Give Back a Smile goes global in Germany

German affiliate launches GBAS to help domestic violence survivors

Domestic violence survivors in Germany now have an opportunity to have their smiles restored through the expansion of the AACD Charitable Foundation’s (AACDCF) Give Back a Smile (GBAS) program in Germany. GBAS, the AACDCF’s premier program, restores the smiles of those who have survived domestic violence and have sustained injuries to the smile zone. With the help of volunteer dentists and generous donations, the program is currently active in the U.S. and has helped more than 1,000 survivors.

Jurgen Wahlmann, DDS, was inspired to start the GBAS program in Germany after hearing the story of Mona, a domestic violence survivor who sustained injuries to her mouth when shot at close range by a former partner. Mona spoke at the AACD’s Annual Scientific Session in Honolulu, Hawaii, several years ago. She told attendees of the session how GBAS restored her smile, and helped to change her life.

“Mona’s story was so emotional and impressive,” Wahlmann said.

He talked with the Board of Directors of the Germany Society of Cosmetic Dentistry, and the board agreed to start a GBAS program in Germany. After the AACD approved his idea, Wahlmann presented the program at the Germany Society’s annual meeting. The response was overwhelming, Wahlmann said.

“A lot of dentists and companies signed up for the program, and we hope to make GBAS in Germany as successful as it is in the U.S.,” he added.

Roughly 46,000 German women are estimated to spend some time at women’s refuges each year because of domestic violence, says BBC News. One in five women in Germany also suffers physical or sexual violence at the hands of their partner, according to Deutsche Welle.

University of New England awarded $3.5 million for College of Dental Medicine

The University of New England (UNE) has been awarded $3.5 million from the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention for its proposal, “Creating a Dental School Teaching Clinic in Maine.”

The funds, along with a $2.5 million leadership commitment from Northeast Delta Dental, will be used to help with startup costs associated with opening the first College of Dental Medicine in northern New England in the fall of 2013.

“We look forward to working with UNE as Maine’s first dental school becomes a reality. This definitely fills a strong need in our state,” said Dr. Sheila Pinette, director of Maine CDC, in her announcement of the award.

In June 2010, the Maine Legislature approved a $5 million bond package to increase access to dental care in the state that was accepted by voters last November.

Of that $5 million, $3.5 million was designated for a community-based teaching dental clinic affiliated with, or operated by, a college of dental medicine to be matched by $5.5 million in other funds. UNE submitted the sole proposal.

UNE President Danielle Ripich said, “This award is key for UNE and enables us to establish clinical dental training for our new College of Dental Medicine. We appreciate that Maine recognizes the critical need to educate dentists for the people of our state. As the largest health care work force provider for Maine, UNE is fully prepared to create an innovative state-of-the-art education facility that will allow future dentists to be trained as part of a team of health-care providers.”

UNE College of Dental Medicine Dean Dr. James Koelbl said the school will begin accepting applications for students in June 2012 in anticipation of its opening in the fall of 2013. “We submitted our initial application for accreditation in March to the American Dental Association Commission on Dental Accreditation,” said Koelbl. “The next step in the application process will be an on-campus site visit in the spring 2012, with a decision on accreditation expected in late summer 2012.”

Northeast Delta Dental President and CEO Tom Baffico said, “Dental science indicates that the integration of health services with dental services is the best approach for the recovery of the patient, so we’re very pleased that dentists will be trained as members of a valued team of health-care professionals at the University of New England and that their training will include experience at a community-based teaching dental clinic.”

Goddard Hall, which first opened at UNE’s Portland Campus 150 years ago, has been renovated to serve as the home for the College of Dental Medicine’s administrative offices.

Named one of the best regional universities in America by U.S. News & World Report, UNE is a leader in health sciences education, biomedical research and the liberal arts. It offers student-centered, interdisciplinary programs in the College of Osteopathic Medicine, Westbrook College of Health Professions, College of Arts and Sciences, College of Pharmacy and the College of Graduate Studies. For more information, visit www.une.edu.