



## Water Stations Keep Kids Safe, Hydrated In Schools

(NAPS)—If you've ever been the parent of a school-aged child, you know the drill. A new school year means a new list of required school supplies. And these days the list is definitely different.

Hoping to prevent the spread of coronavirus this year, most schools sent parents shopping for items such as face masks, hand sanitizers and personal water bottles.

Normally, students can quench their thirst at school water fountains. But there's nothing normal about this school year. And after the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction recommended schools discontinue the use of shared drinking fountains, many did just that.

But that meant some schools didn't have a convenient, affordable way to keep students hydrated throughout the day. That's one of the reasons the Delta Dental of Wisconsin Foundation decided to offer more water refill stations to schools in need through its Cool Water program. The foundation is the charitable arm of Delta Dental of Wisconsin.

Today, more people understand the importance of adequate water intake to overall health as well as dental health. Drinking enough water can help increase energy levels, decrease headaches, and improve cognitive function. Water, especially when fluoridated, can help reduce cavities and protect tooth enamel by washing away harmful bacteria.

Youth who drink water during the day are also less likely to consume sugary beverages, which can help to reduce excess weight gain and diabetes. Yet over half of U.S. children and teens are not properly hydrated.

Through its Cool Water program, the Delta Dental of Wisconsin Foundation provided grants to dozens of Wisconsin schools to help them replace existing drinking fountains with water-bottle filling stations. The program covers the



**Bottle-filling stations in schools, while a good thing in 2019 when this photo was taken, are even more important for health and safety today.**

cost of installation and a supply of reusable water bottles for students and staff.

This year, the Foundation paid for water bottle filling stations and their installation—valued at over \$100,000—to dozens of schools across the state.

The touchless systems ensure that learners stay well hydrated while helping to prevent the spread of germs. Many schools also have fluoridated water, adding extra protection for teeth.

Almost all water contains some of the naturally occurring mineral fluoride, but the levels are usually too low to prevent tooth decay. That's why most U.S. communities—and dozens of developed countries worldwide—add very small amounts of fluoride to their public water supplies.

“In optimal amounts, fluoride is proven to be a safe way to make teeth stronger and more resistant to cavities,” says Dr. Greg Theis, DDS, MBA, Dental Director at Delta Dental of Wisconsin.

“In fact, every \$1 invested in fluoridation saves \$32 in costs to treat dental problems,” he adds. “As a parent and a dentist, I'm pleased to know more of Wisconsin's students will have the advantage of fluoridated drinking water during the school day, and I'm proud that Delta Dental of Wisconsin can help make an impact.”