

December 2008 Holiday Letter

***Wherever you go, go with all your heart, whatever you do,
do your very best and always listen with your heart.***

Dearest members of my practice family,

As time goes by the years seem to pass so quickly. I always enjoy reflecting on the year when I send my holiday greetings to each of you. Reflection to me is thinking back on the challenges encountered and successes achieved both individually and as a family. There were many challenges this year as we sought, designed, built and moved into our beautiful new office. My goals were to build a state of the art facility that maximized our ability to provide excellent patient care in an environment of peace and tranquility. Despite months of planning the process created stresses beyond expectation and the results, though wonderful, have yet to be fully realized. Thank you from the bottom of my heart for being a patient family that recognizes and appreciates the benefits of using cutting edge technology in a peaceful setting.

I would like to share some of the behind the scenes changes that make our new office exceptional. We use digital radiography, which greatly reduces radiation exposure yet providing images of outstanding accuracy. The staff at ImagDent, a 3D imaging facility across the hall from us have put together a in both 2 and 3 dimensional fields provides reduced exposure to radiation with exceptional accuracy. The new chairside treatment units now utilize distilled, bottled water to eliminate exposure waterline pathogens. The airlines to our chairside units are also completely new throughout the office and deliver purified air with the best compression system available in the dental market. The vacuum system is also 'waterless' meaning the office is no longer using limitless gallons of water thereby doing our part to reduce the burden on our planet. And all of the instrumentation that could not be heat sterilized was disposed of further protecting our patients above and beyond the requirements by law.

In order to create 'virtual' patients charts and records we have doubled the number of computer workstations from 8 to 16. This cut our paper usage by approximately 75%. Our computerized phone system and email capabilities allow for more effective and efficient communication with our patient families. All latex has been removed from the practice reducing an increasingly common, yet undiagnosed allergen to our patients.

The number of staff has been reduced to those with the greatest experience to provide a team of professionals with a combined experience of greater than 120 years. Our appliance system has now been completely converted to achieve the most predictable outcomes with the shortest treatment times, decreased pain and reduced the number of visits to maximize our efficiency while decreasing the number of times our patients miss school and work.

Presently, our practice is approximately 50% adult and 50% of the patients; both teen and adult are being treated with the Invisalign appliance system. After 12 years of study, we have earned our 'Elite' Premier Provider status, which places us in the top 1% worldwide based on experience. We are now the top provider for 'Teen' Invisalign treatments in the Dallas area.

We have reorganized our schedule to allow for me to spend more time in the operatory and the location of my private office allows me to directly supervise all patient care. All of these changes have had a huge impact on our practice. While most of the conversion has been completed, the extra load on me and my staff has made it somewhat difficult to accurately predict appointment lengths. My staff and I sincerely appreciate your tolerance as we have struggled with the challenges of making so many improvements at one time.

On a much more personal note, in the midst of our relocation efforts, my son's father died suddenly at the age of 51, in Oregon. We have traveled back and forth to Oregon to handle the complications of this unplanned event. Finally, the dust has settled and the remaining details should be completed with one more trip over the winter break.

And this year, for the first time since my children were born, neither will be home for Christmas. As I have said so many times, "we have but two things we really give our children... roots and wings." I know I have done my best but taking a lesser role in their adult lives feels unfamiliar and somewhat scary to me. Both Bryan and Chris have chosen their paths and both know I love them unconditionally and eternally.

It is hard to believe that Chris has been a Marine for 3 years now. He shared with me recently that he felt he was not serving his country to the level he intended and has volunteered to go to Afghanistan on our behalf. Chris is now a corporal in the Corp. He has completed his training on the C130 emergency systems, martial arts and underwater training and is an expert marksman. In January he is leaving for North Carolina to begin his helicopter training. In March he is expected to start his 1st overseas tour in support of our country. Please continue to pray for our country and the dedicated men and women who proudly serve it.

As for me, many of you have commented on the ring I am wearing. This summer I had the opportunity through one of my patients to meet a wonderful man and his family. Jim is a talented architect and the wonderful father of three amazing children. My ring is a promise ring, as we are committed to developing a relationship centered on our faith and our families. Both of our families are excited about the possibility of a future together.

As your doctor, please accept my heartfelt thanks for the opportunity to serve each of you and your families. Our wonderful practice continues to thrive in these uncertain times because of each of you. I am grateful for all the wonderful referrals of your family and friends. My staff and I promise to continue to earn the confidence you have expressed in my skills. I believe with all my heart that we individually and our country as a whole will survive the current challenges and be better for the perseverance and faith during these difficult times.

In closing, I'd like to share the following "If you planted hope today in any hopeless heart, If someone's burden was lighter because you did your part, If you caused a laugh that chased a tear away, If tonight your name was mentioned when someone kneels to pray, Then your day was well spent." Many of you have given me hope when I felt hopeless, lightened my burden when my heart was filled with personal sadness and made me laugh when I felt like crying. You may not have known when it happened but always know I am thankful for each of you and feel very blessed to have taken the journey of my life with you.

I hope your holidays are filled with the joy and peace that surpasses all understanding.

Warmly, Linda