



# Caring Times

A Publication for the Friends and Supporters of the Caring for Children Foundation of Texas | Summer 2015



The mission of the Caring for Children Foundation of Texas' Care Van Program is to immunize uninsured and medically underserved Texas children, and provide health, nutrition and exercise education, as well as other health-related services.

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## On the Road Again, Destination Laredo

Last year, the Care Van® Program extended dental outreach efforts to Laredo in collaboration with the Miles of Smiles-Laredo program. It provides free school-based oral health promotion and disease prevention services to children in the two largest school districts in Webb County, located along the Texas-Mexico border. About 8,500 children received preventive dental services last year through the program. Miles of Smiles-Laredo provides limited dental screenings and fluoride treatments to children in kindergarten through third grade. The program was created by the University of Texas Health Science Center at San Antonio, School of Dentistry, which continues to administer the program.

Dr. David Cappelli, Miles of Smiles-Laredo program director, says, "I want to express my gratitude to Mr. Craig Jeffery, executive director of the Caring for Children Foundation - Care Van Program, who provides the van so that the Miles of Smiles-Laredo program can more easily move equipment and supplies between the 44 different elementary schools that we serve in the program. The community collaboration with the Caring for Children Foundation is an integral part of the success of the Miles of Smiles-Laredo program. The van allows the Miles of Smiles-Laredo portable dental program to serve children attending elementary schools in Laredo with greater efficiency. We appreciate the contribution of the Care Van Program."

In reflecting on the various needs of the families served by the Care Vans, Jeffery says, "We are so proud of the immunization services we provide through the Care Vans, but we want to do more to meet the needs of those we serve. It is through work with outstanding partners like Miles of Smiles-Laredo that we can make a bigger difference in the overall health of economically disadvantaged Texas children."



Gathering to extend dental outreach efforts are, from left, Dr. David Cappelli, Miles of Smiles-Laredo, Program Director; Magda A. de la Torre, Miles of Smiles-Laredo, Program Coordinator; Irene Rosales, United Independent School District (UISD), Health Services Director; and Craig Jeffery, Executive Director, Caring of Children Foundation of Texas.



Students in the United Independent School District receive tips for keeping their teeth healthy and strong.



## Care Vans Ready for Summer Rush

Another busy summer is upon us as the Care Vans prepare to immunize thousands of kids in time to start classes in August. The program expects to immunize nearly 10,000 children during this time. The Care Vans will participate in several back-to-school events, providing childhood immunizations, teaching hygiene and health facts, and promoting healthy living. To see a schedule of summer clinics or event dates in your community, visit [carevan.org/neighborhood.htm](http://carevan.org/neighborhood.htm) and select the van in your area. Be sure to look for the Care Vans during the following major events:

- **Mayor's Back-to-School Fair** - Houston
- **Austin ISD Back-to-School Bash** - Austin
- **Shoes for Kids** - Rockwall
- **CT Church Annual Health Fair** - Houston
- **AISD/NAACP Back-to-School Rally** - Arlington
- **Church of the Incarnation Back-to-School Fair** - Dallas

## Shout Out



The Caring for Children Foundation of Texas appreciates the generous support of the following:

- **3M Gives**
- **Carrollton Women's Club**
- **Healthy Kids, Healthy Families®**
- **Transamerica**



## Care Vans Work to Protect Teens Against Meningitis

### Vaccinate Before You Graduate Campaign

As thousands of Texas teens prepare to go off to college, the Care Van Program was there to provide the meningococcal vaccine required for admission. During the month of May, the Care Vans visited many high school campuses promoting the *Vaccinate Before You Graduate* campaign. This annual campaign is geared toward ensuring teens receive the vaccine before graduation. Texas state law requires all students entering an institution of higher education to show proof of an initial meningococcal vaccination or a booster dose during the five-year period prior to enrolling. This timing will protect students through the college years, when students are at increased risk for exposure.

Meningococcal disease is a serious bacterial illness that is especially dangerous for adolescents and young adults. It is caused by the bacteria *neisseria meningitidis*. The bacteria can cause meningitis, an infection covering the brain and spinal cord. It can also infect the blood stream, a condition called meningococemia. Infection can cause brain damage, hearing loss, learning disabilities and even death. One in seven adolescents and young adults who contract the disease will die from it. To combat and prevent spreading of meningitis, the Care Van Program works with several school districts to administer thousands of doses of meningococcal vaccine at no cost to the students. For more information about the meningococcal vaccine or school requirements, visit the [Texas Department of State Health Services website](http://www.dhs.texas.gov).



### Care Vans Receive 'Facelifts'

Over the past few months, several of our Care Vans received much-needed repairs and touch ups. A few enhancements included: fresh paint jobs, new graphics, wider running boards and redesign of the interiors to better accommodate loading and unloading immunization supplies. Look for our updated and brightly-colored vans in a neighborhood near you!

## Staff Spotlight

### Sheryl Smith

Sheryl Smith is our Care Van Specialist and has been a part of the Foundation's team for nearly eight years. She works behind the scenes, supporting the Care Van Program's general operations and is often the first point of contact when supporters call the organization. Prior to entering the nonprofit field, Sheryl's background was in construction and project management for 14 years, which aids her with daily multi-tasking in her current role.



"It's wonderful to be a part of an organization that cares about children and communities," she says as she has enjoyed learning about nonprofits. Sometimes it can be challenging to keep up with the hundreds of requests we field each month. Sheryl's "we're here for the children" approach puts connecting with people first and foremost: "Although I don't get to meet everyone in person, the significant phone conversations I have with the school nurses and the families who need our services make it all worthwhile."

Sheryl reports she and her school contacts get to know each other well. "I've tried hard to build a rapport with many of the school nurses, primarily by listening and showing that I'm concerned about their needs, and making sure they receive our fliers and outreach information in a timely manner to help meet the needs of their students. Maintaining positive relationships with schools and community organizations is more than just a necessity - it is the most rewarding part of my job." Simply put, Sheryl finds that "staying caught up" is her biggest challenge. "If families do not know where the Care Vans will be, we are unable to deliver our services to children who need us most," she says.

Sheryl is an avid baseball fan and particularly enjoys watching her son play on his college team, along with spending time with her husband and family dog, Big Bear.



#### Care Van Showcased at TMA Conference

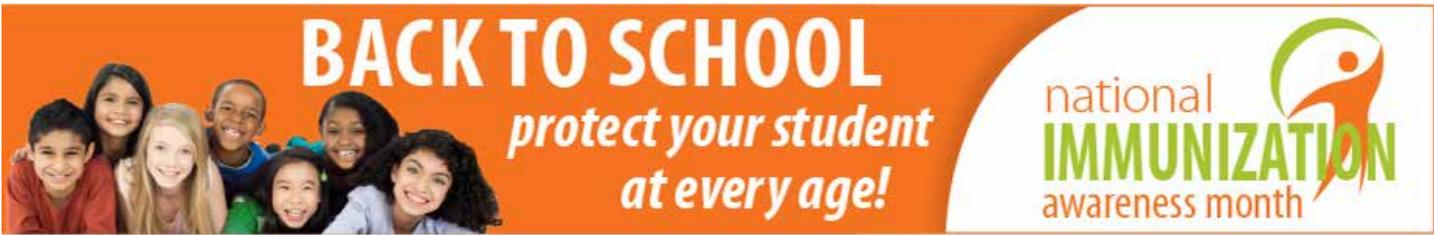
*As part of the Texas Medical Association's TexMed Conference, the Care Van was on proud display, providing information to medical professionals of our outreach capabilities. More than 1,500 physicians, medical students and medical staff attended the annual conference held in Austin in May.*

## Foundation Wish List



The Caring for Children Foundation would greatly appreciate donations of any of the following items. Donations may be shipped or brought to the Foundation's home office. Or call toll-free **800-258-5437** for other arrangements:

- Glad or Hefty drawstring trash bags (13 gallon)
- Individually wrapped alcohol swab/prep pads (boxes of 50 or 100)
- ¾" x 3" Band-Aids or adhesive strips for kids (25, 50 or 100 per box)
- Manila file folders (letter size; new or unused)
- Post-it Notes
- Black ink pens
- Vehicle detail/cleaning services
- Bottled water
- Disinfectant wipes and sprays
- Febreze air freshener
- Brooms/Swiffer floor cleaner
- Window cleaner
- Shop towels or heavy duty paper towels
- Gift cards to Firestone (for oil/filter change or general auto maintenance)



## Helping Celebrate National Immunization Month

August is recognized as National Immunization Awareness Month (NIAM). The goal of NIAM is to increase awareness about immunizations across the life span, from infants to the elderly. It's the perfect time to remind family, friends, co-workers and those in the community to "catch up" on their vaccinations. More importantly, parents who are enrolling their children in school or students who are entering college (including those not living on campus) will have to comply with state laws for admission. Take time to visit the Texas Department of State Health Services website to learn more at [www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school](http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/immunize/school).

In addition, the Care Van Program continues to team up with various school districts to offer school-based immunization events throughout the school year. School-based initiatives are an effective way of improving immunization levels, according to many studies.

Vaccines offer safe and effective protection from infectious diseases. By staying up-to-date on the recommended vaccines, individuals can protect themselves, their families, friends and communities from serious, life-threatening diseases. The Care Vans are working to improve the health of Texas, one child at a time!

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**RESOURCES:**

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: [cdc.gov](http://cdc.gov)

Department of State Health Services: [dshs.state.tx.us](http://dshs.state.tx.us)

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