

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Contact: Felicia R. Phillips
Phone: (215) 967-4580

BRIGHTER IS BETTER, WHEN IT COMES TO SMILES

Sixth Grader Kevin Brighter Proves Fluoride Treatment Really Works

Philadelphia, PA – Master Charter School 6th grader Kevin Brighter was awarded Health Partners Foundation's "Healthy Advances" award for his project, "No Cavities Please" at the 30th annual George Washington Carver Science Fair held at the Academy of Natural Sciences earlier this week.

Kevin, who receives regular fluoride treatments, has never had a cavity. Eager to learn why, the industrious 12-year-old borrowed some fluoride from his dentist and did some experimental dental work of his own.

Painting three crack-free hard boiled eggs with fluoride varnish and leaving another three equally unblemished eggs without, he submerged all six overnight in separate containers of Kool Aid, cola and iced tea. The following day, he discovered the unprotected eggs were discolored and showed signs of cracking, while the fluoride-treated eggs showed little or no damage at all!

"I was so impressed with Kevin's preparation and his knowledge of the material," said Merleen Harris-Williams, M.D., medical director at Health Partners. "The interview he conducted with his dentist and his own creative experiment convinced him about the importance of preventive medicine. His project proved to be a very effective teaching tool."

The George Washington Carver Science Fair is named in honor of the late Dr. George Washington Carver, accomplished African-American scientist, sculptor, musician, and humanitarian. Founded by a group of educators and businesspersons in 1979, the annual fair seeks to encourage urban youth to pursue academic excellence and careers in science.

It's never too early for dental care

Beginning at age two, children should visit the dentist twice every year for a thorough cleaning and fluoride treatment. Below are some tips to help prevent tooth decay and keep your child's teeth strong and healthy between dental visits.

- Even before teeth come in, wipe your baby's gums with a clean wash cloth after each feeding.
- Brush and floss after each meal as soon as your baby has teeth.
- Use a toothbrush with soft bristles and be sure to reach the molars in back.
- Use a fluoride supplement everyday.
- Feed your child plenty of fruits and vegetables, milk and other dairy products.
- Avoid filling baby bottles with sugary fruit juice.
- Never let your child fall asleep with a bottle in the mouth. This can cause tooth decay.

CAPTION:Merleen Harris-Williams, M.D., medical director, Health Partners (left), congratulates Master Charter School 6th grader Kevin Brighter (right) on receiving the Health Partners Foundation "Healthy Advances" award for his project, "No Cavities Please" at the 30th annual



In Wellness and Health, Partners for Life.

George Washington Carver Science Fair. This award, presented for the fourth straight year by the Foundation, includes a \$100 check for the winner and a \$200 check to support the continuation of his school's science program. (Photography Credit: Leaping Lion Photography)

About Health Partners and the Health Partners Foundation:

Founded in 1984, Health Partners is the result of a unique collaboration among seven area hospitals to create a not-for-profit health plan for residents of Philadelphia. Over more than 20 years, Health Partners has garnered national attention for innovations in managed care, and now serves nearly 150,000 members throughout southeastern Pennsylvania.

The Health Partners Foundation, founded in 1999 by employees of Health Partners, supports low-income communities, within the Greater Philadelphia region, with educational programs, scholarships, and emergency assistance.

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