On Thursday, July 21, Mayor Pro Temp Kathie Tovo joined patients, families and health care providers for a special event at Dell Children’s to raise awareness about cleft and craniofacial conditions.

According to the CDC, about 7,000 babies will be born this year with a cleft lip or palate. July was National Cleft and Craniofacial Awareness and Prevention Month (NCCAPM).

“I am proud to help spread the word about the important work that NCCAPM and its partner organizations do throughout the year, offering support and education services for patients and families,” said Mayor Pro Temp Kathie Tovo. “We are so fortunate here in Austin to have Dell’s craniofacial team that provides tremendous medical care and support to children and families in the Central Texas region.”

“This is where craniofacial and reconstructive plastic surgery experts come together, gathering all the necessary health care specialists from all the different fields into one place,” said Raymond Harshbarger, MD, pediatric craniofacial plastic surgeon at Dell Children’s. The result: providing the best care possible to patients and their families.

Children born with cleft and craniofacial conditions can lead fulfilling, successful, accomplished lives, says Harshbarger. Clefts are usually repaired surgically in the first year of life, though many children require additional surgeries and treatments through adolescence to correct challenges to breathing, eating, or speech development.

Treatments vary depending on the severity of the condition, whether there are other syndromes or birth defects, the child’s age and other needs. Those born with cleft lip or palate often need specialized dental or orthodontic care throughout.

Two of our parents, Janae Baumeister and Susie Tucker also spoke at the event. Janae is the mother of two children with cleft lip/palate. She spoke of how essential it is to connect early with a team. Susie’s daughter, Julia, was born with Pierre Robin Sequence and a cleft palate. She described Julia as outgoing and strong-willed, “just like any other normal child.” She added, “Without the community and without the support we would’ve just felt lost. Having other people to promote this (cleft awareness) and give information is imperative for parents and makes you feel like you have hope.”

As many of you are aware, many of the fun events we have offered patients and families throughout the years is because of the wonderful support from Austin Smiles. Now with new leadership and an updated logo, we are pleased to introduce Austin Smiles – The Austin Plastic Surgery Foundation. The new team members include: Kristen Slaughter Brown, Executive Director, and Kristin Garcia, Director of Development and Communications. Martha Myer-Mashburn will be the Administrative and Communications Consultant and Leilani Kahoekele Briseno will continue as Medical Missions Director.

Kristin and Kristen met with our team to discuss ways to continue with our traditional events and new ways to revitalize programming at the local level. Keep an eye out for a new opportunity we hope to offer middle-high school girls very soon. Think yoga and stress relief!!!
Cleft-Craniofacial Team’s Secret Treasure

If you have been to our Cleft Clinic, you are sure to have received a warm welcome from Kimberly Ramirez, our clinical assistant who has been with Seton for 17 years (five with Cranio). She has a real tender spot for all our patients—many who she has known since birth! Her smile and sweet disposition help those who are a little shy or nervous about getting their temperature or picture taken—she helps turn the visit into a positive experience!

Kimberly has taken it upon herself to create a Treasure Box filled with hand picked gifts she purchases on her own. They come in handy for patient’s birthdays or if they are just having a rough time.

Outside of clinic, Kimberly and her husband are active with their church and they have raised two stellar youth who are both in college this year.

Kim Ramirez

BABY SHOWER: RAISING CLEFT AWARENESS

A baby shower is a wonderful way to celebrate the expected birth of a child by bringing gifts for the expectant mother. The Miller family had a beautiful baby shower to welcome their soon to be born son with an additional goal of giving the gift of inviting friends and family to be part of his cleft treatment journey.

Kimberly, the expectant mother, printed up helpful information and invited everyone to visit with her throughout the party to ask any and all questions they might have about cleft lip-palate. The Miller family has always felt the love and support of extended family and they wanted to keep everyone actively involved in their son’s life. “I did not want anyone to be afraid or fearful about our son’s condition,” said Kimberly. “Knowing they can hold him, feed him, and love on him the same as any baby…that he will not hurt because of his condition was important to us.”

A fun activity at the baby shower that got everyone engaged and generated lots of discussion was having each family member decorate a bib for the baby. Kimberly stated, “I knew we would have a messy eater on our hands and bibs would be essential so why not make them fun and personal.” She ended up with over twenty bibs decorated with lots of love!

Kimberly explained how it was important for her to start the dialogue within the family about her son’s condition. She says she welcomes the opportunity to continue the conversation with people outside her circle as a way to raise awareness about cleft lip-palate.

“Continuing the conversations to help reduce fear of the unknown---to encourage genuine acceptance and understanding is the goal,” stated Kimberly. Every member of the family and member of the medical team was given a blue bracelet with “Cleft Strong for Preston.”

Patients Enjoying Generous Donation

Thank You to Jessica and Evelyn Penrose —a former family who were followed by the cleft team since Jessica was 8-months old (she is 18 years old). They led a summer camp program from the Comal ISD School Age Child Care (SACC) to create journals, coloring kits, stress balls, and lots more to share with patients during their visit to clinic. Dr. Havemann met with the students to accept the donation and introduce them to our clinic.
Introducing New Dental Specialists

Dr. Gregerson (Dr. “Jeff”) received his bachelor’s degree from Brigham Young University in 2004. He then obtained his Doctor of Dental Medicine (D.M.D.) from Temple University School of Dentistry in 2009. While attending dental school, Dr. Gregerson became known for his unique ability to interact with and care for pediatric patients. Upon graduation, Dr. Gregerson pursued advanced specialty training in pediatric dentistry from the University of Pennsylvania and Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, one of the top ranked children’s hospitals in the nation. While in his residency, Dr. Gregerson served as chief resident and received extensive training in hospital-based dentistry, sedation, anesthesia techniques, medically complex patients, and treatment of children with disabilities. He has been practicing in the Austin area for the last five years dedicated to learning about the management of medically complex patients, pediatric dental trauma, infant oral health, preventive dentistry, pediatric Dental restorative techniques, and laser dentistry.

“I am passionate about providing each one of my patients the highest quality of dental care while treating them as if they were one of my own. My goal is to create a fun and engaging atmosphere where your child will leave our office looking forward to their next dental visit.”

With four children of his own, Dr. Gregerson understands the challenges that parents face while providing daily preventive care. He looks forward providing the exceptional service you have come to expect from DCMC.

Dr. Michelle Kim, A native New Yorker, Dr. Kim received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Cornell University in 2001. She earned her Doctorate of Dental Surgery degree at New York University College of Dentistry and stayed at NYU to receive her specialty training in pediatric dentistry. Dr. Kim is a board certified pediatric dentist and a Diplomate of the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry. While at NYU, Dr. Kim received extensive training in oral conscious sedation, hospital dentistry, management of the medically complex and special needs patients, and preventative and restorative dentistry. Through the NYU Global Outreach Program, Dr. Kim has been able to travel both locally and internationally (Grenada and Nicaragua) to provide preventative and restorative treatment to children in need. She is an active member of the American Academy of Pediatric Dentistry and American Board of Pediatric Dentistry and is certified in CPR and PALS.

“I understand that every child is unique and I am committed to personalizing your child’s care to create a positive experience for everyone. It is my goal to create a safe and nurturing environment from the very first visit your child has in our office. I am excited to be able to partner along with all the families and our amazing team to provide exceptional care and to help every child maintain a beautiful and healthy smile for life.”

AUSTIN CLEFT FACEBOOK COMMUNITY

One of our mothers who has been through the first few years of cleft treatment with our team started a closed Facebook community she is calling, Austin Cleft Parents. She is wanting parents who have children with cleft issues to connect with each other to encourage helpful discussion and support locally.

Hi Austin Cleft parents.
Welcome to the group. I thought it would be good to have a local group dedicated to the experience that parents with cleft kids go through. I wished I had this when we discovered Arie had a cleft. Feel free to ask questions or tell your stories.

Save the Dates

Holiday Party
Sunday, Dec 4, 2016

Camp Amigo
March 24, 25, 26, 2017

This FB support group is responsible for its own content.
Friendly Front Desk Faces in Craniofacial/Dental/Orthodontic Clinics

When you call our office or check in for an appointment, it is these wonderful professionals you connect with first. These Patient Access Reps (PARs) provide quality services in registration and all of its support processes so that our families have a positive health care experience. Thank you PAR Team!!

Fun & Festive Fundraising Opportunities

Two outstanding organizations that provide valuable services and support to many of the families we treat every day raising awareness, raising funds to continue good work.

On Monday, September 12, Team Austin Smiles had a Kendra Gives Back Party. Guests enjoyed sips, sweets, and jewels at Kendra Scott Lamar Central location. 20% of proceeds benefitted Austin Smiles—The Austin Plastic Surgery Foundation.