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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Future Smiles to serve more at-risk children thanks to \$400,000 grant from Engelstad Foundation

Future Smiles, Southern Nevada's largest school-based preventive and restorative dental health program, received a \$400,000 grant from the Engelstad Foundation to support dental education, prevention and restorative health care to local at-risk youth in Southern Nevada.

The Protect our Smiles grant will help Future Smiles, a nonprofit agency, meet three goals for serving 6,000 at-risk children, from toddlers to teens, in Southern Nevada during the 2020-21 school year.

Oral health education: More than 4,000 Future Smiles-served students will have access to a new virtual educational oral health presentation. The presentation is delivered through weekly school-level modules designed for small and large groups and special education.

Dental decay prevention: More than 4,000 Future Smiles-served students will have access to tooth-brushing supplies and dental prevention, including fluoride varnish, and referral to restorative dental services.

Dental restorative treatment: Future Smiles can keep the Nevada Women's Philanthropy Dental Wellness Center, at Elaine P. Wynn Elementary School, 5655 Edna Ave., open year-round, to deliver essential dental care and more than 2,000 comprehensive dental exams, X-rays and diagnosis/treatment plans to its constituent audience.

"We are so very grateful for this gift from the Englestad Foundation for funding our efforts to alleviate a child's dental pain and suffering while returning them to a healthy benchmark of oral health," Chandler said.

The Engelstad Foundation, which has [donated nearly \\$335 million](#) in Nevada since 2002, is a leading philanthropical backer of innovative health care, including the Nevada Women's Philanthropy Dental Wellness Center. The Foundation was founded to continue the philanthropy of Imperial Palace founder and Las Vegas Motor Speedway co-developer Ralph Engelstad and his wife, Betty.

“Having access to dental care is essential for overall health, especially for youth,” said Kris Engelstad McGarry, Trustee of the Engelstad Foundation. “Children in underserved parts of the Las Vegas Valley need this care to maintain school attendance and an active lifestyle. By investing in Future Smiles, we are supporting vital dental services and education to those who need it most.”

The dental care need is great. More than 50% of Clark County School District students are living in poverty, as demonstrated by their enrollment in free and reduced lunch.

“As dental professionals, we know that tooth decay is a progressive disease and when left unchecked, results in excruciating pain, tooth loss and possible death from cranial infection that started with a tooth abscess,” Future Smiles Executive Director Terri Chandler said.

Children with poor oral health are three times likelier than orally healthy students to miss school because of dental pain, Chandler said. Tooth decay and its resulting toothaches contribute to chronic pain and sleep deprivation, which can diminish children’s ability to learn in the classroom.

Data show that children without Medicaid or private insurance struggle to get complete dental restorative care. But with its full-time dentist delivering low- or no-cost services in a school setting, Future Smiles can treat underserved Las Vegas Valley students where they are.

Since the coronavirus pandemic started, Future Smiles has invested \$50,000 in technology and equipment to treat children safely and protect staff.

About Future Smiles

Founded in 2009, local nonprofit Future Smiles is Southern Nevada's largest school-based preventive and restorative dental health program. Since its inception, Future Smiles has provided low-cost or no-cost dental services to more than 100,000 at-risk children in Southern Nevada. Dental services such as exams and cleanings were performed at Clark County schools through the nonprofit’s mobile dental office and at the Nevada Women’s Philanthropy Dental Wellness Center at Elaine P. Wynn Elementary School, opened in 2019.

Its goal is to improve overall health, which includes oral health, by eliminating health care barriers ending dental pain and suffering for Southern Nevada’s youth. To learn more about Future Smiles or to make a donation, please visit www.futuresmiles.net.

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