

The Sunday Hour
Sunday, Feb 8, 2009

NORWALK HOUR, 2/8/09

Smiles order of the day at free dental clinic

NORWALK

By **STEVE KOBAK**
Hour Staff Writer

There was nothing left for Marco and Diego Lima to do but smile after getting their teeth cleaned Saturday afternoon at Norwalk Smiles.

The Limas and other uninsured children received a free dental checkup from area dentists as part of Give Kids a Smile Day.

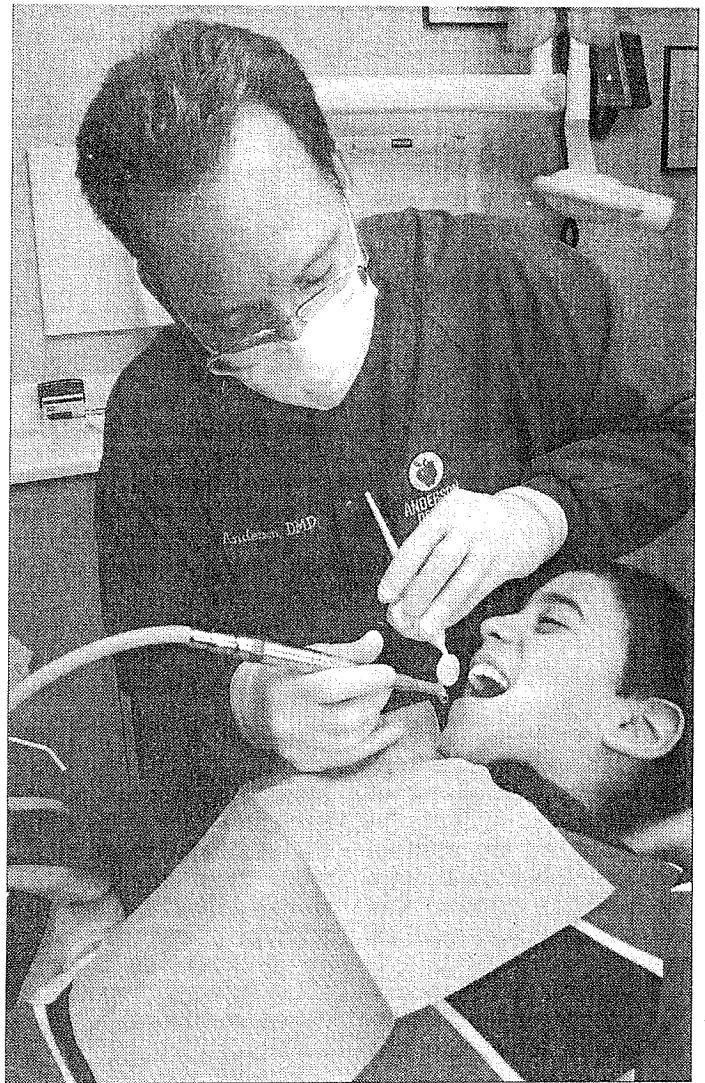
"This is very good, very special

for the kids," said Marco Lima Sr., Diego and Marco's father. "When you have nice teeth, you have a nice smile."

Adele Gordon, director of Norwalk Smiles on Flax Hill Road, said the turnout for the program on Saturday was "unbelievable," as more than 40 children were scheduled for appointments.

Gordon said the children would receive a standard checkup as well

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Hour photo / ERIK TRAUTMANN

Jeff Anderson, DDS, cleans the teeth of Nicholas Marin, 8, following a free examination at the Norwalk Smiles Dental Clinic in South Norwalk. Dentists donated their time on Saturday to see nearly 50 young patients who do not have dental insurance.

Smiles prevail

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as any dental work that needed to be done.

"Just checking kids' teeth doesn't restore health to their mouth," she said. "We really need to do the restoration work."

Six private practitioners donated their time for the event, including Nicole Kent, who practices with Maerowitz-Klien.

Kent said she used to work at a clinic similar to Norwalk Smiles and donating her time to Give Kids a Smile Day is her way of giving back to the community.

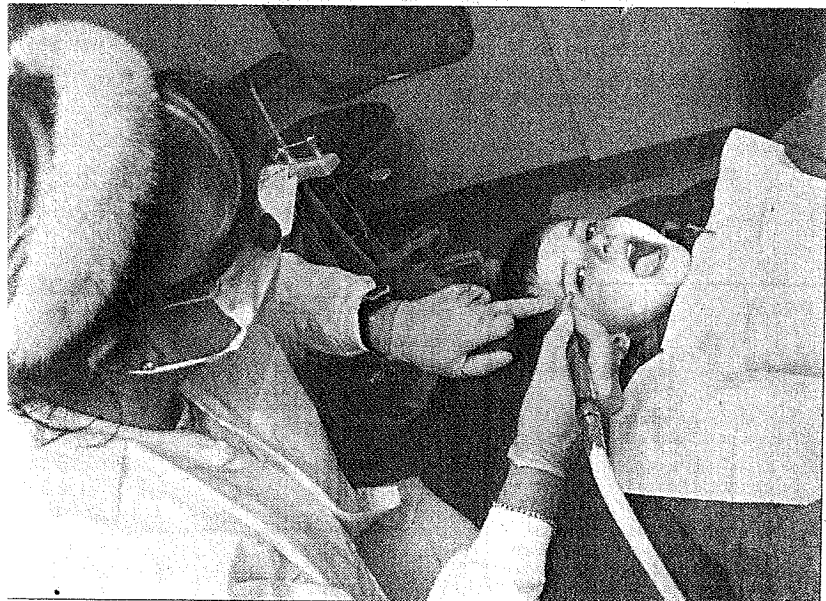
"This is my way of helping people who can't access regular health care," she said.

Kent stressed the importance of regular checkups in preventing future dental problems. She said she saw one child who had to have two teeth removed and one child who had 11 cavities on Saturday.

"Many families aren't aware of their children's dental problems," she said.

Nino Kakabadze took her 6-year-old son Giorgi and her 4-year-old daughter Mariam to the event after receiving a flyer from Fox Run Elementary School.

"Since they've never been to the dentist, it was a good opportunity," Kakabadze said. "They're healthy, but they still need checkups."



Hour photo / ERIK TRAUTMANN

Aley Barocas, DDS, cleans the teeth of Jameson Pears, 5, following a free examination at the Norwalk Smiles Dental Clinic in South Norwalk. Dentists donated their time on Saturday to see nearly 50 young patients who do not have dental insurance.