Open wide with Lucky

Lucky the Lion launched a major schools initiative by The Midcounties Co-operative in Oxfordshire to encourage children to look after their teeth. The 6ft cuddly character joined in the fun in a pilot scheme which started at Pegasus Primary School in Blackbird Leys, Oxford.

Some 150 pupils aged five seven learned about the importance of brushing their teeth regularly and the need to reduce sugary snacks and to eat the right foods.

Each child received a special information pack which included a funky toothbrush, toothpaste and a wooden toothbrush holder. The youngsters also decorated the holder, which has a two minute timer; so they knew how long to brush their teeth each time.

Lucky the Lion took part in demonstrations, which also featured a giant toothbrush and a huge pair of teeth, to get the message across.

Barbara Dunne, community co-ordinator for The Midcounties Co-operative, said: “We are a trusted retailer which believes in giving back to the communities we serve. We have developed this project in partnership with the Oxfordshire PCT to encourage children in a fun and effective way to look after their teeth.

“We hope parents will reinforce that message at home. The information packs we provide include a toothbrush chart for the children to draw a smiley face on a calendar each day if they have brushed their teeth once in the morning and last thing before bed.”

Pegasus headteacher Jill Hudson said: “The children really enjoyed the sessions and meeting Lucky. The project complemented what they learn in school as part of the curriculum for personal, social, and health education.”

Dental practice wins Small Enterprise of the Year

A dental practice in Buckinghamshire has won the Small Enterprise of the Year award.

Smile Design Dental Practice won the Small Enterprise of the Year category at this year’s Buckinghamshire Ambassadors Awards.

Dr Komal Suri and her team (pictured) were presented with the award at the event by Formula One champion, Damon Hill.

Dr Suri said: ‘We are delighted to have won this award, particularly as it is a team award and recognises the efforts we all put in to make this a successful practice from a patient, employee and business perspective.’

Smile Design Dental Practice is recognised as one of the country’s leading practices for cosmetic and restorative dental care, but it is also very much a local practice providing general dental care for residents in south Buckinghamshire.

Dr Suri bought the practice in 2002 and over the past eight years she has updated the building and invested heavily in state of the art equipment and training to enable them to offer patients a complete care package.

She said: “The key to our success has been the strength of our practice-patient relationships. We spend a great deal of time with our patients to ensure they are educated about their mouths and have all clinical findings explained fully before embarking on any treatments or programmes.

“The level of training for all our team is extremely high with most of our clinical team considered among the leaders in their profession.”

The Bucks Enterprise Awards were created by the Buckinghamshire Ambassadors who formed just five years ago. The awards event was organised by Buckinghamshire Economic & Learning Partnership (BELP) which aims to promote the sustainable economic development of Buckinghamshire.

New GDC Council member

The Appointments Commission has confirmed that David Murphy (pictured) has been appointed to the Council of the General Dental Council (GDC) with immediate effect.

David is a returning lay member of the Council, having previously been on the Council between 2005 and 2009. He is one of 24 members, 12 lay and 12 professional.

David is currently Deputy Secretary of NILGOSIC, the Northern Ireland Local Government Scheme and previously held positions with Methodist College, Grant Thornton, and Queen’s University Belfast. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in Ireland.

He has held a number of public appointments and is currently a member of the General Chiropractic Council, a Board member of Helm Housing and a lay Member of the Solicitors’ Disciplinary Tribunal for Northern Ireland.

Keep your business records in order – before the tax inspector does it for you

Specialist dental accountants are warning dental practitioners to ensure their business records are in order.

The warning comes after an announcement by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) that it is cracking down on dentists and other medical practitioners, tracking down those who have not declared their full income.

The Association of Specialist Providers to Dentists (ASPD), have set out some of the HMRC’s basic record keeping guidelines for dentists.

These are:

• Don’t throw away business records – keep business records for at least five years and ten months after the end of the tax year the records relate to. Failure to do so could result in a fine of up to £5,000.

• Keep business and home life separate – business records and personal records are kept separate, with the help of a separate business bank account.

• Sorry, sir. The dog ate it… if your business records are lost or destroyed, unfortunately they will have to be recreated.

Practitioners looking to stay in HMRC’s good books should enlist the help of a specialist accountant for dentists who is well versed in the preparation of tax returns and submitting them to the Inland Revenue, said the ASPD.

Some 90% of dentists do not have their records in electronic form, which means it takes much longer to review them and prepare tax returns. This can mean having to work overtime at the end of the tax year, or worse, having to hand over information to HMRC’s inspectors where records are not available.

“Unfortunately some dental professionals rely on HMRC to check their records on their behalf – and HMRC have made it clear that they will not assume responsibility for this,” said Andrew McDonald, managing director of Meadows Partnership Accountants in Scotland.

MarCella Sanders, CEO of Smile Design Dental Practice, said: “We are a trusted retailer which believes in giving back to the communities we serve. We have developed this project in partnership with the Oxfordshire PCT to encourage children in a fun and effective way to look after their teeth.”
So, election fever has finally gripped the country as the 'UK's worst kept secret' of a May 6th General Election has been announced by Prime Minister Gordon Brown.

Surprisingly, NHS dentistry has hit the headlines early in the process as Tory Shadow Health Secretary Andrew Lansley visited a dental practice in Reading West, a hotly contested seat – and gave the Tory view on dental provision. With this campaign being one of the most publicly fought in the UK, thanks to our 24/7 need-to-know-all society of news channels and social media, it's going to be hard to get away from all aspects of the election (although I'll be giving it a good go – I'm in Tanzania with B2A for two weeks before the election!). I'm sure that NHS dentistry will remain at the forefront of the campaign trail, and I hope that after all its over, nothing but good will come out of it for practitioners and patients.

And at least it'll give us something else to concentrate on than a certain striker's ankle and an upcoming football event...

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Cuts to dental school budgets

Cuts in dental school budgets could affect the training of dental students, impacting on the skills and quality of new dentists, according to the British Dental Association.

The British Dental Association’s (BDA’s) warning follows the recent announcement by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) that funding allocations for universities and higher education colleges for 2010-11 will be reduced.

Prof Paul Wright, chair of the BDA’s Central Committee for Dental Academic Staff (CCDAS), writing in the latest edition of the British Dental Journal (BDJ), claimed that cuts to posts in dental schools would exacerbate the inadequate staff resources that institutions are already confronting.

He argued that every extra student in a clinical session without a concomitant increase in supervision means risking a reduction in the quality of care for patients that can be assured.

Prof Wright also warned the way dental academia is funded, with money coming from both the HEFCE and the NHS, means that schools are at risk of a far greater cut to their finances than might be anticipated or intended.

Prof Wright said: “We recognise that academics in many disciplines will be making their cases for the preservation of their particular subject areas. Dentistry really is in a unique position though; in the way it is funded, the already stretched position it is in, and the value to society of the graduates it produces.”

He added: “Cuts to dental schools’ budgets threaten the high quality of both the dentists and the research that UK institutions produce. We urge extreme caution by universities as they absorb HEFCE’s announcement.”

The BDA will be submitting evidence to the Independent Higher Education and Student Finance Review. The review has been tasked with looking at the higher education system in its entirety.

New editor for FGDP journal

John Stanfield has been made the new editor of Team in Practice, the Faculty of General Dental Practice (UK)’s journal for dental care professionals.

Mr Stanfield, a dental hygienist, replaces Professor Ken Eaton who has held the post of editor since the journal was launched in 2004.

Team in Practice is a continuing professional development journal, written by dental care professionals (DCPs), with a focus on peer learning and best practice.

The journal aims to update all members of the dental team on issues affecting everyday working practice, including analyses of how and why problems arise and ways to improve outcomes.

Mr Stanfield has served on the editorial board of Team in Practice for the last three years and has represented dental hygienists on the FGDP (UK) Board since 2006.

He is also an assessor in key skills for DCPs and is vice chair of the Faculty of General Dental Practice (FGDP) (UK)’s DCP Committee.

He called it a ‘great honour’ and said: “Team in Practice offers readers a great opportunity to learn from the practical experiences of colleagues and read the latest evidence for best practice. I hope to see the journal go from strength to strength in supporting the dental team to achieve excellence in their work.”

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