

Applications ready for dental care

By PAMELA STAIK
STAFF WRITER

Charlotte County students without dental insurance will have the opportunity to get a better, cleaner and healthier smile in January and February during the third annual local celebration of the American Dental Association's national Give Kids A Smile Day.

While the national event is scheduled to be celebrated on Feb. 5, event coordinator Dr. Judy Marshall said Charlotte County's celebration is set up a little differently.

For starters, Marshall said Charlotte's program will span six days.

The first four have been established as preventative care clinics, where professionals will evaluate

the student's medical history, take X-rays and plan the course of treatments for each child. During these clinics, the children will receive free cleanings, fluoride treatments and have teeth sealants applied.

The last two days of the program will be in February, where pre-screened children in need of more work, like fillings

and extractions, can be treated.

All of the work being completed will be done by volunteer dentists, dental hygienists and dental assistants from the area as well as teachers and students from the dental program at the Charlotte Technical Center. Clerical office staff, local businesses and dental supply companies are also

donating their time and resources for the event, Marshall said.

"This is the community at large coming together to help the children in our area," Marshall said. "It's a win-win for everybody." To enroll your child in the free dental program, you must complete an application.

Applications are available in the clinic at all

Charlotte County Public Schools, as well as through the Charlotte County Health Department. At the latest, applications are due Dec. 10.

If accepted, students will be contacted for appointments.

For more info about the Give Kids A Smile Day, visit www.ADA.org.

E-mail: pstaik@sun-herald.com

SCHOOL NEWS BRIEFS

Volunteers, sponsors and donations for a silent auction are still needed for the annual Empty Bowls fundraiser, an initiative meant to raise money for the Charlotte County Homeless Education Project, the Charlotte County Homeless Coalition, Englewood Helping Hand and Good Samaritans of Charlotte County. With a \$10 donation to the Nov. 19 event, people will be fed soup, bread and bottled water donated from local restaurants. Participants will also receive a handmade bowl



to take home as a reminder of those who go without food each day. The event will take place from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m. at Pilgrim United Church of Christ, 24515 Rampart Blvd. For more informa-

tion on how to get involved, contact Winkler at JoAnn_Winkler@cpcs.k12.fl.us or by calling 941-255-7515, ext. 260.

Tickets are on sale for the Charlotte Campus of

Edison State College's production of "Noises Off," an internationally acclaimed English comedy. Students will take the stage at 7:30 p.m. on Nov. 20 and Nov. 21, as well as during a 2:30 p.m. show on Nov. 22. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$8 for students. They can be purchased online at www.edison.edu/charlotte/theatre, via phone at 941-637-3513 or from the cashier located in Spatz Hall on the Charlotte campus, 26300 Airport Road in Punta Gorda.

The Port Charlotte campus of Southwest Florida College recently added diploma programs in crime scene investigation and early childhood care and management, as well as three associate's degree programs in criminal justice, early childhood education and management and marketing. Applications are now being accepted for the winter term. For more information on any of these new programs, call 1-888-526-7973 or visit www.swfc.edu.

The Rotary Club of Murdock is trying to raise

funds to help build an adaptive playground for the Charlotte Harbor Center, a public school in Charlotte County that caters to the needs of students with emotional, mental and physical disabilities. The playground would serve as an extra learning environment at the school, where children could interact without being constrained by mental, physical, visual or hearing disabilities. For more information about how to donate, contact Alan Holbach at 941-769-0594.

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SUN NEWSPAPERS



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Students of the Month

Each month, Murdock Middle School announces the names for the student of the month program. Pictured in the back row are Dylan McCormick, Marlins Team; Chris Otakan, Dolphins Team; Vanetin Kanchev, Sea Dogs Team; Principal Maria Gifford; and Brian Thatcher, Buccaneers Team. Honorees in the front row are Jamie Apice, Bullsharks Team; Brianna Fiochetta; Tigersharks Team; and Alexandra Daniels, Hammerheads Team.

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Calendar Art keeps Charlotte beautiful

During a Keep Charlotte Beautiful awards ceremony Monday night, 12 first-place students from Charlotte County Public Schools were honored for their participation in the annual calendar art contest. Pictured here with School Board members Alleen Miller and Andrea Messina is Savana Hibbert, who designed the cover of the calendar. Hibbert recently graduated from Lemon Bay High School and is now attending Ringling College of Art and Design.

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The Magic is in the Middle School

SCHOOL NOTES
Cathy Corsaletti
Principal

It is 9:30 a.m. on a November morning and all is calm at Punta Gorda Middle School. But, when the bell rings to end first period, almost 1,200 kids pour out of classrooms, scrambling and joking, filling the hallway with the buzz of energy. The students are fired by engines that never seem to run out of gas! Welcome to middle school... the magic link between elementary school and high school.

Everyone is aware of the bad rap this age group, 10-15 year olds, can get. They are predictable unpredictable, always ready with an opinion, crave independence and their image is of utmost importance. Every day can be like a roller coaster ride during the middle years, as they are forced to deal with new bodies, new feelings, new interests and new ways of thinking.

Understanding and responding to the unique developmental characteristics of the young adolescent has been a focus at Punta Gorda

Middle School. The job requires great patience, creativity, dedication and, above all, a sense of humor. Our students are a wonderful handful whose capacities for thinking and reflecting are unfolding. Their outward behavior may disguise the seriousness of their thoughts, but those who work closely with these young people know they need support even though they may seem unappreciative and praise when they do something well.

Middle school is where the magic happens between youth and maturity. Kids try out new versions of themselves, experiment, go in other directions, and certainly test boundaries. If you have the pleasure of knowing a young adolescent, we invite you to join us in this important journey.

You may wonder if they are worth it some days... I know I wouldn't trade them for the world!

Cathy Corsaletti is principal of Punta Gorda Middle School.

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