

Local Dentist Screens Special Olympics Athletes

Last month, Beaufort, South Carolina's Stephen Durham, DMD, FAGD, LVIF, traveled to Orlando to participate in the Special Olympics State Fall Classic. He wasn't there as an athlete, but as part of the Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® initiative.

On November 5 and 6, 2010, Dr. Durham joined dozens of other medical professionals in the Healthy Athletes program. Under Healthy Athletes Special Smiles®, he provided no-cost, non-invasive dental screenings to the athletes participating in the State Fall Classic. These screenings provide athletes with dental hygiene education and nutritional education, as well as a list of dental providers in their home area who are well suited to providing ongoing care to special needs patients.

“The athletes are amazing,” Dr. Durham says. “As passionate about their games as I am about dentistry. It's incredibly rewarding to help ensure they have the best level of oral hygiene possible, and to connect that with their desire to improve their ability to train and compete in Special Olympics.”

Over 1200 athletes competed in the Florida State Games, in softball, bowling, power lifting, and gymnastics. Many also participated in the Healthy Athletes activities, which, in addition to Special Smiles, includes Fit Feet, FUNfitness (physical therapy), Healthy Hearing, Health Promotion, and Opening Eyes®. Combined, these disciplines form a framework upon which Special Olympics athletes can learn ways to improve their health, as well as find local medical care with training in their unique needs.

“It's inspiring to have so many health professionals come together to ensure special needs patients have access to the kind of medical care and education that will enhance their athletic and personal goals,” Dr. Durham said. “It's even more inspiring to be able to interact with such excellent competitors and good sports.”

Dr. Durham, through his practice, Durham Dental in Beaufort, SC., welcomes special needs patients of all ages. He can be contacted through his website at www.durhamdental.net or by phone at 843-379-5400.

Additional information on the Healthy Athletes® Initiative can be found via www.specialolympicsflorida.org.