



Giving Kids a Dental HEAD START in Our Community™

**Friends Foundation for the Aging Year-end Report & Reapplication Proposal Form
KinderSmile Foundation Smiles for Seniors Health and Wellness Program 2024**

Date: 2/28/2024

Organization: KinderSmile Foundation

TIN & Formal organization name: 56-2635166 The KinderSmile Foundation, Inc.

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Amount requested: \$30,000

Project title: KinderSmile Foundation Smiles for Seniors Health and Wellness Program

1. What is the problem you identified? Has it changed?

KinderSmile Foundation's Smile for Seniors Health and Wellness Program focuses on improving the lives of aging adults in Trenton and vicinity by providing them with access to oral health care—the gateway to total health and wellbeing.

Aging adults are impaired by poor oral health and function, which negatively affect their health and quality of life. Oral health is directly related to overall wellness in older adults, influenced by common risk factors including nutrition, inflammation, infection, and psychosocial factors. Periodontal disease has been proved to be related to increased risk of diabetes, heart disease, vascular disease, and dementia.

Access to care and resources must be expanded in order to improve the disparities. The dental care provided at KinderSmile Community Oral Health Center Trenton has an unmeasurable impact on patients' oral health, mental health, confidence, speech, and eating. The continued incorporation of medical-dental integration and prompt referrals to a primary care physician at a partnering medical will have a long term effect on our seniors' long term wellbeing.

In our prior grant cycle in 2021, we experienced delays in being able to provide dental care, due to lack of a link to a medical home and the delays in obtaining medical clearances. With the 2023 grant cycle, we incorporated pivotal medical-dental integration to alleviate this gap. Testing dates were scheduled on site, and referrals to medical care were followed through, greatly improving our efficiency in providing timely care, as well as knowing that the participating seniors were in good hands for overall medical care.

2. What actions did you take to address the problem?

In this grant cycle we incorporated a partnership with Advanced Home Diagnostics, who joined forces with KinderSmile Community Oral Health Center Trenton to host a Community Health Education event. The primary objectives were to provide valuable health education to the Trenton senior community.

Topics included:

Oral Health Education and its relation to total health and wellbeing

Stroke prevention and recognition and response

Diabetes and healthy diets and lifestyle choices

Hypertension

Diet and lifestyle choices

The service included blood glucose testing, blood pressure checks, Hemoglobin A1C testing, and consultations. Participants received printed educational materials to review, and healthy snacks. Crucially, participants were

linked to both a medical home and to our Dental Home KSCOHC Trenton, where they were scheduled for preventive and comprehensive dental care.

Through continued and growing partnerships with Trenton area organizations and social services agencies such as HomeFront NJ, the Trenton Housing Authority, Capital Health, Henry J. Austin, and others, we recruited and enrolled 30 qualifying participants. As in the past, we provided them with important oral health education, nutritional counseling, and tobacco counseling related to dental disease, in addition to the medical testing provided by AHD. Following the educational portion, they were scheduled for exams, preventive, and comprehensive dental care in our Dental Home. Word of mouth has made our Smiles for Seniors Program very well received, and we look forward to being able to continue to provide this crucial access to oral health care to others who are awaiting the opportunity.

3. What did you learn? Will you make any changes in the coming year?

The fact that oral health is the gateway to total health and wellbeing cannot be overstated. Periodontal disease is related to diabetes, cardiovascular disease, dementia, nutritional health, confidence, and more. The incorporation of medical-dental integration during this grant cycle enabled us to provide an efficient way of linking our senior patients to a medical home and our Dental Home alike. Treatments were able to proceed as scheduled, without delays caused by the lack of medical clearance.

Continued and growing collaborations with Trenton community partners and agencies enabled us to promote the program regularly. Continued partnerships in upcoming years will hopefully allow us to conduct oral health education sessions within our community partner sites, in order to educate more seniors about the importance of oral health and recommended oral hygiene practices to their wellbeing.

4. How have you engaged any partners/collaborators in implementation or funding? Have you considered how to sustain the program?

KinderSmile Foundation was founded in the community and for the community. The community is our priority, and we will continue to develop programs to cater and provide access to care to bridge the gaps and reduce the disparities that exist in the state of NJ.

In this grant cycle we incorporated a partnership with Advanced Home Diagnostics, who joined forces with KinderSmile Community Oral Health Center Trenton to host a Community Health Education event. The primary objectives were to provide valuable health education to the Trenton senior community.

Continued collaboration with our growing list of Trenton area community partners and social services providers has enabled us to promote the program within Trenton Housing Authority, HomeFront NJ, TASK, Capital Health, Henry J. Austin, and more. Participating senior patients are promptly referred to a medical home for care, to assure total health and wellness.

KinderSmile Foundation and our programs remain sustainable and continue to grow over time through a combination of insurance reimbursements when applicable, reduced fees, pursuit of grant opportunities, donations, and in kind donations of clinical supplies, as well as professional dental providers who donate their time and expertise to the uninsured. Our Smiles for Seniors program is certain to remain sustainable, evident by the continued need and interest in the community. Future years of the program and expanded bandwidth will incorporate oral health education sessions to be held within our partnering community agencies in order to reach a wider audience.

5. How do you know your actions had an impact? Please describe those who participated, outputs and outcomes. Stories or photos are welcome.

KSF's Smiles for Seniors Health and Wellness initiative pursues dental-medical integration, thereby increasing access to care while providing additional assistance to this growing at-risk community. Participants are afforded a long lasting impact for their oral and overall health, dental function, nutrition, self esteem, confidence, and more. Our ultimate goal is to establish a prompt link to a brick-and-mortar Dental Home, where comprehensive dental care can be provided regardless of a patient's insurance status or means at any time of need. Through partnership and collaboration, this grant included a link to a medical home as well.

KinderSmile Community Oral Health Center provided care to **123** seniors aged 60 and older in the last year, and **41** of them were uninsured. Of those, **30** were enrolled into the Smiles for Seniors Health and Wellness Program in this grant cycle. Patients' demographics included **11** Hispanic and **19** Black, out of whom **20** were female and **10** male. One of the 30 had insurance coverage but was denied coverage for the denture he needed. The value of care for this grant year was an astounding **\$40,523** which includes 24 complete or partial dentures, several extractions on 4 participants, restorations (fillings) for at least 10 participants, crowns, denture repairs, preventive care including exams, xrays, and cleanings, emergency appointments, and more.

In 2023 we have been fortunate to focus on advocacy efforts through various initiatives that raise awareness of the need to close the gap and make equitable access to oral health care a priority in NJ. We had the opportunity to present a ***Roadmap to Improving Access to Oral Health Care in the State of NJ*** to members of Governor Murphy's advisory teams and several legislators. We outlined solutions to repairing the broken oral health system in our state, seeking oral health legislative champions. These policy and budget requests include a line item in the state budget for oral health and a permanent state dental director with an adequate staff, regulation and oversight of Medicaid/MCOs, streamlining of the credentialing system, increase of reimbursement fees and other initiatives that would expand workforce opportunities in public health settings, and more.

Our documentary film ***Toothache: The Painful Truth About Oral Health Care Inequity*** was selected to the 22nd Annual Garden State Film Festival. This film gives the audience a bird's eye view of the disparities we see everyday, outlines the strides NJ has taken, and lists necessary resolutions. Below are direct quotes from the film, related to Smiles for Seniors:

"We have seniors that are walking around completely edentulous. No teeth that have been edentulous for 10, 15 years. Why is that? Because some of our seniors, their social security check is \$5 over the cutoff for Medicaid. They've worked decades pouring into Social Security and pouring into their communities to no avail. So what do we do? We go out, we seek grants from our community, we get funding in, and we provide dentures for those seniors that are out there. It's called Smiles for Seniors. When a senior walks in and says "look, I can't get insurance" for whatever reason, we do our proper vetting, and we provide them with free dental services."

-Dr. Nicole McGrath-Barnes, Founder & CEO, KinderSmile Foundation

"As a travel nurse, I had purchased some backup insurance, but I found out that it wasn't insurance at all after paying thousands of dollars into this extra extra insurance I have as a travel person. So I needed some dental work done and I was distraught. It was over a thousand dollars and at that time literally, I didn't have a thousand dollars. Dr. Nicole, she said don't worry about it, we have a grant, and she fixed my teeth, and she also just held me with such embrace that I've never had that experience before in my life. And I've been telling people about this wonderful place for seniors, for children, for anyone that's in dire need of more health, which is very important for all of us, because a lot of us don't have the finances." -Mattie Cramer, Smiles for Seniors Patient

6. Is there anything else you would like FFA to know about this project?

We are grateful to The Friends Foundation for the Aging for sponsoring our Smiles for Seniors Oral Health and Wellness Program in 2021 and in 2023. We look forward to the opportunity to continue to partner and collaborate with your organization in order to improve the quality of life, mental health, and total health and wellbeing of the growing and underserved senior community of Trenton and vicinity, as we continue to improve the program with time. This is a unique discipline for both funding and services, and we appreciate the opportunity to partner for our common goal of serving and providing crucial oral health care to this at-risk population.

7. Feedback on your interaction with FFA would be helpful. Are there ways we can help beyond the grant?

KinderSmile Foundation has a unique relationship with FFA's Nikki Mosgrove and Susan Hoskins, as we share a passion for serving the Trenton community. If there is a need of any sort to help other organizations they immediately contact us for oral hygiene supplies for example, and we come together to serve. When they come across an opportunity that we could benefit from, they immediately forward or reach out. Our partnership is an authentic relationship of service and love for our community. This is how a community is strengthened by active members who want the best for our seniors, families, and children. We are grateful for our collaboration, a relationship that is deeply rooted in service, dedication, and compassion.

8. Include a simple program budget/actual with income and expenses (eg. staff, program supplies, travel, etc) for both last year and next. Please see attached.

9. Has your 501c3 status changed? No.