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Delta Dental Foundation Awards \$2,500 Smiles for Kids Grant to Smart Start of New Hanover County to Improve Oral Health Education in New Hanover County

Wilmington, NC (May 30, 2019) – Smart Start of New Hanover County received a \$2,500 Smiles for Kids grant from the [Delta Dental Foundation](#) (DDF) to support their Healthy Smiles in Early Childhood Education program.

Smart Start of New Hanover County developed an oral health education program that addresses crucial topics such as: developing good dental habits, dental hygiene in infants, and healthy foods in relation to good dental health. Early educators in New Hanover County are trained on how to provide this program to their students with sample lesson plans and how to implement them. The Delta Dental Foundation grant will help implement this necessary training for up to 26 early educators representing up to 13 licensed childcare centers or family childcare homes.

“We are grateful for the Delta Dental Foundation’s support and partnership in reaching families with young children in New Hanover County,” said Jennifer Gallo, Smart Start of New Hanover County Family and Community Educator. “Here at Smart Start of NHC, these funds will provide dental education for children ages 0-5, an age that is essential to forming a life-time of healthy habits.”

The Delta Dental Foundation focuses on ensuring that children and adults in North Carolina receive high-quality oral health education and dental care. The grant received by Smart Start of New Hanover County is one of 19 grants totaling \$70,000 that the foundation is donating to North Carolina oral health organizations and programs in 2019. Grant recipients were selected based on criteria that included the number of at-risk children served, the uniqueness of the program, the level of community involvement in the program and the ability to measure results.

“Tooth decay is the most common, chronic childhood disease today, and children miss 51 million hours of school every year due dental issues,” said Curt Ladig, president and CEO of Delta Dental of North Carolina. “The Delta Dental Foundation’s grant to Smart Start of New Hanover County will help provide the oral health education that children need in order to be healthy and show up for school ready to learn.”

About Delta Dental of North Carolina

Delta Dental of North Carolina is a nonprofit dental service corporation created in 1970 to provide dental benefits throughout the state. Its mission is to improve the oral health of the communities it serves. It does so by providing affordable access to oral health care with the largest network of providers, including two out of every three dentists, in North Carolina.

About the Delta Dental Foundation

The Delta Dental Foundation is a nonprofit, charitable organization established in 1980, which serves as the philanthropic arm of Delta Dental of Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and North Carolina. The foundation's goals are to support education and research for the advancement of dental science, and to promote the oral health of the public through education and service activities, particularly for those with special needs. For more information, visit www.deltadentalinc.com.

About Smart Start of New Hanover County

Smart Start of New Hanover County shares with the other citizens of New Hanover County a common concern for and commitment to the welfare and future success of our youngest children. As part of a statewide early childhood Initiative, Smart Start of New Hanover County serves as a local leader in developing a comprehensive, collaborative approach to serve the needs of all children, birth to five, in New Hanover County. To learn more, visit www.newhanoverkids.org.

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