

## ***Miles for Smiles: Community, Advocacy, Care***

### **Local Leaders Join to Raise Awareness of Oral Health Disparities in North Texas**

DALLAS, TX – March 19, 2015 – Since 2008, Dallas area pre-dental and dental students have joined together once a year at the Miles for Smiles runathon to raise funds for individuals and families unable afford much-needed dental care. On Saturday, May 9<sup>th</sup>, 2015, dentists, dental students, residents, and local business and community leaders will join at Exall Park in Dallas, Texas to raise awareness for the importance of oral health care. Many members of our North Texas community are faced with lack of access to oral health care, with Hispanics being the largest group impacted.

This year **Miles for Smiles** is privileged to have the support of its corporate sponsor, Northwestern Mutual. Karin Larrave – a Guatemalan native who is a passionate advocate for promoting health throughout the local Hispanic community – has been a Wealth Management Advisor with Northwestern Mutual for thirteen years. Also offering their support is the North Texas Hispanic Dental Association – a group of Hispanic oral health professionals and students that strive to eliminate disparities of access to oral health care in the Hispanic Community in North Texas.

Participation is open to all members of the community, and all sponsors' contributions will benefit the Texas A&M Baylor College of Dentistry Social Services Dental Care Fund, a non-profit fund which directly helps to provide treatment for those who need it most. Attendees can enjoy free food and live music, and every participant goes home with a free toothbrush, toothpaste, floss and mouthwash.

Runners can register online or on the day of the event and are sponsored by local dentists and businesses for every lap they complete. Last year, runners raised a cumulative \$10,000 for the cause, and this year that number is expected to increase significantly. The 2015 runathon is expected to attract 1,000 people, its largest turnout yet.

This year, organizers are going even further to meet our community needs. For the first time in Miles for Smiles history, the Texas A&M Baylor College of Dentistry (TAMUBCD) student dentists will provide free dental screenings for participants. "We're passionate about raising awareness and making a real difference in the community," said Mehrad Sadeghpour, TAMUBCD student dentist and event organizer, "We hope to see people from all over the Dallas – Fort Worth area come out for the event and really take advantage of these free screenings."

Thursday, May 7<sup>th</sup>, Dallas County Commissioner Elba Garcia will join special guests for a kickoff cocktail reception at a Joyce & Gigi's Kitchen to bring more attention to the event and the cause. Larrave and the NTHDA are joining with TAMUBCD students to make this year's event the largest and most successful yet – both in terms of sponsorship and outreach. All of those involved agree that the provision of dental care is a great need throughout North Texas, and are excited to make a difference in their local community.

For more information contact visit the event website: <http://milesforsmiles.bcd.tamhsc.edu/>.