



## What We're Carrying Into the New Year (and What We're Not)

As we step into a new year, I've been doing a lot of reflecting on what I want to carry with me—and what I'm ready to leave behind. I'm carrying the things that truly matter—my faith, my family, our community, and the responsibility we have to care well for what we've been given. I'm carrying gratitude for the people who walk through our doors each day and trust us with their health. And I'm carrying the belief that small, intentional choices create lasting change. This year I've chosen three words to guide me: *steady, disciplined, and connected*. My family and I rang in the new year at Disneyland and somewhere between the lights, the laughter, and the crowds, I was reminded how powerful it is to slow down and be fully present.

What I'm not carrying into this year are the distractions, the pressure to do everything, or the habit of moving too fast to be fully present. I've intentionally stepped back from the noise so I can realign and show up where it matters most. This year is about stewardship—of our time, our relationships, and our health. My hope for you is that 2026 becomes a year where you give yourself permission to care for yourself with the same intention you give to everyone else... choosing what brings peace, clarity, and wholeness, and letting the rest go.

— Nichole Christensen



## DR. CHRIS'S CORNER

On the walls in our Consultation Room are three words: Liberate, Excellence, and Celebrate. When I think about **excellence** in the year ahead, I see it as a standard we choose every day. At Sandia View Family Dental, that means continually learning, investing in the best technology available, and never settling for "good enough" when better is possible.

This year brings some exciting growth for our practice, including new technology like our recently added 3D printer, which allows us to deliver more precise, efficient, and customized care. I'm also honored to share that I am now licensed by the state of New Mexico for Parenteral (IV) Sedation, with plans to begin offering this service later this spring—providing an additional option for patients who need a higher level of comfort during treatment.

But beyond equipment and credentials, excellence is ultimately about doing what is right, even when it's harder. It's about choosing integrity, preparation, and compassion in every interaction. We have many exciting things ahead, and

our focus remains clear: not just to practice excellent dentistry, but to be excellent in how we serve our patients and our community.

— Dr. Chris Christensen

Follow us on our Social Media Accounts for more fun!



HAPPY NEW YEAR FROM OUR FAMILY TO YOURS!

## Stress, Sleep, and Your Teeth: The Hidden Connection

When we talk about health, we often think about diet, exercise, and sleep—but oral health is deeply connected to all three. Stress and poor sleep don't just affect how you feel; they can quietly impact your teeth, gums, and jaw as well. One of the most common ways stress shows up in the mouth is through **bruxism**—clenching or grinding your teeth (often while you sleep). Many patients have no idea they're doing it until they start experiencing jaw pain, headaches, tooth sensitivity, or even cracked teeth. Over time, grinding can wear down enamel and place stress on your jaw joints.



Chronic stress also affects the body's inflammatory response. When inflammation increases, the gums can become more vulnerable to irritation and infection, making gum disease more likely and harder to control. Add in poor sleep, and the body's ability to heal and regulate inflammation is further compromised.



Your immune system plays a role too. When you're run down, overwhelmed, or not getting quality rest, your immune response can weaken—making it easier for bacteria in the mouth to cause problems that can extend beyond your smile.

The good news? Small, intentional habits make a big difference. Prioritizing rest, managing stress, staying hydrated, and keeping up with regular dental visits can protect both your oral health and your overall well-being. If you've noticed symptoms like jaw soreness, headaches, tooth sensitivity, or signs of grinding, let us know—we can help with personalized solutions such as night guards or treatment plans designed to reduce long-term damage.

Your smile is connected to your whole body. Caring for one helps care for the other.



### Staff Spotlight: Alondra Talavera-Flores, Patient Relations Specialist

When you walk into our office, the first friendly face you're likely to see is Alondra's. She has worked in the dental field since 2019. She quickly discovered that what started as a job, became a true passion for caring for people. Alondra loves creating a welcoming, stress-free experience for every patient and takes pride in helping each person feel heard and supported. As a bilingual team member, she's able to connect with even more of our patients and make communication easy and comfortable. Outside the office, Alondra enjoys cooking and baking, spending time with her family, and cheering on her child at soccer games.



### January Referral Program

Do you know someone who's looking for a new dentist? A referral is the highest compliment we can receive—and we'd be honored to care for your friends and family.

Anyone who refers a new patient to Sandia View Family Dental during November, December, or January will be entered to win a Valentine's Date Night Basket when their referral books their first appointment. The basket includes cozy, Valentine-themed treats plus a \$50 Cinemark gift card for a perfect night out.

Just make sure your friend or family member mentions your name when scheduling so we can give you credit. Thank you for trusting us with the people who matter most to you—it truly means the world to us.

