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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

20 Years of Protecting Children's Smiles

A National Children's Dental Health Month call to strengthen access to care for underserved children

CHARLOTTE, NC (February 17, 2026) — As the nation observes National Children's Dental Health Month, America's ToothFairy is celebrating its 20th anniversary, marking two decades of advancing children's oral health by strengthening the nonprofit clinics and community organizations that serve them.

Founded in 2006 by renowned dentist Dr. Cherilyn Sheets in response to the U.S. Surgeon General's call to address the "silent epidemic" of dental disease, America's ToothFairy was established as a collaborative effort among clinicians, academic leaders, corporations, and community partners committed to improving oral health outcomes for underserved children. National health data shows that progress has been made: public health literature has historically estimated that dental disease once accounted for more than 50 million school hours lost annually, while more recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention estimates that approximately 34 million school hours are still lost each year due to unplanned or emergency dental care—highlighting both meaningful gains and the continued need for action.

Over the past 20 years, America's ToothFairy has grown from supporting a small network of committed providers into a trusted national resource partner. Thanks to the generosity of donors and corporate sponsors, the organization has delivered more than **\$27 million in donated dental products, equipment, educational materials, financial support, and programming** to nonprofit clinics and community organizations nationwide. Through these efforts, **more than 9.4 million youth** have received dental care at clinics supported with America's ToothFairy resources, and **15.9 million children, teens, and caregivers** have received oral health education and prevention materials designed to promote lifelong healthy habits.

“National Children’s Dental Health Month is about prevention, education, and access—and that’s exactly where our work has focused for the past 20 years,” said Jill Malmgren, Executive Director of America’s ToothFairy. “This anniversary year is an opportunity to celebrate progress while also recognizing that many safety-net dental clinics are still rebuilding capacity after the pandemic. With the right partners, we can help more children get the care and education they need to stay healthy and succeed in school.”

The organization’s top priority in 2026 is its Dental Resource Program (DRP), which currently supports 57 nonprofit clinics in 21 states, providing essential supplies and resources that help clinics serve children in communities where access to care remains limited. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, these clinics collectively reached more than 530,000 children annually. Today, rising costs, workforce shortages, and reduced resources continue to limit how many children can be served, despite persistent demand.

At the same time, demand for prevention and education continues to grow. America’s ToothFairy’s Smile Guardian Program, which delivers oral health education kits to schools, Head Start programs, libraries, public health departments, family crisis services, food pantries, and other community organizations, currently has more than 400 organizations on a waitlist.

“Our work has always been about strengthening the systems that support children’s health,” Malmgren added. “Corporate partners play a vital role in that effort. Whether through product donations, sponsorships, or employee engagement, their involvement helps extend the reach of care and education during National Children’s Dental Health Month and throughout the year.”

America’s ToothFairy is recognized for its responsible stewardship and transparency, holding a Platinum Seal of Transparency from Candid and a Four-Star rating from Charity Navigator. The organization is guided by a Board of Directors that includes leaders from respected dental and healthcare companies, providing strong governance and strategic oversight.

“I’m proud of our integrity, accountability, and long-term vision,” said Ann Bruck, Board Chair of America’s ToothFairy and representative of Solventum, which serves as a Corporate Underwriter. “America’s ToothFairy offers corporate partners a credible, measurable way to invest in children’s health and educational success—especially during a month dedicated to raising awareness about the importance of early and preventive dental care.”

Throughout National Children’s Dental Health Month and its 20th anniversary year, America’s ToothFairy invites corporations—both within and beyond the dental industry—to explore partnership opportunities that help restore and expand access to oral health resources for underserved children. Interested organizations can learn more at AmericasToothFairy.org or contact Jill Malmgren at jmalmgren@ncohf.org.

About America’s ToothFairy

As a resource provider, America’s ToothFairy increases access to oral health care by supporting nonprofit clinics and community partners delivering education, prevention, and treatment services for underserved children. Since 2006, the organization has provided resources to help more than 16 million children and caregivers protect their smiles from tooth decay. Learn more at <http://www.americastoothfairy.org/>.

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Each year, staff from Augusta Regional Clinic in Fishersville, VA provide free preventive care and oral hygiene supplies to more than 1,000 students across local elementary and middle schools. Product donations help offset expenses and keep this lifeline running at full capacity. "Without America's ToothFairy's support," said Clinic Director Sophie Parson, "we would have had to cut schools or turn away children."