



LIFETIME SMILES

A program of United Methodist Western Kansas Mexican-American Ministries

2005 WINNER

Janet Sevier Gilbreath Special Recognition Project of the Year

From 164 grant projects supported by the Health Fund in 2005, Lifetime Smiles, an oral health program of United Methodist Western Kansas Mexican-American Ministries, was selected to exemplify the vision of a Christian health community. Initiated in 2000 in response to growing unmet oral health needs recognized at the MAM Clinic, Lifetime Smiles is a comprehensive oral health program aimed at education, decay prevention, and access to dental care in southwest Kansas. Four criteria are used to evaluate projects for recognition as the Janet Sevier Gilbreath Project of the Year and Lifetime Smiles achieved in each.

On attainment of goals and objectives, the most telling statistic is that referral rates from school screenings fell from 51% the first year to 39% in the fifth year. Screenings involved 25,346 children. Nearly 9,000 children in 35 schools throughout southwest Kansas continue to be screened for oral health each year. In addition to school screenings, the project was responsible for a media campaign over five years that reached an audience of 70,000 each week and an education campaign that reached 39,000 with information and handouts at 635 events. The program also provided case management for dental care for 1,050 children and 388 adults; implemented monthly free clinics for sealants, treatment, and fluoride varnish; and expanded the number of dentists providing free and reduced-cost care and accepting Medicaid/HealthWave patients.

On utilization of volunteers, Lifetime Smiles helped host the first Kansas Mission of Mercy in Garden City, provided translation services for the materials, and recruited more than 80 volunteers to serve as interpreters during the event and to conduct the exit survey. The program has also engaged the dental community to provide ongoing and periodic free and reduced-cost services for people in need, particularly children. Lifetime Smiles initiated and continues to facilitate the work of the Community Oral Health Coalition, the coalition responsible for championing water fluoridation in Garden City. The group includes dentists, social services staff, school district personnel, early childhood workers, a pediatrician, and a family practice physician as well as representatives of local government. These volunteers remain active advocates for oral health.

On the development of community, church and other support, Lifetime Smiles attracted a grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation's Local Initiative Funding Partners program and brought \$351,140 to Kansas for oral health from this national foundation. The Health Fund served as the local funder that nominated Lifetime Smiles for this national grant and awarded a \$300,000 grant to start Lifetime Smiles. The program also received a national Volunteers in HealthCare grant after being nominated by the Kansas Dental Association and was selected by the American Association of Public Health Dentistry for a poster session at its national conference. It continues to receive recognition as a model of community collaboration and attract funding from state and local sources. The program will continue with MAM supporting the coordinator's salary after the Health Fund grant ends. A current grant of \$22,262 continues support of the coordinator's position through this year.

On the institution of good management and financial practices to assure quality service delivery, MAM has always demonstrated good stewardship. In fact, based on these same criteria, MAM was selected for the first Janet Sevier Gilbreath award in 1988. With this project, as with others, excellent management and financial practices were reflected throughout the grant in timely, thorough, and insightful reports.

Representing Lifetime Smiles and United Methodist Western Kansas Mexican-American Ministries: Penney Schwab, executive director, and husband, Don; Ray Mann, chairperson of the Board; and Jose Olivas, Ulysses/Johnson/Satanta community developer