat-screen TVs will be installed above each dental chair with wireless headphones and additional AV equipment.

Halloween Costumes a Tradition at UTDB

Dr. Gary Badger took this photo of the residents, faculty and staff at the UT Pediatric Dentistry Graduate Clinic at 6655 Travis St. in the Houston Medical Center building. The clinic’s staff members didn’t need encouragement to come to work dressed in costume on Friday, Oct. 29. The prospect of making a young patient’s visit more enjoyable was reward enough.
Cancer Center and state, national and international professional and civic organizations.

We welcome the opportunity to serve as an educational resource for our many alumni and friends. Please let us know if we can help you or your group with professional presentations. Our faculty members have expertise in many areas of pediatric dentistry, including behavior management, traumatic injury management, oral pathology, special care dentistry, hospital dentistry, cleft lip and palate, infant oral health education, interceptive orthodontics and access-to-care issues.

It is also a pleasure to report that our six recent pediatric dentistry graduates (Class of 2010) were each awarded a Master of Dental Science Degree in recognition of their successful research thesis defense. Nine alumni achieved board-certified diplomate status from the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry in 2010, and five departmental faculty members authored or co-authored articles in professional journals.

The Houston Medical Center (HMC) Pediatric Dentistry Clinic is undergoing needed renovations of the eight dental operatories, the acquisition of a digital imaging system for intra- and extra-oral radiography, and the installation of the AxiUm electronic patient record software program.

Plans for the new Dental Branch building and the predoctoral pediatric dentistry clinic on the UTHealth South Campus are proceeding on time, with occupancy targeted for spring 2012.

The lofty vision of our department in the areas of teaching, scholarly activities and service would not be achievable without the commitment of our alumni and friends who generously provide time, professional expertise and financial support for our many projects. Thank you for caring.

Best wishes for a very happy and healthy New Year.

See you at the beach,

Sandy

Sanford J. Fenton, DDS, MDS

The University of Texas Dental Branch in conjunction with the Houston Health Museum sponsored the Teddy Bear Check-Up Tough Teeth Exhibit at the Museum in December. Pediatric dental faculty, residents and students provided 236 children and their parents with age-appropriate oral hygiene instructions. Those who visited the Tough Teeth Exhibit also received additional important health information, a toothbrush and toothpaste. Dr. Sandy Fenton coordinated the day's event.

Faculty, staff, family and friends honored the Pediatric Dentistry Class of 2010 with a June 25 graduation banquet at Trevisio in the John P. McGovern Texas Medical Center Commons. From left are graduates Drs. Kathy Pazmino, Kim Hoang, Chris Claus, Heber Tufi, Julie Longoria and Sophie Liamidi.
Dr. Sandy Fenton was the featured speaker at the Special Olympics U.S. National Games in Lincoln, Neb. in July. His presentation was entitled: “Training to Standardize Oral Health Screening.”

Dr. Gisela Velasquez, full-time assistant professor, presented “Infant Oral Health” at the Houston Asian Society Meeting in August. Recent graduate Dr. Kathy Pazmino (Class of 2010) will soon be joining our faculty team as a part-time clinical assistant professor. She will provide clinical supervision for our predoctoral students at the UT Dental Branch one day per week. Kathy was selected by our faculty as the 2009-2010 recipient of the Peabody Award which is sponsored by the Houston Academy of Pediatric Dentistry. Congrats, Kathy!

Ms. Janet Lopez joined our Department of Pediatric Dentistry as a Senior Staff Assistant in August 2010. She has been a welcome addition to our staff primarily involved with predoctoral dental education clerical duties. She is a health fitness advocate whose favorite color is hot pink. Janet likes the beach so she will certainly feel at home when the pediatric dentistry clinic in the new dental facility becomes a reality.

Alumni News & Kudos

Congratulations to all our pediatric dentistry alumni who have recently achieved certification by the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry. They include:

Class of 2008: Dr. Leena James
Class of 2005: Dr. Matthew Hamilton
Class of 1994: Dr. David Tang
Class of 1986: Dr. Jean Stout
Class of 1977: Dr. Mark Urbach

Graduates of the Class of 2010 are now in practice in Texas and around the country. Here’s where you’ll find them:

Houston: Dr. Kim Hoang, Dr. Julie Longoria and Dr. Kathy Pazmino
Spring, Texas: Dr. Chris Claus
Tuscon, Ariz: Dr. Sophie Liamidi
Monroe, La.: Dr. Heber Tuft

The Pediatric Dentistry Department is pleased to welcome our incoming Class of 2012 pediatric dentistry residents:

Dr. Elizabeth Briceno, Nova Southeastern University College of Dental Medicine, 2008
Dr. Rachael Garrett, University of Texas Dental Branch, 2010
Dr. Elizabeth Gold, UTDB, 2010
Dr. Zaria Rasheed, UTDB, 2010
Dr. Brian Steele, UTDB, 2010
Dr. Brenden Taylor, UTDB, 2010

Wedding Celebration

Best wishes to Dr. Amber Callis and her new husband, Dr. Ronald Cotton, who were married Nov. 13 at the St. Regis Resort in Punta Mita, Mexico. Amber is a part-time clinical assistant professor at the Dental Branch and also maintains a private practice in Sugar Land. Her new husband is a general surgery resident at Baylor College of Medicine. They first met while attending the DeBakey High School for Health Professions. Fifty guests including family and friends attended their wedding.

Department News

Continued from Page 1

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