

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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## **FIRST SEVEN “IOWA SMILES AWARD” RECIPIENTS HAIL FROM AROUND THE STATE**

ANKENY, Iowa – November 22, 2006 – From Davenport to Des Moines, and Ottumwa to Nora Springs, seven Iowans are being recognized for their ability to put big grins on the faces of their friends, neighbors, associates and colleagues.

Delta Dental of Iowa, the sponsor of the program, today announced the names of the first “Iowa Smiles Award” recipients. This new award was designed to recognize Iowans who put smiles on the faces of others, especially in the fields of health care, education and community service.

The first class of award winners includes:

- Jan Anderson, a very active community volunteer from **Ottumwa**.
- Dr. Alex Brandtner, a **Davenport** dentist who’s adept at calming the fears of his young, underserved patients.
- Marge Cleveringa, an **Iowa Falls** elementary school teacher whose caring nature transforms a group of students and parents into a school family.
- Dr. Kathy Elsner, a **Des Moines** dentist who started and continues to volunteer at a free dental clinic for residents of the House of Mercy.
- Gayle Gilbaugh of **Coralville**, a dental hygienist in the University of Iowa’s College of Dentistry, who exemplifies the true meaning of a caring, generous dental health professional.
- Dr. Kristopher Kelly, a **Nora Springs** dentist who was praised for his work with the Free Dental Clinic at Mercy Medical Center-North Iowa.
- Kathy Thorsteinson of **Cedar Rapids**, a dental public health hygienist at the St. Luke’s Dental Health Center, who was praised for her advocacy of developmentally disabled patients.

All seven of the Iowa Smiles winners receive a custom-designed award (pictured above). Delta Dental of Iowa also will donate 100 toothbrushes to the organization of the winner's choice.

"We're pleased to recognize these seven wonderful people for their contributions to their communities, and we welcome nominations of other Iowans who bring smiles to their friends, neighbors and associates," says Donn Hutchins, President and CEO of Delta Dental of Iowa. "Whether it's a teacher who puts smiles on the face of students or a community volunteer who makes an event a little more enjoyable, we want to recognize Iowans who create smiles."

Continuing awards will be made throughout the state. For more information, or to make a nomination, go to [www.iowasmilesaward.com](http://www.iowasmilesaward.com).

*Delta Dental of Iowa supports a number of community benefit programs as part of its not-for-profit mission to improve the oral health of Iowans. It is the largest and most experienced provider of dental benefits in the state. The Iowa company is a member of the Delta Dental Plans Association, a national organization of not-for-profit Delta Dental plans. The national association is the largest dental benefits carrier in the nation providing coverage to more than 47 million people in nearly 81,000 employer groups.*

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