

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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NEWS RELEASE

'Share Your Smile with Alabama' 2019 photo campaign open to third graders statewide

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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A healthy smile is important to children, both for their overall health and self-esteem. The Oral Health Office of the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) is launching the second annual smile photo contest open to third grade students who live in Alabama.

Two children, one girl and one boy, will be selected from photo submissions as the overall winners of the "Share Your Smile with Alabama" campaign. The winners will appear at a live news conference from Montgomery and will be featured in ADPH marketing campaigns to promote children's oral health in the state.

Parents will submit photographs of their children's faces to ADPH. A panel of judges will then make their final selections from the top three vote-getters for boys and girls. Photo submissions are due by November 28, 2018. Winners will be announced January 8, 2019.

One of last year's winners, Kerrigan Benn of Jacksonville, said, "Winning the 'Share Your Smile' contest was AMAZING! I have been on stage in plays before, but the live news conference and seeing myself on posters everywhere was the best thing ever! Your smile is one of the first things people see, and it is so important! It reminds me of what 'Annie' said, 'you're never fully dressed without a smile.'"

Haedyn Leverette, the 2018 boy winner from Montgomery, is also pleased he participated. He stated, "It felt really good being the winner. I liked seeing my picture in the magazine and everyone telling me congratulations. I wish I could win it again next year."

Cavities (also known as caries or tooth decay) are one of the most common chronic conditions of childhood in the United States. Untreated cavities can cause pain and infections that may lead to problems with eating, speaking, playing and learning. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children who have poor oral health often miss more school and receive lower grades than children who enjoy appropriate dental care.

State Dental Health Director Dr. Tommy Johnson said, "Teaching children to develop the habit of brushing and flossing, along with regular dental visits, helps them keep healthy smiles. We are sponsoring the contest again this year to bring attention to the need for children's oral health care and to remind everyone that dental decay is preventable."

The ADPH Oral Health Office is dedicated to preventing dental disease for Alabama's citizens by promoting and developing quality, cost-effective community and school-based preventive,

educational and early treatment programs which emphasize elimination of oral health disparities.

For more information and contest rules, visit alabamapublichealth.gov/oralhealth.

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