A second chance at a great smile

Orthoease, Phoenix charity and local orthodontist join forces to help cancer survivor

By Joseph P. Depa III

PHOENIX — Demetria Slan always dreamed of having the perfect smile. The 33-year-old single mom of two teenagers worked hard in the administration department of Maricopa County Oncology to support her kids and pay for her orthodontic treatment.

All that changed after Slan was diagnosed with breast cancer. Paying for her smile wasn’t so important any more — staying alive and providing for her children became the only things she cared about.

“I have been insecure with my mouth my whole life,” Slan said. “I finally went to get myself braces later in life and was tired of hiding my smile. Unfortunately the cost became too much after being diagnosed with breast cancer and taking care of my two teenage kids alone.”

Slan, a Phoenix resident, was diagnosed with a treatable form of breast cancer back in November 2007. Due to the financial burden of her cancer treatments, she turned to Singleton Moms, a local Phoenix charity made up of volunteers, for household services and financial support. That support includes helping single mothers who are receiving cancer-related treatment with mortgages, rent and other utilities.

Slan’s cancer is almost in remission, and her last treatment will be in October. Now that she’s getting a second chance at life, she wanted to give her orthodontic treatment and braces a second chance as well.

That’s where Orthoease came into play.

Orthoease, an orthodontic practice management software company based in Ogden, Utah, came to Slan’s aid. With the help of Orthoease’s Chief Executive Officer Faisal Naveed, the company reached out to Dr. Nolan Cordon, a successful orthodontist in the Phoenix area.

“When I found out that Singleton Moms had someone offering to find me orthodontic care, I couldn’t believe it,” Slan said. “I have had braces on my teeth for about a year now that have not been taken care of. Then I got the call that (Naveed) found an orthodontist for me, and all I had to do was make the appointment.”

After an initial exam, Dr. Cordon determined that Slan could safely continue her orthodontic treatment, and he offered to finish the entire treatment herself — at no cost.

“I accompanied Demetria to her initial exam and still remember the excitement in Demetria’s eyes when Dr. Cordon told her that he would be the one finishing her treatment,” Naveed said. “In the short time Demetria spent in Dr. Cordon’s office, she felt comfortable with him. Demetria filled with gratitude and excitement when she learned that she wasn’t going to be referred to a different orthodontic practice.”

Dr. Cordon carefully listened to her story, talked to her about her concerns and discovered what she wanted in a treatment plan.

“Demetria is an absolute sweetheart,” Cordon said. “She feels the weight of the world on her shoulders, and she’s so grateful and humble. After meeting her, I wanted to help her as soon as I could.”

Slan had begun her orthodontic treatment a couple of years ago at a large national clinic; however, that clinic did not provide much personal care and attention.

“She has a difficult orthodontic case,” Dr. Cordon said. “We will be using traditional orthodontic brackets, and it will probably take a minimum of one year to correct her situation. When she’s finished with her chemotherapy, we’ll get started right away. She still can’t believe that someone is doing this for her. It warms my heart to know that I’m that ‘someone.’”

Jody Farley-Berens, co-founder of Singleton Moms, said this is the first time her organization assisted one of its members with orthodontic treatment.

“When Faisal came to us looking to help our organization, we couldn’t have had a better candidate than Demetria,” Farley-Berens said. “All the moms we support have dependents at home, but this is a fantastic partnership for us. This is the first time we’ve helped someone with their dental work, and we couldn’t have found a better patient, a better company to support us and a better orthodontist to provide the service.”

“When Demetria started chemotherapy, she had to put off paying for her dental work and concentrate on getting better and feeding her kids. She’s now starting to get her life back.”

“I am overwhelmed with the generosity of Singleton Moms, Faisal and Dr. Cordon,” Slan said. “Being cancer free with my beautiful new teeth is more than I could ever ask for. I am incredibly grateful. This experience has reminded me that there are really good people out there and has given me a sense of hope.”

“I am honored to have had the opportunity to meet and work with Dr. Cordon,” Naveed said. “He is passionate about his work, his patients and the quality of treatment he provides. Dr. Cordon is truly a winner in our eyes. To see Demetria light up about her pending treatment truly warms our hearts.”

Dr. Cordon added that Demetria is a strong young woman who is full of life, and that her battle with breast cancer has taken its toll on her physically, emotionally and financially.

“After she successfully defeats cancer and completes her orthodontic treatment, with the help of Singleton Moms and Orthoease, Demetria will be ready to take on the world again with a beautiful smile.”

About Orthoease

Orthoease is a leading provider of innovative software solutions to orthodontic practices. The company offers comprehensive practice management, imaging, cephalometrics and analysis, and patient education software packages. Orthoease software solutions work with both Mac and Windows operating systems. For more, visit www.orthoease.com.