

Tooth Mobile makes local stop

Traveling dentist will provide necessary dental care for students

Story by Kristin M. Kraemer
Photos by Genevieve Ross

Appeal-Democrat

Dozens of Yuba-Sutter school children who have never been to the dentist will have clean and healthier teeth this week with the arrival of the Tooth Mobile.

The Dentistry in Motion van rolled into Marysville Monday morning and set up shop at Covillaud School.

About 65 students are expected to sit in one of two dentist's chairs this week and undergo everything from cleanings and X-rays to sealants and restorative work, said Mike Reza, who coordinates the free dentistry with his brother, dentist Alireza Parhizkari of San Jose.

"If this is another indication of what we've seen before, a lot of these kids, the majority of them, haven't been seen by a dentist in their life," said Reza, whose dental van has served more than 1,000 students in Santa Clara County in the last year. "We're hoping that (the damage) is reversible."

The mobile clinic's arrival was arranged through the Yuba-Sutter Chil-



Yashika Devi Nair, 6, a first-grader at Covillaud School, is shown how to properly brush her teeth by dentist Alireza Parhizkari.

dren's Dental Task Force – comprised of school nurses, dental and medical providers, Healthy Start coordinators and parents – and the state's Healthy Families program, with grant funding from Delta Dental Plan of California.

Deb Coulter, director of community development for Fremont-Rideout Health Group, said the need for dental care for students was identified in 1998 by the Yuba-Sutter School-based Health Clinics. Eighty percent of those screened had obvious signs of dental problems, according to the statistics.

"The goal is to get the kids treated that are having access problems now and get kids signed up who don't have any cover-

age," she said.

The mobile dental clinic is targeting children who have no insurance or are eligible under Medi-Cal or Healthy Families, which provides low-cost medical, dental and vision coverage for poor parents and their children up to 18 years old.

According to health group information, the lack of good dental health causes absenteeism, poor nutrition, susceptibility to diseases and illness.

Letters were sent home to Covillaud parents earlier this year informing them of the traveling dental clinic, with more than 108 responses to the