



...Because every child deserves a childhood

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Astor Head Start Children to Receive Dental Exams

NYC College of Dentistry to oversee oral health program

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

POUGHKEEPSIE – More than 500 children enrolled in Astor’s Head Start programs in Dutchess County will be eligible for free dental checkups administered by New York University College of Dentistry Henry Schein Cares Global Student Outreach Programs, during the week of January 27. Head Start and Early Head Start are federal, early childhood programs for low-income families. Astor administers these programs in Dutchess County.

Mary Sontheimer, Assistant Executive Director, Astor’s Early Childhood Programs, said she and others involved in Astor’s Head Start programs are grateful to NYU College of Dentistry for offering the free service. They will also survey parents to identify issues in the community and at home that might lead to the development of dental disease in children.

“We know the damage dental problems can do, the impact it can have on learning and on long-term health, so this is a vital service the dental college is offering,” she said.

Participating dentists will examine the children and make recommendations for long-term or immediate dental care. Those needing emergency treatment will be referred to local dentists. Others will be treated when the NYU dental team returns to Poughkeepsie in June if they are unable to receive treatment from a local provider.

Sontheimer said parents and guardians are being asked to provide their children’s medical history and sign consent forms for the exams. “We’re hoping for 100-percent participation,” Sontheimer said.

For more information about the free dental screenings, contact Sontheimer at (845) 452-4167.

About Astor

Since 1953, Astor Services for Children & Families (formerly The Astor Home for Children) has been providing behavioral and educational services in a caring environment where children and their families find strength, healing, hope and trust. Now serving more than 6,000 children and families annually in over 33 locations, Astor’s current range of services in the Hudson Valley (Dutchess, Orange and Ulster counties) and the Bronx include: Residential Programs (for children ages 5-14 who have severe behavior and mental health challenges); Early childhood Programs (Astor operates the Early Head Start and Head Start Programs in Dutchess County, a federal early childhood program for low-income families); and Community-Based Behavioral Health and Prevention Services (outpatient mental health services).

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