

Unspoken Smiles Leads Historic Push for Zero Cavity Status in San José Preschools Ahead of Clinic Launch

Nearly Half of Screened Children Diagnosed With Cavities in Pioneering Push Toward Zero Cavity Status

SAN JOSÉ, SAN JOSÉ, COSTA RICA, June 30, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- In a bold and unprecedented effort to combat one of childhood's most preventable diseases, [Unspoken Smiles](#), in partnership with the Latin American University of Science and Technology (ULACIT), is on track to eliminate cavities across every public preschool in San José Central. This ambitious campaign, part of the organization's pioneering "Zero Cavity" Initiative, will culminate in the opening of the world's first fully preventive and green dental clinic in September 2025.



Unspoken Smiles fellow Mariana during school's visit in San Jose

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Achieving Zero Cavity is more than a goal—it's a public health breakthrough that proves the power of prevention at scale.”

Jean Paul Laurent, Founder and Executive President, Unspoken Smiles

Over the past three months, a cohort of Unspoken Smiles Fellows—dental students trained through a formal partnership with ULACIT—have screened 403 children across six public preschool centers in San José Central, representing 61.3% of all enrolled students. What they found was deeply concerning: 190 children, or nearly 47.1% of those screened, were diagnosed with untreated dental cavities. At José Fidel Tristán preschool, for instance, more than 69% of children had active cavities. Other schools, such as Arturo Urien Galloso and Juan Rafael Mora Porras, also showed alarmingly high prevalence rates,

revealing an urgent and often overlooked public health crisis.

This milestone project has provided not only diagnostics, but a lifeline. Children received oral health kits, in-person hygiene education, and non-invasive clinical referrals—often the first such intervention in their lives. Beyond the immediate dental care, this initiative marks a systemic shift in how oral health is delivered: free, preventative, inclusive, and sustainable.

“This is more than a dental campaign—it’s a public health breakthrough,” said Jean Paul Laurent, Founder and Executive President of Unspoken Smiles. “Reaching Zero Cavity status proves what’s possible when prevention, education, and community service come together to build equity from the ground up.”

Families, many of whom had never accessed dental care for their children, responded with enthusiasm and hope. However, nearly 39% of children could not be screened due to lack of parental authorization or absence on screening days. Cultural misconceptions such as “baby teeth don’t matter” and a general lack of oral health awareness persist as barriers. These challenges highlight the importance of continued family education and outreach.

Yet even with these barriers, the initiative’s multi-dimensional impact is already evident. It has lowered stigma around dentistry, reduced absenteeism due to dental pain, and helped families avoid costly emergency treatments—costs that, for many, were simply out of reach. It also offered real-world training to a new generation of dental professionals committed to service, prevention, and sustainability.

The cornerstone of this campaign is the forthcoming Unspoken Smiles Preventive and Green



Group of Unspoken Smiles fellows during school's visit in San Jose



Unspoken Smiles fellow Dennise handing over oral hygiene kits to every kids

Dental Clinic, a first-of-its-kind facility located in Paseo Colón. Set to open in September 2025, the clinic will offer free oral health services to public schoolchildren and will serve as a national demonstration site for Costa Rica's evolving Zero Cavity model. Equipped with eco-friendly dental technology, and a prevention-first care model, the clinic is a physical representation of Unspoken Smiles' long-term commitment to health equity and environmental responsibility.

The success of this initiative was made possible through strategic collaborations. ULACIT serves as the academic partner, giving dental students real-world experience and academic credit for their fieldwork. Corporate and community partnerships with Microsoft Costa Rica, [YoMeUno BAC](#), The American Dental Association (ADA), and [Henry Schein](#) provided funding, volunteers, and critical supplies. FIGS, a longtime supporter of the fellowship, ensured all fellows were outfitted in professional scrubs. Special thanks also go to Lic. Juan Diego Gomez Gonzalez, Vice President of the Municipal Council of San José, whose leadership enabled access to school networks and helped bridge the gap between public health and civic engagement.

The numbers tell a powerful story: 657 children enrolled, 403 screened, 190 found with cavities. But beyond statistics, this initiative is about changing how communities think about oral health—from a reactive system based on pain and cost, to a proactive one grounded in education, empathy, and prevention. With continued support, Unspoken Smiles plans to scale this model across other districts in Costa Rica and beyond.

This milestone effort is not just about healthier children today—it's about building a healthier, more equitable tomorrow.

To learn more or support the Zero Cavity Initiative, visit:

□ <https://yomeuno.com/costa-rica/organizaciones/asociacion-unspoken-smiles>

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