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**News**

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**Special Olympics and Golisano Foundation Team up with Eastman Institute for Oral Health for First "A Day for Special Smiles," Providing Needed Dental Treatment to People with Intellectual Disabilities**

***Boston Dentist, Dr. Steven Perlman, Founder of the International Special Smiles Program Will Welcome Volunteers***

Rochester, New York -May 13, 2014 - [Special Olympics](#), the [Golisano Foundation](#) and [UR Medicine's Eastman Dental](#) are taking action to bridge a long-standing gap to improve access and oral health care for people with intellectual disabilities (ID).

For the first time in this area and the second time in the nation, A Day for Special Smiles will be held, providing more than 20 Special Olympic athletes from the Rochester region with much needed dental treatment free of charge. The event takes place from 8:30 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., Saturday May 17, at Eastman Institute for Oral Health's Eastman Dental Downtown (228 East Main St. in Rochester).

"A Day for Special Smiles" is part of [Special Olympics Healthy Communities](#), funded by a \$12 million donation from Tom Golisano. The global initiative is providing comprehensive, community-based health care and resources for people with intellectual disabilities, and educating healthcare professionals. Healthy Communities is now active in six states (Arizona, Florida, Kansas, New Jersey, Wisconsin and New York (including NY's Genesee Region) and eight countries (Kazakhstan, Mexico, Peru, Romania, Malawi, South Africa, Malaysia, and Thailand).

"People with disabilities face many barriers to accessing high-quality health care, including difficulties in finding health providers who are trained and willing to treat people with disabilities and who will accept their insurance," said Ann Costello, director of the Golisano Foundation. "By supporting Healthy Communities, we hope to eliminate some of the barriers, and connect people with care in their community to address problems that are preventable and treatable and can help them live a fuller and more productive life."

Onolee Stephan, director, Community Health Program for Special Olympics in Rochester, said, "At the event, athletes will receive treatment for their most immediate dental needs including baseline

x-rays, full exams, fillings, and cleaning. More than 30 volunteers, including dentists, dental students, dental assistants, faculty, and staff will provide the care at Eastman Dental Downtown, which is donating the clinic space and time."

"This program will not only benefit the people receiving care, it will also provide more opportunities for dentists to get experience treating people with ID," said Dr. Eli Eliav, director of Eastman Institute for Oral Health. "For most of the dentists participating, it will be their first time treating people with disabilities in a clinical setting. As more dentists gain this experience, we will be able to connect more people with care."

One in four Special Olympics New York athletes has untreated dental decay that can cause pain and other medical problems and limit the athlete's ability to compete in sports and enjoy life. For a variety of reasons uncovered by a recent Golisano Foundation/Eastman Dental-sponsored Task Force, most of these athletes are not getting the care they need.

Athletes needing more care than can be completed at this event will be invited to be seen for follow-up and ongoing care at Eastman Dental.

The individuals receiving care at "A Day for Special Smiles" were identified as needing dental services at several Special Olympics Healthy Athletes Special Smiles screening events earlier this year. Most of the people who will be seen on Saturday do not have a regular dentist.

Key in organizing the event are members of the local student chapter of [American Academy of Developmental Medicine and Dentistry \(AADMD\)](#) and the [Strong Center for Developmental Disabilities](#).

[Dr. Steven Perlman](#), founder of the Special Smiles program, and its Senior Global Clinical Advisor, has also supported A Day for Special Smiles and will be at this inaugural event. Perlman is a Clinical Professor of Pediatric Dentistry at The Boston University Goldman School of Dental Medicine and has devoted much of his private practice and teaching to the treatment of children and adults with physical and intellectual disabilities.



Steven Perlman,  
DDS

### **Healthy Communities and Healthy Athletes®**

Healthy Communities builds upon and broadens the scope of the Special Olympics Healthy Athletes® program, which has provided free health clinics and products to athletes for 15 years and continues to provide free health examinations in seven health disciplines. The Healthy Communities initiative enables Special Olympics to reach more athletes in harder-to-reach locations, utilizing technology and partnerships to improve access to follow-up care, while also addressing local health challenges such as obesity, oral health, and access to health care.

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**Special Olympics** is an international organization that unleashes the human spirit through the transformative power and joy of sports every day around the world. Founded in 1968 by Eunice Kennedy Shriver, the Special Olympics movement has grown from a few hundred athletes to more than 4.2 million athletes in 170 countries. [Special Olympics New York](#) is the largest Special Olympics chapter in the US and offers sports training and competition to nearly 65,000 athletes state-wide. The opportunities presented through Special Olympics allow our athletes to develop physical fitness, demonstrate courage, experience the joy of achievement, and to make new

friends.

***The Golisano Foundation*** is one of the largest private foundations in the United States devoted exclusively to supporting programs for people with intellectual disabilities. Through its targeted initiatives, it is a catalyst for transformation, encouraging communities to commit to inclusion, acceptance and opportunity for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, and to provide services that empower individuals to make their way productively and creatively in their communities. In addition to providing funding, the foundation also serves as a proactive partner with organizations that serve people with intellectual disabilities, working together to promote acceptance and inclusion in the community and workplace. [golisanofoundation.org](http://golisanofoundation.org).

For nearly 100 years, ***Eastman Dental/Eastman Institute for Oral Health*** has been serving Rochester as the leader in high quality, general and specialized dental care. Eastman Dental is part of Eastman Institute for Oral Health, a world leader in research and post-doctoral education programs.

UR Medicine is the University of Rochester's health care system. It includes Strong Memorial Hospital (and its inpatient and outpatient components such as Golisano Children's Hospital, Wilmot Cancer Center, and Flaum Eye Institute), University of Rochester Medical Faculty Group, Highland Hospital, Thompson Health, Eastman Dental and University Dental Faculty Group, The Highlands at Brighton, The Highlands Living Center, Visiting Nurse Service, and a range of clinical programs serving patients across western New York.

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