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June 7, 2010

### VSDS Special Olympics Special Smiles Performs a Record number of Screenings

Despite dire weather predictions, the Saturday June 5th VSDS Special Smiles project at the Special Olympics Summer Games was a huge success. 15 dedicated volunteers helped in the performing of dental screenings of 169 athletes competing in the games at the University of Vermont.

With the guidance of the Special Smiles program co-director Dr. Nevin Zablotsky, veteran dentist volunteers Drs. Richard Bellino, Holly Halliday, Renay Ivens, Matt Kolesar, John Langfeldt, Gabe Mannarino, Brian Shuman, and Brad Turner provided the screenings with a smile and gentle hand.

As usual, the athletes were incredibly appreciative of the screenings, as well as the grab bag of toothbrushes, dental floss, and toothpaste provided by Northeast Delta Dental. Dental hygienists, Bobbie DeGenaro and Lindi Liimatainen, provided the athletes with a refresher course on oral hygiene and they were then given eye-catching tee-shirts, sponsored by Northeast Delta Dental, The T-shirts were distributed by Corey Shalek, a bright young recruit.

VSDS wants to make a special thank you Delta Dental staff Sarah Nelson, Robin Shalek and Carol Wright for greeting and handling the required check in paperwork. They also get extra thanks for securing the tooth brushes, floss and tooth paste and carry bags when a "glitch" in the shipping of these crucial materials occurred. Of course thanks also go to co-director Dr. Steve Pitmon for his diligent help, Dr. Renay Ivens for her incredible photography, as well as Peter Taylor, the executive director of the Vermont State Dental Society. A special thanks also goes to Dr's Shuman and Kolesar for helping run the program last year.

This year the screenings revealed an increase in the number of athletes requiring more urgent care. A follow-up will be done with the collaborative help of the athletes, the coaches, caregivers and the VSDS to ensure that those athletes' dental needs are addressed. All those interested in helping with this event next year can contact the VSDS or Dr. Nevin Zablotsky or Dr. Steve Pitmon.

See [VSDS.org](http://VSDS.org) for a video and many photos taken by Dr. Ivens, Diane Dumas from the VSDS central office, and Nadine Lawliss of Fiddlehead Dental.

The VSDS participation in the Special Olympics Special smiles program began in 1997 when Dr. Steve Pitmon brought the idea to the Society as a community service. Thanks again to all and we will see you next year!