

NEWS RELEASE

Positive Aging Delivered Through Orthodontics

30-second [“ortho morph” clip tracks patient’s dramatic transformation](#)

Editor’s Note: Interviews with patients/caregivers are available upon request.

St. Louis (Jan. 31, 2015) – Once considered the domain of plastic surgeons, the shaping of a beautiful face can also be achieved by visiting an orthodontist. Many people understand that orthodontists can straighten teeth, but don’t realize that these specialists can influence facial growth to create an improved appearance that will last a lifetime. Facial structure can be changed at any age, and especially during those important teen years when the self-image is beginning to form.

The [American Association of Orthodontists](#) (AAO) says the new advancements in the field of orthodontics have enabled doctors to achieve remarkable esthetic benefits, as well as oral health improvements, for patients in all stages of life. By anticipating how the jaw and facial bones will grow, how the smile changes over time and understanding the dynamic relationship between the teeth, the lips, the jaw and other facial structures, the orthodontist can literally sculpt the face of the patient during treatment. Even adults report significant improvements in their face structure after completing orthodontic treatment, along with the boost in confidence in their professional and personal lives that comes with a perfected and healthy smile.

Consider the work of David Sarver, DDS, MS, and a Birmingham, Alabama orthodontist, who is one of the leading researchers, authors and pioneers in the field of facial esthetics. As a young orthodontist, Dr. Sarver became interested in the potential of orthodontic treatment to improve esthetics, as well as function, and began tracking his young patients as they grew into adulthood. His studies, now considered ground-breaking in the field of orthodontics, provide surprising insight into just how powerful the changes can be. “Patients undergoing treatment today benefit from technological advancements in diagnosis, technology, and improved wires and brackets,” he says. “With better treatment alternatives, the orthodontist can put additional focus on the characteristics of the face that can be addressed to enhance the final outcomes. That’s good news for patients.” Chicago-based orthodontist Lee Graber, DDS, MS, MS, PhD,

another leader in the study of facial esthetics agrees: “Every orthodontist is looking at the facial structure now – often we will even look at the faces of the patient’s parents to help us predict how the appearance could change in the future.”

Orthodontists can focus on altering the contours of the lower third of the face. They look at lip support, and how the underlying teeth can be moved to create a more pleasing facial esthetic. “Everyone’s smile ages over time, including less tooth display or less lip support. If an orthodontist anticipates these changes, then treatment can be designed to provide a more youthful appearance for a longer time,” says Dr. Sarver. He also recommends considering details such as flared teeth, teeth that are oddly shaped, concave teeth, misaligned jaws, teeth that need to be rotated, and gum lines that aren’t even. “Orthodontists and dentists can collaborate on correcting these abnormalities, and the cumulative effect of this teamwork results in dramatic improvements in both the esthetics and the oral health of the patient,” adds Dr. Graber.

“Dental professionals are actually the first ones to recognize potential issues and thus make decisions that affect how a child will look for the rest of their lives,” says Dr. Sarver. “When the public thinks of facial esthetics, they think of plastic surgeons and other health professionals. But given the progress of dentistry and orthodontics in the past three decades, it is readily apparent that the dental community can play a significant role in improving facial aesthetics in both children and adults— often without surgery. The dentist must know the appropriate timing of orthodontic treatment, and the orthodontist has the specialty training to impact the face, smile, and the jaw alignment in all three dimensions. For patients that present underlying problems in facial support structure, orthodontics can be a solution that lasts a lifetime. Patients have always known an orthodontist can deliver a healthy, beautiful smile, but now they may be able enjoy the lifelong benefits of an improved facial structure at the same time.”

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About the American Association of Orthodontists

Founded in 1900, the American Association of Orthodontists (AAO) is the world’s oldest and largest dental specialty organization. It represents 17,000 orthodontist members throughout the United States, Canada and abroad. The AAO encourages and sponsors key research to enable its members to provide the highest quality of care to patients, and is committed to educating the public about the need for, and benefits of, orthodontic treatment.

Orthodontists are uniquely qualified specialists who diagnose, prevent and treat dental and facial irregularities in patients of all ages to correctly align teeth and jaws. Orthodontists receive an additional two to three years of specialized education in orthodontics beyond dental school at an accredited orthodontic residency program. Visit the AAO’s website, mylifemysmile.org, for information about orthodontists, orthodontic care and to locate nearby AAO-member orthodontists.

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