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Dental Alum Distributes Oral Care Kits During Pandemic

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During these uncertain times – when dentists are offering only emergency services in light of the COVID-19 pandemic – many patients are overdue for their standard appointments. Joanne Block Rief, DDS '86, owner of Crossroads Dental Arts in Owings Mills, Md., found one way they could maintain good oral health even without regular visits.



Joanne Block Rief, DDS '86

"I didn't want to sell anything," Rief says, "but I asked myself, what can I do to help my patients?"

The answer was "Crossroads Cares," an oral healthcare kit that contains a dental mirror, scaler, dental pick, and gum stimulator, along with detailed instructions. The kits were available free to anyone who wanted them – whether they were patients at Crossroads Dental Arts or not.

On Friday, May 1, Rief – dressed head-to-toe in personal protective equipment – stood curbside herself and distributed the Crossroads Cares kits. The whole stock was gone in 30 minutes, Rief notes, with most going to non-patients.

The demand was so strong that she held another distribution event the next week. People have even called in from as far away as California.

Besides promoting good oral health in the absence of a dental checkup, the kits had another charitable purpose. Rief, a longtime volunteer at Weekend Backpacks for Homeless Kids, an organization that provides food for disadvantaged youths, asked those picking up the Crossroads

Cares kits to consider donating to the charity.

The result? Over \$1,000 raised for Weekend Backpacks.

Rief was recently interviewed by WBAL-TV, WJZ-TV, and *The Daily Record* about the Crossroads Cares kits.

"[W]hat we're trying to do is have at least some basic maintenance at home until patients can get in to see their dentist, so they don't lose too much ground," Rief told WBAL-TV.

By helping both patients and non-patients alike, and raising money for a worthy cause, Rief ensured that a whole lot of folks are better equipped to restart their lives when the pandemic ends.

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