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Local dentist makes 'Miles for Smiles' a success

"When you are blessed, you have to share that blessing," is the watchword of Dr. Ziad Tohme of Toledo Periodontics. So it is no wonder he continues to look for opportunities to give back to the community. When he and his wife, Seba, were participating in the 2007 Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure, it occurred to them that organizing Miles for Smiles could be a fund-raising opportunity for a cause dear to their hearts. "I had read an article in the New York Times about how dentists across the country were making big profits while many Americans were having difficulty affording basic dental care. It occurred to us that local dentists could come together in a fun activity and give back to the community. And, becoming fit is another benefit," Dr. Tohme said.

In addition to his philanthropic philosophy, he is also concerned about fitness. He and his staff have their own version of "The Biggest Loser" to encourage weight loss in their office.

With those thoughts in mind, Dr. Tohme put together a committee, which grew to 15 people to organize the initial Miles for Smiles, a 5k run/walk coordinated by the Toledo Roadrunners, May 2 beginning at Olander Park.

The event also included a .5 mile kids run and a sponsor race for those wishing to solicit those to underwrite donations for laps walked or run.

All proceeds from the event benefit the Dental Center of Northwest Ohio, a nonprofit organization that provides free or sliding scale rates for dental services to area children and adults who struggle with access to dental care.

"Our mission was to bring the entire northwest Ohio dental community together for a day of fun, fitness and fund-raising and to raise awareness about the need for dental care," Dr. Tohme reported. "My dream is to see this event grow year after year and expand to other cities."

He is a member of the Board of Directors of the Toledo Dental Society, which Dr. Tohme said will form multiple sub-committees to organize Miles for Smiles in the future. "We are also in the process of obtaining a nonprofit status for the event."

In addition to dental community, several other professional groups including veterinarians and physicians and their staff members were part of the more than 700 people who participated in the event, which raised more than \$50,000. "When we began planning, we had hoped to have 200 participants and to raise between \$10,000 and \$15,000. We are so pleased with the response and the support of so many, and certainly I could not have done it without the help and the great work of the committee and particularly Dr. Steve Shall, the Toledo Dental Society, and my office staff who worked very hard to organize this event."

Prior to the event, Dr. Tohme and committee members distributed 47 posters to area dental offices. Those posters said "Tell Dr. (the dentist or dentists of that office) to take a walk! and encour-

aged monetary donations. The dental office of Drs. Ronald Howard, Kris Nicholas and James Baburek raised the most amount of money, \$3,800, received a large plaque for the year and a \$250 gift card to a local restaurant.

In addition, Dr. Tohme is encouraging all local dentists to "adopt" at least one child for free dental care. "It is another avenue to give back to the community, and complement the generous charity works that the local dentists have been doing such as 'Give Kids a Smile,' and others because as dentists, we have been blessed," Dr. Tohme reflected.

Dr. Tohme's practice, Toledo Periodontics, was relocated to its present location at 5937 Renaissance Place, in Sylvania Township in January, 2006. He is the fourth dentist specializing in Periodontics and dental implants to head the practice founded by Dr. James Robinson over 40 years ago. Other dentists heading the practice were Drs. Richard Tavtigian and Peter Carroll.

Dr. Tohme is a Diplomat of the American Board of Periodontology and the Michigan Board of Periodontology. He was an assistant professor of periodontics at the Boston University Dental School and was in private practice in Massachusetts before relocating to northwest Ohio. He received his DMD degree from Boston University's Goldman School of Dental Medicine and did advanced training in Periodontology and was in the Ph.D. program at the Eastman Dental Center at the University of Rochester, New York. He also received a doctor of science degree, (D.Sc./CAGS) in Periodontology. He has published numerous research articles and lectured and supervised courses in several aspects of periodontics and dental implants.

Toledo Periodontics maintains a satellite office in Monroe, Mich. with periodontist, Dr. Veronica Ng.



Dr. Steve Shall and Dr. Ziad Tohme of Toledo Periodontics were part of the original team to organize Miles for Smiles. Dr. Tohme had the idea for the race two years ago when he and his wife participated in the Susan G. Komen Race for the Cure. Over 700 people participated in the initial dental race May 2.