

GATEWAY REGIONAL SCHOOL DISTRICT

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Pre-schoolers learn healthy habits

Huntington- “What do jellybeans do to your teeth?” asked Littleville PreK teacher Mrs. Susan Rhoads. A student replied “Rotten!”

On March 28, the Gateway School Based Health Center and Gator Grins (Gateway’s school based dental program) visited the PreK classrooms at Littleville Elementary School. Students learned healthy lessons such as brushing their teeth two times a day, flossing, washing their hands, and coughing into their elbow. Dental hygienist Liz Spooner and Coordinator Kristen Brakey spoke for Gator Grins and nurse practitioner Brenda Jaeger spoke for the School-Based Health Center.

Both school-based programs, operated by Hilltown Community Health Centers, Inc., are located in Gateway Regional High School, but see students in all Gateway schools. This location saves parents time and money by having their child seen for medical and dental appointments in a comfortable setting right at their school. This eliminates extended time away from classroom learning, and the need for parents to take time off from work to drive to an outside doctor or dental appointment. The School-Based Health Center provides comprehensive health care and can serve as a primary care provider for Gateway students (including well visits, illnesses, immunizations, sports physicals, and behavioral health care). Gator Grins is a comprehensive dental provider and provides dental exams, x-rays, cleanings, sealants, fluoride varnishes, amalgam (silver) and composite (white) fillings, and emergency dental care.

Reading the book “Happy, Healthy Teeth” started off the visit. Next, students each selected a cardboard replica of a food and were asked to differentiate between food that was good and food that was bad for their teeth.

“You should always brush your teeth *before* eating anything sugary” stated Spooner.

At the end of the visit, all the students went home with a dental mirror, toothpaste and a toothbrush from Gator Grins and coloring materials from both programs.

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Photo: (right) Gator Grins hygienist Liz Spooner demonstrating how to brush teeth to Littleville Pre-Kindergarten classes, during a visit last week. (below) Nurse Practitioner Brenda Jaeger and hygienist Liz Spooner teach a lesson on healthy habits at Littleville’s PreK classrooms.

