

## SEASON FOR CARING



Dr. Aliisha Choucair and dental assistant Cristy Werner work on a filling for Chris Watkins on Saturday during the Capital Area Dental Foundation's Dental Day for Season for Caring. NICOLE VILLALPANDO/AMERICAN-STATESMAN

# DELIVERING SMILES

## Families who lived with mouth pain receive free dental care

### Nicole Villalpando

Austin American-Statesman  
USA TODAY NETWORK

"My teeth are horrible," Rebecca Adamson said as she entered the office of Dr. Kavin Kelp over the weekend. After having two children a year apart and her wisdom teeth coming in, the Marine, who has experienced homelessness, said she's been in pain on and off for the past two years because of her mouth.

On Saturday, dentists, dental assistants and hygienists gathered in Kelp's office for the Capital Area Dental Foundation's Dental Day, benefiting the Statesman's Season for Caring, for adults who have no access to dental care or can't afford the co-payments.

Season for Caring highlights the needs of a dozen families in our community and helps hundreds of others through local nonprofit organizations. This is the 25th year of Season for Caring, which has raised more than \$18.4 million in monetary gifts and donations of in-kind goods and services since

1999.

"My mouth needs it," Adamson said of receiving a cleaning and some fillings. More fillings will be done by Dr. Annalisa Heck at a later date, after Adamson heals from the current dental work. The foundation said it needs an oral surgeon to donate services to remove Adamson's painful wisdom teeth.

The Capital Area Dental Foundation has partnered with Season for Caring since 2011 and donated more than \$200,000 worth of care to the featured families.

"We give back as dentists because our community supports us," Dr. Stanley LaCroix said. "Season for Caring patients are kind of special. We know they are in need, and we get them referred from various agencies who know what their situation is."

Dental Day "reminds me why I'm doing what I'm doing," Dr. Richa Wahi said. "It's great to see so much impact during this."

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### About Season for Caring

The Statesman will be sharing the stories of all 12 Season for Caring families throughout the holiday season.

Find more stories and information at [statesman.com/seasonforcaring](https://statesman.com/seasonforcaring). You can donate online or use the coupon on Page 2B. Now through Dec. 25, all monetary donations will be matched up to \$500,000 by the Sheth family.



**"We give back as dentists because our community supports us."**

**Dr. Stanley LaCroix**

# Smiles

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This year, the patients received X-rays and an assessment by a dentist. After the assessment, treatments including fillings, cleanings and scalings (deep cleanings). For more complicated procedures, or if treatments need to be spread out, the patient will be assigned to a local dentist to complete the work. Season for Caring money helps pay for laboratory fees and required sedation.

"Our volunteers get a personal connection with the patients," LaCroix said of Dental Day. Some, like Heck, have agreed to complete the work for a patient.

For Phyllis Campos, this day came with such relief. Her son Cody, 28, who has cerebral palsy and is under hospice care because of recurring lung

infections, might have needed to have his molars removed because of decay. Looking inside his mouth, the dental volunteers determined that keeping his teeth and doing a cleaning with sedation would help the teeth, prevent injury to his gums and keep him from having more trouble breathing.

"It's amazing," Phyllis Campos said. "Thank you."

During the day, Campos and son Casey got their teeth cleaned. Cody will have his case referred out.

Mia Yett needed an emergency removal of a back tooth. Three dentists removed the tooth safely.

"A very mean tooth," said Jess Hicks, a dental assistant with Kelp, told Yett. "You did really, real-

ly good."

Yett, her grandmother Bonnie Yett and cousin Nate Bonner Yett will return to Kelp's office to complete the dental work they need.

For Sarai Amzaldo Hudson, one of two dental hygienists who were busy all morning, "it doesn't feel like a full day when you love it."

The Capital Area Dental Foundation will do a communitywide Dental Day in March and is always looking for volunteers to staff that day or to complete the work for Season for Caring. Contact it at [txcadv@gmail.com](mailto:txcadv@gmail.com).

The Season for Caring families have many more needs on their wish lists. Read their stories and find their wish lists at [statesman.com/seasonforaring](http://statesman.com/seasonforaring).



**Rebecca Adamson and Chris Watkins fill out forms before their treatment as their daughter Keiko and son Lucas hang out at Dr. Kavin Kelp's office.**

NICOLE VILLALPANDO/AMERICAN-STATESMAN