

**SEASON TO SHARE**

# Dental work made affordable in Boulder County for those in need



Seth McConnell, The Denver Post

Dr. Stacey Cha, DMD, looks at Daniel Chavez's teeth during an appointment at Dental Aid Clinic in Louisville, Colo. Dental Aid provides low cost and free dental work to low-income and uninsured individuals.

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By **JOHN AGUILAR** | jaguilar@denverpost.com

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There's nothing quite like watching a young child at the dentist office squirming under the drill to make a parent cringe and wish for an end to the torture.

But Isela Chavez, a Longmont mother of two young kids, said she has been able to take great comfort in the dentists who work at Dental Aid, a Boulder County nonprofit organization that provides affordable dental care to those who are uninsured or otherwise unable to afford it.

“They have so much patience with kids and they’re fast and efficient at what they do,” said Chavez, whose 9-year-old son Daniel went in for a cleaning earlier this month.

Chavez says she typically pays \$60 out-of-pocket for a cleaning at Dental Aid, which has clinics in Longmont, Boulder and Louisville.

“They always try to help me with whatever they can,” she said.

Dental Aid, one of about 50 programs receiving funds from The Denver Post’s Season to Share campaign this year, states that it typically offers services for half the cost that private practices charge. It served 8,287 patients in 2015, half of them children – with 12 dentists, eight dental hygienists and 14 dental assistants on staff.

Most of its clients come from Boulder and Broomfield counties.

“Dental problems tend to be more marked in lower-income communities,” said Greta Maloney, Dental Aid’s community liaison.

She said untreated problems can cause such discomfort that children have trouble concentrating on their school work.

Money collected through Season to Share is “essential” for the organization, which has a \$4.3 million annual budget, Maloney said. About \$40,000 was collected through Season to Share to fund operations in 2015, which amounted to about 5 percent of Dental Aid’s fundraising total.

“Without it, we wouldn’t be able to subsidize the service for the children,” she said.

Naomi Madena, mother of 10-year-old Kelsey, had no dental insurance and relied on Dental Aid for affordable service. She said Kelsey’s baby teeth were in really bad shape and left her daughter in pain at times. Dentists at the Dental Aid office in Louisville pulled four of them and treated another eight.

Kelsey is feeling much better about her smile these days.

“I cannot pay for all the surgery they provided me,” said Madena, who lives with her daughter in Lakewood. “I hope one day I can help them as well.”

**Dental Aid, Inc.**

**Address:** 1285 Centaur Village Drive, #200, Lafayette, Colo.

**In operation since:** 1974

**Number of employees:** 48

**Annual budget:** \$4.3 million

**Percentage of funds that goes directly to client services:** 86 percent

**Number served last year:** 8,287 (4,195 were children)



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<p>John Aguilar of The Denver Post</p>	<p><b>John Aguilar</b>          Originally from Boston, I have worked at the Boulder County Business Report, the Rocky Mountain News, the Boulder Daily Camera, and now with The Post since April 2014.</p>
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