Generous Dentists Offer Comprehensive Care to Patients in Need

By Dental Lifeline Network • Florida

Fifty-five-year-old Boyd, a resident of St. Cloud, has suffered vision problems since birth and is legally blind. He is unable to read but enjoys listening to TV, especially the NASCAR races, with Chewy, his three-year-old Chihuahua.

Boyd was in desperate need of dental care, including 10 extractions to eliminate his painful periodontal disease and frequent abscesses. As a young adult he was able to work, repairing vehicle transmissions and installing concrete, until his deteriorating vision prevented further employment. Now, he is financially dependent on social security disability insurance, food stamps and Medicaid. Boyd could not afford the extensive dental treatment he needed and Medicaid does not cover dental therapies for adults.

Thankfully, Boyd was rescued by Dental Lifeline Network • Florida’s Donated Dental Services (DDS) program, which often is the last resort for people who have no access to treatment. Due to the overwhelming generosity of Dr. M, a DDS volunteer, Boyd was relieved of his pain. His oral health is restored and Boyd has new dentures and a new smile.
Florida Donated Dental Services

Boyd (center), a resident of St. Cloud who is legally blind, received comprehensive dental care due to a generous donation from Dr. M (right) and his assistant through Florida Donated Dental Services (DDS), a program of Dental Lifeline Network • Florida.

“My treatment with DDS was excellent,” said Boyd. “They asked me what was the first thing I’d do. I got me a great big apple and ate it — it was delicious! I just keep smiling. It’s nice to walk up to someone and grin!”

Boyd is one of thousands of vulnerable Floridians with disabilities or who are elderly or medically fragile and have no access to dental care that they desperately need. Dr. M, who treated Boyd, is a one of 396 Florida DDS volunteers. In addition, 196 Florida dental laboratories and several labs from outside the state donate their services. Through Florida DDS, nearly 1,300 people have received $4.7 million in donated treatment since Dental Lifeline Network • Florida was founded in 1997 in conjunction with the South Florida District Dental Association (SFDDA). This year, the Florida Dental Association Foundation has granted funding that enabled DLN to hire a full-time program coordinator.

How to Apply for Treatment

Applicants for the DDS program must lack adequate income to pay for treatment and have a permanent disability, or be age 65 or older, or qualify as medically fragile. Patients who qualify as medically fragile are those who need a clean bill of oral health to receive chemotherapy for cancer or autoimmune diseases, an organ transplant, dialysis, cardiac surgery or those who have crippling arthritis and need a joint replacement.

To apply for the Florida DDS program, please call Megan Gallagher at 850.577.1466. For more information, visit http://dentallifeline.org/florida/.

Dental Lifeline Network • Florida is part of the national Dental Lifeline Network organization, a charitable affiliate of the American Dental Association. Dental Lifeline Network serves patients in all 50 states and the District of Columbia through more than 15,000 volunteer dentists and 3,600 laboratories.