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SUNGA ORTHODONTICS

For Dr. Elaine Sunga, opening a dental practice in east Chula Vista felt a lot like returning home. The Bonita Vista High alumnae had gone on to college and dentistry school at UCLA and then to the University of Pennsylvania for her certification in orthodontics. But when she thought about where she wanted to open her practice, Sunga Orthodontics, she settled on an EastLake location only minutes from where her parents live in Bonita.


“Where my office sits now was just an empty dirt lot when I was growing up,” Sunga said. “One of the reasons I opened this practice here is because this is where I call home. This is my community. I went away for school but I always wanted to come back. It is like coming full circle and it means a lot to come home to the community I know best.”

That community connection is evident in Dr. Sunga’s approach to practicing orthodontic dentistry. While specializing in orthodontics for children and adolescents, Sunga Orthodontics also treats adults interested in clear brackets and Invisalign. Dr. Sunga said her practice goes beyond the simple straightening of teeth that is normally associated with orthodontics, but includes the adjusting of teeth so there is a more comfortable bite and to alleviate possible joint and jaw problems.

“My mom is a general dentist and has been practicing since I was in elementary school,” Dr. Sunga shared about her initial interest in becoming a dentist. “When I first started dental school I knew orthodontics was something I wanted to do. The kids are

great to work with. It’s a field where you feel satisfaction every day because you can see changes in the patients almost right away. It’s a fun environment, upbeat, and people are happy to be here. It is very rewarding to see a child’s happiness when they see the changes that we’ve accomplished and they have a beautiful smile.”

Growing up locally, Dr. Sunga makes it a point to be active in the community. The office sponsors an annual coloring contest every October as part of National Orthodontic Health Month and awards prizes to patients who participate. Together with her mom and husband, who is a physician, Dr. Sunga recently returned from a medical mission trip to the Philippines. This big service project focuses on sharing general oral hygiene instruction in a place where that type of care is not widely available.

“My parents, since we were young, instilled in us the importance of community service,” she said. “We do a lot of fundraising to pay for the expenses and supplies for that trip. One of my goals is to get out into the local middle and elementary schools to promote oral hygiene. As a resident of Chula Vista, it is neat to live and work in the community. I would like to be here for a real long time.” 

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