

# Something to smile about in Meriden

By Andrew Perlot  
Record-Journal staff

**MERIDEN** — Area dentists are hoping to improve a few smiles this weekend.

On Saturday morning, 40 uninsured children who could otherwise not afford treatment will have their teeth cleaned and their cavities filled by local dental workers interested in giving back.

The Gives Kids a Smile program is a collaboration of the Meriden-Wallingford Dental Society and the Community Health Center of Meriden.

The program is the brainchild of Dr. David Hergott, who is organizing it for its fifth year.

"Untreated dental disease can not only be painful, but can affect a child's physical, emotional and social develop-

ment," Hergott said in a statement. "Children with untreated dental decay may not be able to eat or sleep properly; they may not be able to concentrate in school."

He noted that some of the children his team of three dentists and a hygienist will treat have as many as 10 untreated cavities.

The Community Health Center of Meriden will provide facilities and equipment for the work, while the dentists and hygienists and their assistants will provide the labor, said Matt Vinikas, interim site director of the Community

Health Center of Meriden.

The uninsured children are singled out as needing work by the center's dental workers, who travel to city schools to do cleanings.

"The services that Dr. Hergott and other dentists provide each year make a tremendous impact on the children of Meriden," he said, "but I con-

tinue to worry about the thousands of children in Connecticut we don't reach — the ones who continue to have trouble eating, sleeping, and paying attention in class because their teeth are in such bad shape."

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