

PHILADELPHIA, July 8, 2014 /[PRNewswire](#)/ -- Philadelphia Zoo and United Concordia Dental today announced a three-year partnership to increase awareness of how the health of the mouth can impact the health of the body for children and animals alike.

"Today cavities have become one of the most common diseases of childhood," said James Bramson, D.D.S., chief dental officer, United Concordia. "They're now five times as common as asthma and seven times as common as hay fever in children, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. We see this partnership as a way to educate children about the important role the mouth can play in total body health for themselves and the Zoo's animals."

To help children understand how oral health is connected to overall wellness for both themselves and the animals, the Zoo and United Concordia are using the dental wellness company's mobile app, [Chomper Chums®](#), to reward children who brush, floss and rinse correctly. The app, which is available in the [App Store](#) or [Google Play](#), turns these daily oral health activities into a fun game by providing the children with "digital coins" they can use to buy food for an animal character of their choosing – a lion, horse, alligator, hippopotamus, or kangaroo. The healthier the food, the healthier their animal becomes, teaching children to make smart food choices for themselves and become "Chomper Chum Champions." Children can earn a free ticket to visit the zoo by earning a set amount of coins equal to brushing, flossing and rinsing two times per day for six weeks.

On-site at Philadelphia Zoo, the "Chomper Chum Champions" program continues with a scavenger hunt that complements the mobile app, offering children even more incentive to make healthy choices. Signage at designated exhibits offers information on the animals' diet and dental care. The scavenger hunt ends at KidZooU, where visitors answer questions about things they learned at each stop encountered during their visit. Upon completion, the children are automatically entered to win a grand prize: a behind-the-scenes experience with one of the Zoo's amazing animals.

"We are excited to align ourselves with United Concordia," said Amy Shearer, chief marketing officer, Philadelphia Zoo. "The 'Chomper Chum Champions' program gives us another opportunity to educate our young visitors about wildlife in a way that is relative to what they are learning in their everyday lives and via the 'Chomper Chums' app. The scavenger hunt is an excellent tool to further establish the human/animal connection that is at the heart of every Zoo visit."

For more information or to purchase tickets please visit www.PhiladelphiaZoo.org.

SOURCE United Concordia Dental

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