

# Authentic Smile with Beautiful Variation

A story of a woman's gift to herself: a perfectly imperfect smile.

After years of taking care of her family, Connie Zahorchak decided it was time to take care of her needs. "It bothered me through a lot of years that my teeth were uneven. All those years you do for others, the kids, as a mother and a wife, so now it's my time."

course of treatment was to start with a bite appliance to reposition her jaw."

Like many patients, Connie wanted a beautiful smile built on solid structural work. "The first priority of the treatment planning we do with new patients is to set up a well-designed treatment plan, making a beautiful smile possible," explains

Stephen Blank, DDS

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In a conversation with her physician, Connie mentioned that she was concerned about how her right jaw was popping and clicking. In addition to that, she noticed that her front teeth seemed to be shifting, creating an uncomfortable overbite and crooked teeth. And too she was having headaches.

"My doctor mentioned she'd heard really good things about a dentist in the area, a Dr. Blank. She understood he was well liked by patients and had a reputation for excellent work. Based on that recommendation, I called Dr. Blank's office and made an appointment.

"I'll say this right now, looking back several years, everything my doctor was told about Dr. Blank and his staff turned out to be completely true in my experience. The first thing that really stood out for me was the office environment; it was very unstressful. Once I was in with the doctor, he took plenty of time understanding my concerns. It was unlike any visit I've had with a doctor."

Stephen G. Blank, DDS, practices cosmetic and functional dentistry in Port St. Lucie. Considering each patient's needs and expectations, Dr. Blank chooses his cosmetic dentistry procedures and methods carefully. He takes his time in evaluating both the patient's dental condition and how the new smile will fit with other facial features.

"Your smile really is your best accessory," affirms Dr. Blank. "That's the underlying assumption driving all of our efforts with a new patient. We design a plan that corrects any underlying issues so that the beautiful smile we create will last."

## Functional beauty

Dr. Blank recalls Connie's first visit. "Connie had a concern about her right jaw joint. We discovered the teeth were not meeting together in harmony. She had a narrow arch that overlapped in the front quite a bit, causing her jaw to close into a position that wasn't comfortable. We decided that the best

Dr. Blank. "Both beauty and functionality are critical to patient satisfaction and long-lasting dental work.

"Once we were able to get her comfortable with the bite appliance, Connie wanted to straighten her teeth, but she was very clear about not wanting to wear metal braces. A lot of people will accept a less-than-ideal appearance of their teeth because they don't know their options," notes Dr. Blank, whose smile makeovers include in-depth discussions; choosing the right materials; designing the length of the new teeth; ideal proportions; desired morphology, or shape, of the teeth; color; and other aesthetic and functional concerns.

Connie learned about an alternative to braces she could accept. "I was happy when Dr. Blank told me about Invisalign therapy [clear, removable aligners]. I wore

them for a little more than a year and they were wonderful."

Invisalign therapy has many advantages. The aligners are a clear, almost invisible plastic that's easy to wear and doesn't attract attention. Once a month, office visits were needed to deliver the next set of aligners and check tooth movement. There are no limits on the types of foods that can be eaten and the

aligners are easily removed prior to brushing and flossing.

"Invisalign therapy improved Connie's smile tremendously," adds Dr. Blank. "After Invisalign, she still had teeth with wear patterns from their previously crooked positions. After they were straightened, the worn edges and discolorations became more apparent."

## Perfectly imperfect

Connie was very pleased with each step in the process of correcting her bite. She says that although she never wanted perfect teeth, she did want a beautiful smile uniquely hers.

"I noticed in the pictures Dr. Blank showed me of his previous work that he didn't make perfect teeth – which is

Before



After



PHOTOS COURTESY OF DR. BLANK

Connie Zahorchak is pleased with her new smile, commenting that, "It's perfectly imperfect!"

wonderful," affirms Connie. "Instead of rows of square teeth, he makes each one beautiful with the natural existing variations."

After the Invisalign therapy, Connie expressed interest in going further to improve her smile. "That's another thing I really liked about working with Dr. Blank – he was never pushy," says Connie. "He gave you the information and let you decide what you wanted to do and when."

During Connie's smile design visit, Dr. Blank took photographs and measured her teeth. "The purpose of doing this is so we can determine the best treatment to correct the wear patterns," says the doctor. "Determining how much to put back is an artistic judgment. We take a close look before deciding what will look good but also work with speech and function.

"Based on our photographs and measurements, we send the lab study model copies of her teeth and prescribe a wax-up based on our design visit. The lab waxes up the teeth to stimulate the new smile design and then sends the wax-up back to us. We then use the wax-up as a guide to build the temporaries. If the temporaries meet all of our criteria, the lab then converts them to ceramic crowns or veneers that look absolutely fantastic," says Dr. Blank enthusiastically.

"The important part of this story is that a small problem can provide a clue to what's

really going on. A headache or wear patterns may indicate that something isn't working with the whole chewing system. In Connie's case, it meant a bite adjustment, Invisalign therapy, and ceramic crown work."

Connie concludes: "He was so conscientious. If there was a problem, all I had to do was call and come in with no waiting. Dr. Blank and his team are exceptionally courteous. I can't say that I ever, ever had a bad day there.

"My best girlfriend who lives in Florida says she wants Dr. Blank to do her teeth based on how well mine turned out. I live in Pittsburgh but I will be arranging my travel schedule to return to Florida to have follow-ups done with Dr. Blank. He's just that good." **FHCN**—Elizabeth A. Leib



**Stephen G. Blank, DDS**, is a 1982 graduate of Northwestern University Dental School in Chicago. He has since completed intensive continuing education studies. Dr. Blank has studied TMJ under Mark Piper, MD, DMD, at the Piper Education and Research Center. He has completed

the course continuum at the Dawson Center for Advanced Dental Studies. Dr. Blank was a clinical instructor with the Hornbrook Group, teaching dentists from all parts of the country in live, hands-on courses on the various aspects of smile design, occlusion, full mouth reconstruction, and complete patient care. He is a facilitator/mentor with the Dental Boot Camp program. Dr. Blank enjoys teaching dental teams around the country.

## Gold Medal Winner

Dr. Blank was awarded gold medals by the Florida Academy of Cosmetic Dentistry (FACD) Scientific Session competition, which is designed to reward excellence in clinical cosmetic dentistry. The FACD is an organization devoted to seeking improvements in the science and art of cosmetic dentistry.



Scan the QR code for Dr. Blank's contact information.

## SNAP Instant Dental Imaging

Dr. Blank and his staff look forward to meeting the readers of *Florida Health Care News*. For more information or to schedule an appointment, please call (772) 878-7348. His office is located at 184 NW Central Park Plaza in Port St. Lucie. Ask how you can see your smile enhanced with SNAP Instant Dental Imaging. You will be able to see your new smile before you make any decisions.



Dr. Blank invites you to visit his website at [www.PSLDENTIST.com](http://www.PSLDENTIST.com).