On Campus

A-Rod Spreads Smiles

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Alex Rodriguez greeting children outside MS 328 and MS 326 in Washington Heights to celebrate the opening of a new dental van. (Eileen Barroso)

The University’s Community DentCare Network, which provides free dental services to poor children, got a big assist this summer when Yankees slugger Alex Rodríguez donated $250,000 to help pay for a mobile van that will provide oral healthcare to kids throughout New York City.

Rodríguez, known as A-Rod to fans, was on hand for the van’s July 23 champagne christening in his native Washington Heights neighborhood.

“Every child deserves access to regular dental visits,” said Rodríguez, at the ceremony outside of MS 328, known also as the Manhattan Middle School for Scientific Inquiry, and at MS 326, or Writers Today & Leaders Tomorrow. “It is reassuring to know that this new dental van will serve nearly 3000 children in the community where I was born and its surrounding neighborhoods.”

The Community DentCare program, which is overseen by the University’s College of Dental Medicine, operates in seven schools throughout Washington Heights, providing free screenings, preventive care, and oral-health education to children. The new van will visit about 65 locations, mostly schools and daycare centers throughout Harlem, Washington Heights, Inwood, and the Bronx.

Every year, dental-related illnesses cause American youngsters to lose a total of about 50 million hours of school, according to the American Dental Association. “That loss could be sharply reduced with timely receipt of preventive services,” said Stephen Marshall, an associate dean at the dental school and the director of Community DentCare. “That is part of the reason why Alex Rodríguez’s gift is so deeply appreciated.”



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