

# ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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## ***NEWS RELEASE***

'Share Your Smile with Alabama' photo campaign highlights winning smiles

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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To kick off National Children's Dental Health Month in February, the Oral Health Office of the Alabama Department of Public Health (ADPH) announces the winners of the third annual smile photo contest for third grade students in Alabama.

Two children, one girl and one boy, were selected from photo submissions as the overall winners of the "Share Your Smile with Alabama" campaign. Brison Williams of Lafayette Lanier Elementary School in Valley, Ala., and Saya Bell of Paine Elementary School in Trussville, Ala., were selected as the contest winners. The pair of third graders will be spotlighted in upcoming ADPH marketing campaigns to promote children's oral health in the state.

This year's national campaign slogan is "Fluoride in water prevents cavities! Get it from the tap!" Fluoride is a mineral that exists naturally in nearly all water supplies, and the optimal level is reached when a public water system properly adjusts the level of fluoride. The year 2020 is the 75th anniversary of community water fluoridation in the U.S. Studies conducted over the past 60 or more years have consistently shown that fluoridation of community water supplies is safe and effective in preventing dental decay.

State Dental Health Director Dr. Tommy Johnson said, "Dental decay is preventable, and fluoridation can play a large part. Fluoridation is important for young children because it strengthens the enamel to make it resistant to tooth decay. By drinking tap water containing fluoride and developing good oral health habits such as brushing and flossing, kids will get a good start on a lifetime of healthy smiles."

Cavities (also known as caries or tooth decay) are one of the most common chronic conditions of children in the United States. Untreated dental cavities can cause pain and infections that may lead to problems with eating, speaking, playing and learning. Children who have poor oral health often miss more school and receive lower grades than their classmates.

The ADPH Oral Health Office is dedicated to preventing dental disease for Alabama's citizens by promoting and developing quality, cost-effective community and school-based preventive, educational and early treatment programs which emphasize the elimination of oral health disparities.