



by Gregory H. Grady, D.D.S.

Dr. Grady practices cosmetic dentistry in Okemos, Michigan. A graduate of the Ohio State Dental College, he has been in practice for 17 years and has been a member of AACD for 6 years. He and his wife, Susan, have two daughters and a son. This is Dr. Grady's first GBAS opportunity.

Be a "Superhero"

The AACD Charitable Foundation's Give Back A Smile™ (GBAS) program, in cooperation with the National Coalition Against Domestic Violence, restores the smiles of domestic violence survivors at no cost.

We have received many success stories and thanks from GBAS volunteers and recipients. This section shares the triumphs of the GBAS program.

Sally M. a 46-year-old African-American female with an unremarkable health history, was referred to me for a Give Back a Smile (GBAS) evaluation by the AACD/GBAS support staff. Sally arrived in my office nervous, unsmiling, quiet, and tired from the two-hour commute. I discovered that I was the only GBAS volunteer within 100 miles of her home!

She presented with a mouth full of problems: decay, abscesses, fractured teeth, periodontal disease, pain, failed restorations, and obvious damage from facial trauma. The "before" photographs of Sally are startling (Figs 1 & 2).



Figure 1: Before, retracted; the patient has many needs.

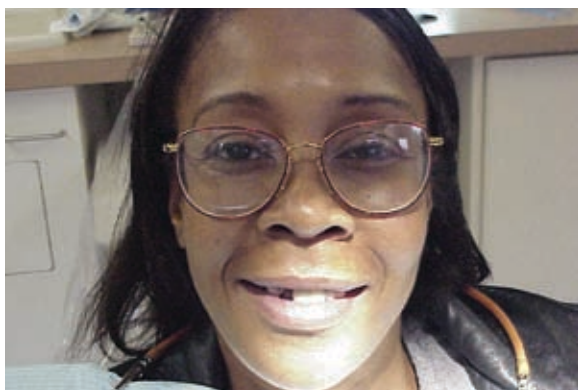


Figure 2: She is not happy with her full-face smile.



Figure 3: After, the close-up smile shows nice symmetry.

With a bit of coaxing, Sally told me what she hoped to be able to do as a result of her dental work:

- to smile at job interviews; to not be embarrassed or cover her mouth
- to smile when she sings in church
- to sleep at night because her front teeth no longer hurt.

I felt for Sally, who could not afford comprehensive dentistry. At the same time, I could not afford to become involved in a pro bono full-

mouth reconstruction case. I took a deep breath and said:

"Sally, you have many, many problems. The GBAS program concerns only 'the smile zone' of your mouth, and I can really help you there. But your back teeth have major issues, as well. I can patch a few of those and remove the really bad ones. Ultimately, though, you'll need to establish a relationship with a dentist in your hometown to fix up the teeth that don't show when you smile. Okay?"

Sally agreed and was excited to have a second chance at a nice smile.

Clinically, I completed a maxillary removable partial denture (RPD); and #6 needed endodontic treatment, post/core, and a porcelain-fused-to-metal crown. Limited gingivoplasty of the excess tissue in the anterior maxilla, dental extractions, and a few composite restorations were performed. Clinicians may not consider this to be "ideal" dentistry, but Sally was thrilled. The necessary records were obtained and shipped to Bay View Dental Lab of Virginia (a GBAS volunteer laboratory). Initial treatment was followed by delivery of a temporary acrylic



Figure 4: The patient is extremely pleased with her new look.

partial denture. After a few weeks, the definitive RPD was seated. I asked Sally to find a local dentist to finish the rest of her needs. Overjoyed with her new smile, she happily agreed (Figs 3 & 4).

My time commitment for this case was as follows:

- consultation—20 minutes
- two operative appointments—80 minutes each
- two try-in appointments—20 minutes each
- delivery appointment—20 minutes

This came to a total of four hours, spread over eight weeks' time. Every day, we all spend four hours to commute to and from work, eat dinner, check e-mail, walk the dog, and relax. We all have four hours to share our abilities. Those four hours I volunteered improved Sally's life. When she hugged me and said, "Thank you—you can't know what this means.

Thank you!" she made me feel like a "superhero."

There are many people who deserve credit for Sally's transformation. First and foremost is Sally herself, who had to change her life to qualify for the GBAS program. This also could not have happened without the AACD/GBAS staff; Bay View Dental Lab; and my dedicated team: Nita Bouldin, Trina Joseph, Sue Thompson, Kathy Peterson, Barb Andries, and Liz Grant. And finally, I thank my wife and our children, and my parents. They taught me to give to others, and inspire me to be a better person every day.

In movies and comic books, superheroes have the unique set of skills to rescue those in distress. Every AACD member has the ability to rescue a person with "a smile in distress." What we can do for a person in dire need is miraculous; you will feel like you can fly. Participating in GBAS is your chance to be a superhero. I strongly urge you to

share your incredible gifts and talents—you truly will be able to improve someone's life. Contact Lisa Langenfeld at AACD, 800-543-9220 and volunteer to step up. *ALD*



THE GIVE BACK A SMILE™ PROGRAM IS DEDICATED TO PROVIDING COSMETIC DENTAL CARE AT NO COST TO ALL SURVIVORS OF DOMESTIC VIOLENCE.

