

Stories That Will Make You Smile!

The official newsletter of

SMILE
Humboldt



Third Edition - Spring 2026

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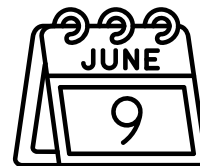
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Hello From Smile Humboldt!

Spring has certainly sprung in Humboldt county. Come read about what has “sprung” up in the Humboldt County Oral Health Program since our last issue!

Save the Date!



**Dental Advisory Group
DAG Meeting
Tuesday, June 9
Noon - 1 p.m.**

**Email for invite
smilehumboldt@co.humboldt.ca.us**

Stay in the Smile Loop!



Follow us online for more updates, photos and upcoming events:

Facebook, X and Instagram:

@SmileHumboldt

Website: **SmileHumboldt.com**



Humboldt LOHP is funded by Prop 56, CDPH Grant 22-10165

Smile Humboldt Program Highlights

Smile Humboldt is proud to share several exciting updates that reflect our continued commitment to improving children's oral health across our community.

So far this school year, the Smile Humboldt team has successfully completed 917 dental screenings for local elementary school students throughout the community. Each screening represents an opportunity to identify early signs of dental issues, connect families with care, and reinforce healthy habits that can last a lifetime.

We're also pleased to announce that our updated 5-Year Needs Assessment is now available for the public. This comprehensive report offers valuable insights into the current state of oral health in our region, highlights ongoing challenges and helps guide our priorities moving forward. We encourage community members, partners, and stakeholders to review the assessment and join us in shaping solutions that ensure equitable access to care for all. If you'd like to review the Needs Assessment, you may access with the link provided below.

Highlights of Children's Dental Health Month

February was a busy and meaningful month for Smile Humboldt as we came together with our community to celebrate Children's Dental Health Month... and this year's impact was certainly something to smile about.

Thanks to the generosity and enthusiasm of our supporters, this year's Smile Drive was an outstanding success. Together, we raised over \$1,200 in online monetary donations, an additional \$600 dollars local donations and collected an incredible 2,467 oral health supplies.

The donated items and monetary proceeds go to supplying the 16 sites in the Humboldt County Family Resource Center Network with dental supplies for their families.



[2019-2024 Humboldt County Oral Health Needs Assessment Update](#)

Program Highlights Continued

Throughout the month, our team hosted nine “Love Your Teeth” library events across eight library branches throughout the county. These events were all about making oral health education fun, engaging and accessible for all ages.

In total, we connected with 189 attendees, providing hands-on learning, helpful oral health supplies and plenty of smiles along the way. From interactive activities to storytelling to simple tips kids can use every day, these events helped build confidence and excitement around taking care of their teeth.



First 5 took a simply delightful picture with Molarie and their furry, four-legged pals.

Smile Humboldt’s giant of a mascot, Molarie went on quite the adventure in February. Molarie traveled all around the county and had photoshoots with many friends of the program and community partners that wanted to show their love for Children’s Dental Health Month. Programs like WIC, Public Health gave some love, and so did First 5, some of our local businesses and one of our biggest contributors to the Smile Drive, Eureka Grocery Outlet took some time out of their busy schedule to take pictures with our favorite local celebrity tooth. We wanted to showcase some of our favorite photographs taken for the event.

Children’s Dental Health Month is a reminder that small habits like brushing, flossing and regular dental visits can make a big difference. With the support of our community, we’re proud to continue spreading that message in ways that are positive, approachable, and impactful.

To everyone who donated, participated and helped make these events possible... thank you. Your support is helping create healthier and more joyful tomorrows.



Eureka Grocery Outlet Managers, Mike and Kathryn Luna, pictured with Molarie

Provider Spotlight

Smile Humboldt wanted to shine a light in our newsletter to a new dental provider in town. They are Christina Nunez, Pediatric Dentist and they just joined the Open Door Burre dental Center.

Christina earned her dual Doctor of Dental Surgery and Master of Public Health at Columbia University, College of Dental Medicine and School of Public Health, in New York City. Following that, she received her Master of Oral Science, Pediatric Dentistry Certificate, and the Public Health Geographic Info. System Certificate, all with honors(!), at the University of Illinois in Chicago.



Christina Nunez, DDS, MPH, MS

Christina grew up in Upstate New York and is relocating from Chicago, IL, along with her partner.

When not working, Christina enjoys reading, music, partaking in endurance sports and outdoor adventures.

On behalf of the community, Smile Humboldt would like to give our warmest welcome. We're very excited to work with Dr. Nunez in future projects to help improve the oral health in Humboldt County.

Toothy Tips of the Season:

A Guide to Catching Early Tooth Decay in Kids

Have you ever spotted something on your child's tooth and wondered, "Should I be worried about this?" It's a common question many parents face. The challenge is that tooth decay doesn't always show obvious signs at first. But knowing what to look for can help you step in early—and sometimes even stop a cavity from progressing.

Tooth Decay Starts Small

Many parents assume cavities begin when a hole or dark spot appears. In reality, the process usually starts much earlier. Early decay often shows up as subtle changes in the enamel. These changes can be easy to miss, but they're also the stage where early intervention is most effective.

Why Kids Are More at Risk

Children's teeth need extra attention because they're more prone to decay. Here's why:

- Baby teeth have a thinner enamel layer
- Frequent snacking exposes teeth to acid more often
- Sugary drinks (including fruit juice and milk) can coat teeth in sugar for long periods of time.

Changes in Tooth Color

As enamel begins to break down, early white spots may appear and later darken. Not every discoloration means decay, but it's worth getting checked.

Tooth Sensitivity

If your child avoids certain foods, chews on one side, or complains that cold water or hot drinks "hurt" their teeth it may indicate weakened enamel—another sign to take note of. When decay becomes more noticeable or damage is clearly visible, a dentist will need to intervene.

When You're Not Sure

It's completely normal to feel uncertain, early signs aren't always easy to spot. If something doesn't look quite right, don't wait for pain to appear. A dental visit can offer clarity and peace of mind. It's recommended that children see a dentist by their first birthday or within six months of their first tooth coming in. Continuing regular six-month checkups helps create positive dental experiences and builds familiarity for your child.

In short: Paying attention to the little things now can help prevent bigger issues down the road and keep your child's smile healthy every step of the way.

Event Spotlight:

The Blooming Smiles Playdate

On May 15, Smile Humboldt, First 5 Humboldt and the Open Door dental team held our second annual Blooming Smiles Playdate. We are happy to report that it was a resounding success! We got the dental party going at the Jefferson Community Center and Park from 8 a.m.-12:30 p.m. The event catered to families with children between the ages of 0 to 6, who were provided oral health screenings by Open Door's dental team. The children screened were also able to establish a dental home at Burre Dental Center for future care.



Rain or shine or even blustery weather can't stop the Open Door Dental Team!

This year, the Open Door dental team screened 20 children, an important step toward early treatment and prevention. Children entering primary school in the fall were provided with a Kindergarten Oral Health Assessment for the 2026/2027 school year.

This year, families were treated to a festival of fun and entertainment puppet show from the illustrious Quack and Wabbit, face painting by the extremely talented Wonder Wagon, and the Humboldt Rockers cut a rug and taught the little ones how to do some simple breakdancing moves. Guests were treated to a literal rainbow array of healthy snacks provided by First 5 Humboldt. To continue the fun, several community partners came out to provide the event's guests with health education and connections to resources, including:

- [TOOTH](#)
- [WIC](#)
- [Changing Tides](#)
- [CalFresh](#)
- [SafeCare](#)
- [Smile Humboldt](#) and [First 5](#) of course!

We are so thankful and appreciative of the community partner agencies that tabled and the Open Door dental team for being part of the Blooming Smiles event again.

If you missed the event and have a child aged one to four, who needs their first dental visit, they can be seen at one of Open Door's Well Child Dental Clinics!

Call to schedule your child's Well Child Dental visit:

Burre Dental Center's Well Child Clinic - Third Wednesday of each month

Address: 959 Myrtle Ave., Eureka
Phone: 707-442-7078

Fortuna Dental Center Well Child Clinic - Second Wednesday of each month

Address: 3750 Rohnerville Road, Fortuna
Phone: 707-725-4477

