



Hinsdale residents venture to Chicago Bears training camp, bringing dental care to hundreds of children. PHOTOGRAPHED BY JOEL LERNER

In late July, one of our favorite pediatric dentists, Dr. Mira Albert, loaded up the staff of Brush Pediatric Dentistry while her husband, Dr. Sherif Albert, loaded up his Downers Grove-based Esplanade Dental Care staff.

The Hinsdale residents headed down to The Chicago Bears Training camp for Team Smile.

Dr. Mira Albert was named lead dentist at the event and oversaw the treatment plans as hundreds of underprivileged children received more than \$125,000 of free dentistry with the help of Chicago Bears players.

Hinsdale Living: What an honor to be named lead dentist this year. What were some of the challenges?

Dr. Mira Albert: Rather than actually treat patients I was in charge of reviewing X-rays and assigning patients to one of the 20 dentist volunteers based on that provider's comfort level with particular procedures—most of the docs are not pediatric dentists, so they have different skill levels and abilities to handle kids. Anyone in the dental field will tell you pediatrics is a different ball game. It was a huge compliment that the

organization entrusted me with such an important job, and ultimately I think it was a more effective way to execute care for the hundreds of children that came through. Rather than affecting only 15 to 20 patients that I would be able to physically see, I was able to ensure that every patient had the chance to receive the best care possible by matching them to the right provider. But to answer the question, there are returning patients every year!

How is it working with the Chicago Bears?

So fun! Just the cherry on top of a great day of giving back to kids and families that might not otherwise have access to dental care. The players, coaches, and mascot are all a riot!

As fall football, soccer, and lacrosse kick off, what is your advice to parents about protecting their children's teeth during sports?

Plain and simple: invest in a well-fitting custom mouthguard. According to the National Youth Sports Safety Foundation, the cost to treat a knocked out (avulsed) permanent tooth is between \$5,000 and \$20,000 over a

lifetime. The incidence of dental trauma can be greatly reduced or all together avoided by wearing a mouthguard. Once a tooth is traumatized, it can be a lifelong marriage to your dentist! Not to mention the risk of upper or lower jaw fractures that can be avoided by the cushioning effect of a mouthguard.

Do you recommend a mouthguard fitted in-office or is it okay to pick one up off the shelf?

Here's the scoop on the three types available:

1. Custom-fabricated: This is a simple procedure done in one to two visits to your dentist and is the best option for comfort and protection and is what I would recommend—we make them in our office in a variety of cool colors.
2. "Boil-and-bite": If a custom guard is not an option, this is the next best option and can be picked up at most sporting goods stores or online. "Boil-and-bite" have a lot of variation in how much protection they offer, how comfortable they are, how easy they are to keep in place, and price.
3. Stock mouthguards: This is the least favorable option. These are usually sold over the counter and are held in place by biting the teeth together. This

can interfere with breathing and speaking, which could pose problems. In certain cases, this is the only option for parents and better than nothing.

Anything is probably better than nothing, but if a custom fabricated one is an option—that's my vote.

If an injury to the mouth is sustained, what's your advice?

Rule out concussion or any other medical emergency, then get to a dentist ASAP—preferably a pediatric dentist or an oral surgeon because we are the ones that most frequently see acute dental traumas and have extensive formal training in immediate care needed. If that's not viable, head to the ER—Hinsdale ER has an oral surgeon on call. Side note: If a permanent tooth is knocked out or part of it is fractured, place it in milk or in the cheek to keep it vital and get to your dentist right away—time is of the essence in saving a tooth!

What about overall care routines for the school year?

Have your child see an American Board-certified pediatric dentist two times a year and make sure he or she is following the ADA and AAPD guidelines for taking X-rays. Too few and they could be failing to diagnose something that could eventually cause pain or infection. Too many is overexposure. Professional fluoride applications are a major key in prevention of cavities and remineralization of early tooth decay.

How is the No Cavity Kid's Club growing?

Amazingly! We literally have HUNDREDS and HUNDREDS of members, and we LOVE it! I like to think that Brush is making a difference in the oral health of the children in our community. There is nothing better than bumping into my 3-year-old NCKC member patient at Nordstrom and having her jump into my arms and give me the biggest hug ever! She knows who she is. ■

Brush Pediatric Dentistry is located at 911 N. Elm Street, Suite 228, in Hinsdale. To make an appointment, call 630-504-2223. To learn more, visit brushforkids.com.