

Local dentist and magician shows kids the trick to good teeth

By Polly Keary, Editor

There's a trick to having good teeth. At least, there is when Monroe dentist Kyle Gill is talking to kids about dental health.

Gill, who recently took over the Monroe practice of Bill Ciao, is a longtime magician, and he uses his skill to educate kids about how to care for their teeth. Gill got interested in magic when he was very young.

"As a kid I used to go to the Pike Place Market Magic Shop, and every time I went I got a new trick," he said. "And then I went to the Paramount to see the Rockettes and they had a magician between scenes, and I was the kid that got picked to come up and assist."

After that experience, Gill began to take magic a little more seriously, and by the time he was in high school he was earning money as a magician at kids' birthday parties and other events. "I was the Great Macaroni," he said with a laugh.

After high school, magic became more of a hobby, but one he practiced enough to stay polished at it. It was a good thing; magic actually came in handy when he was applying to dental school at the University of Washington. "They ask about your manual dexterity, and I said I did magic and they asked to see a trick," said Gill.

After dental school, he joined the National Health Service Corps, and when schools called the organization, looking for someone to come in and talk about dental health, Gill thought it might be fun to combine a lecture with magic. "I used a toothbrush as a magic wand to make sugar bugs disappear," he said.



Kyle Gill, a dentist new to Monroe since October, demonstrates a magic trick for the students of Jessica Conte's kindergarten class at Frank Wagner Elementary last week. Gill uses his skill as a magician to teach kids about good dental practices. Photo by Dan Armstrong

When he came to Monroe to take over his new practice, Frank Wagner Elementary teacher Jessica Conte, who had gone to high school with Gill, asked if he'd like to come in and talk to her young students.

So last week, he went to the class and demonstrated the magic that good dental hygiene can work. He used a large model of a mouth with "sugar bugs" running across it and made the bugs disappear. He poured a can of pop into a succession of smaller and smaller glasses until he made it, and the sugar it contained, disappear.

For the grand finale, he typically puts a picture of really bad teeth into a pan, pours in "mouthwash," (actually lighter fluid) and a toothbrush, and sets the pan on fire. When the flames die down, he withdraws from the pan a perfectly white set of chattering wind-up teeth.

Following his successful show in Conte's class last week, he hopes to visit a few other classrooms in the valley, including those in Sultan School District.