

## **'Homeless Not Toothless' program tops \$300,000 in donated care**

By Stacie Crozier

*Los Angeles* — Ten years and \$300,000 worth of dental services after it began, the "Homeless Not Toothless" program continues to provide dental care to homeless individuals in Los Angeles.

Dr. Jay Grossman, who launched the charitable dentistry program in 1993, says the "heartwarming stories of these patients make this all worthwhile.

"Recently a man I treated wanted to learn how to use a computer so he could find a job in an office," says Dr. Grossman. So Dr. Grossman brought him to his home and showed him the basics.

"Not long afterward, I saw him in a real estate office near my office working at the front desk. He was back into society," says Dr. Grossman. "Nine months later, when I went to a real estate open house, he was the listing agent."

The program won the ADA Council on Access, Prevention and Interprofessional Relations' Community Preventive Dentistry Highest Award in its first year. The program provides free dental care to homeless individuals in hopes that it will help them secure employment and rejoin society. Venice Family Clinic, a clinic that provides free medical care to the homeless, refers some patients. Other program participants are residents in local sober living facilities, which refer patients with dental problems.

Today, Dr. Grossman averages treating one patient a week in his office and has several dozen other volunteer dentists who see at least one patient each month through the program.

"It's hard to get a job if you don't have front teeth," he adds. "Through this program, we help a variety of people. Some need substantial dental care and others need smaller things, but it's nice to be able to treat them using the optimal treatment plan available without regard to finances."

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