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## **Delta Dental of North Carolina Unveils New Water Bottle-Filling Station at Local Elementary School to Encourage Children to Drink More Water to Improve Oral, Overall Health**

*Delta Dental's Rethink Your Drink initiative is funding new water fountains in 23 schools across the state in an effort to improve oral health among children*

**Burnsville, NC (November 22, 2019)** – On Friday, Delta Dental of North Carolina unveiled a new water bottle-filling station at East Yancey Middle School. The floss-cutting event, attended by students and teachers, is part of the Delta Dental Foundation's [Rethink Your Drink: Water's School at School program](#). The initiative aims to encourage children across the state to drink more water and fewer sugar-sweetened beverages, which can lead to oral health issues such as tooth decay and cavities.

East Yancey Middle School was one of 23 schools that received a new water bottle-filling station through a grant from the Delta Dental Foundation's Rethink Your Drink: Water's Cool at School program. The initiative, totaling nearly \$80,000 in giving in 2019, selects schools based on criteria including number of children served, the number of children receiving free and reduced lunch, and the age and state of their current water fountain(s).

"Staying Hydrated is very important for student health," said Principal of East Yancey Middle School Tamara Presnell. "We have seen an increase in students filling up their water bottles since the installation of the new filling station. We appreciate the Delta Dental Foundation for helping us take care of our students!"

The new water bottle-filling station gives students a healthy alternative to sugary beverages like sodas, sports drinks and juice, all of which are high in sugar. Drinking soda nearly doubles the risk of cavities in children.<sup>1</sup> Drinking water helps combat obesity and increase energy levels and may improve students' cognitive functions at school. Further, if fluoridated, drinking water also plays an important role in preventing cavities.

"Tooth decay is the most common, chronic childhood disease today, and children miss 51 million hours of school every year in the U.S. due dental issues," said Curt Ladig, president and CEO of Delta Dental of North Carolina. "The Delta Dental Foundation's Rethink Your Drink: Water's Cool at School program will help provide access to drinking water in schools across our state, which in turn can help children make healthier choices and show up for school ready to learn."

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<sup>1</sup> Sohn W, Burt BA, Sowers MR. Carbonated soft drinks and dental caries in the primary dentition. J Dent Res. Mar 2006;85(3):262-266.

The Delta Dental Foundation focuses on ensuring that children and adults in North Carolina receive high quality oral health education and dental care. The Delta Dental Foundation's programs for children in North Carolina include the Smiles for Kids grant program and the Rethink Your Drink: Water's Cool at School program. To date, nearly \$300,000 was awarded to programs across the state, ensuring that more than 200,000 children and their families received access to oral health care or education.

**About Delta Dental of North Carolina**

Delta Dental of North Carolina is a not-for-profit dental service corporation created in 1970 to provide dental benefits throughout the state. Its mission is to improve the oral health of the communities it serves. It does so by providing affordable access to oral health care with the largest network of providers, including two out of every three dentists, in North Carolina.

**About the Delta Dental Foundation**

The Delta Dental Foundation is a nonprofit, charitable organization established in 1980, which serves as the philanthropic arm of Delta Dental of Michigan, Ohio, Indiana, and North Carolina. The foundation's goals are to support education and research for the advancement of dental science, and to promote the oral health of the public through education and service activities, particularly for those with special needs. For more information, visit [www.deltadentalnc.com](http://www.deltadentalnc.com).

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