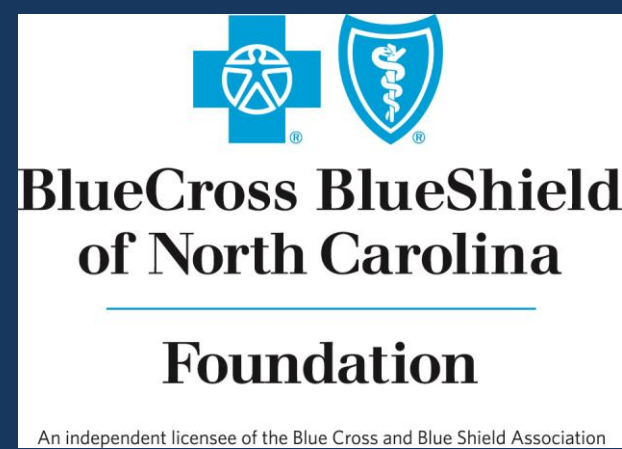




# Preventing Sports Related Oral Trauma through Custom Mouthguard Fabrication and Trauma Management Education to Students in Durham, NC

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## BACKGROUND

Mouthguards prevent about 20,000 oral injuries per year. Evidence indicates that mouthguards may offer additional protection against concussions, jaw fractures and jaw injuries.

Soccer and basketball have been identified as the sports at highest risk for oral trauma due to the lack of mandates requiring their use.

The custom-made, laminated mouthguard is recommended by the American Dental Association and has been proven to be more comfortable and provide more protection than other types of mouthguards.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION and GOALS

The “Guard Your Smile” mouthguard program addressed sports related oral trauma prevention through education and encourage mouthguard usage. One aspect of the program focused on providing custom-made mouthguards for high school athletes in addition to offering oral hygiene and trauma management instructions. The second objective involved educating the Durham community about oral hygiene and oral trauma prevention through participation in local events open to the public and the YMCAs.



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## RESULTS

- 75 student-athletes at Durham Public Schools received custom fabricated mouthguards and oral trauma management instruction
  - Approximately \$15,000 worth of free mouthguards were provided during the 2013-14 school year
- Over 150 children at YMCA events and 400 children at Durham Health Fairs received:
  - Trauma management instruction and mouthguard information/brochures
  - Oral hygiene instruction
  - Free toothpaste, toothbrushes and dental floss
  - Affordable dental-home referrals
- We discovered that high school basketball and soccer athletes had an extremely low prevalence for wearing mouthguards as it is not supported in the sports culture. Younger athletes were more compliant to using mouthguards due to parental influence and this population is optimal for future programs.

## SUSTAINABILITY

The Fellows established the “Guard Your Smile” organization at the UNC School of Dentistry consisting of approximately 50 members. They identified volunteers among this group to lead the project throughout the 2014-15 school year. They hope to build upon their relationships with Durham Public Schools and local YMCAs and continue to improve the oral health of student-athletes in the Triangle area.

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