

# Monthly Newsletter

SMILE FIRST  
DENTAL WELLNESS

◆  
1 October 2025



## October's Wellness Bite Loving Leader Mode: Lead with Heart Compassion, service, and connection.

October reminds us that a true leader isn't just the loudest voice, — it's the care behind every gesture, the gentle presence in every action. This month, we continue exploring our Core Value, Loving Leader: guiding with empathy, service, and intention.

We're honored to welcome Cassandra Ardelean to our team — a warm voice on the phone, a smiling face at the door, someone whose kindness and spirit already reflect leadership in everyday moments.

You'll also read about the Salt & Light Coalition Gala, where Dr. Danielle and Dr. Cristian joined a powerful evening of advocacy and healing. And yes — we're talking Halloween: smart treat swaps, candy survival tips, and ways to protect your smile while still enjoying the fun.

Beyond the chair, catch up on our Strength in the City recap, seasonal events ahead, and a few fall lifestyle moments to nourish your spirit. As the season deepens and days grow crisper, may this be your invitation to lead with love, connect deeply, and care for your whole self — smile, body, and soul.

### In this newsletter:

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Loving Leader

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& Smile Tips

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Light Gala & Dr.  
C's Work

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Core Values  
RECAP!

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# CORE VALUES

## Loving Leader

### Healing isn't a single treatment

—it's a way of being.

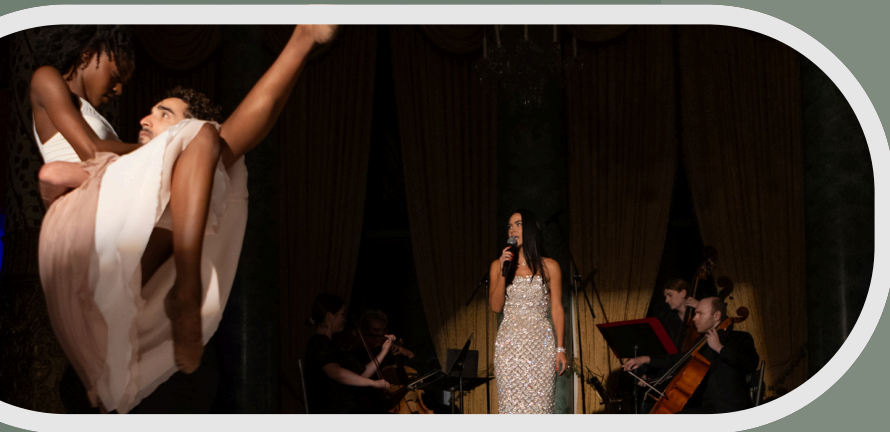
At Smile First, being a Loving Leader means guiding with heart—through empathy, service, and authentic connection—and caring for people beyond their smiles. We believe that leadership shines not in titles, but in everyday actions: how we listen, how we show up, and how we extend compassion in each moment.



## From Presence to Purpose

—it's a posture of presence.

Loving leadership begins with awareness—pausing to notice, listening deeply, aligning actions with kindness. A warm greeting at the front desk, a calm word when a patient feels nervous, or support offered to a teammate during a busy day all carry the weight of true leadership. Presence builds trust; trust builds care.



## Connection Ripples Outward

Leadership isn't just personal

It's communal. When we lead with love, we create environments where stress is eased, confidence is nurtured, and people feel seen. By practicing empathy, mindful communication, and intentional service, we strengthen our team, our patients, and our greater community. That's the power of leadership beyond the chair.



# LOVING LEADERS

Leading  
with  
Heart



## CASSANDRA ARDELEAN

Cassandra is one of the newest members of our team, and already she's showing us what it means to lead with love in quiet but powerful ways. Though naturally shy, her gentle presence and steady warmth create an immediate sense of comfort for patients and colleagues alike. She shows us that leadership can be soft-spoken, thoughtful, and rooted in genuine care.

Every day at the front desk, Cassandra continues to grow into her role. She approaches new challenges with openness and curiosity, always ready to learn and expand her skills. In her own words: "My goal in life is to say that I have traveled around the world, visited far and wide. I enjoy sports like volleyball, snowboarding, and tennis... I would like to say that I am a very adventurous person who likes trying new activities and enjoys a thrill."

That adventurous spirit is part of what makes Cassandra such a natural Loving Leader. Even as she develops professionally, she brings curiosity, courage, and kindness into her work — evolving with intention, serving with care, and embracing each step of the journey.

At Smile First, leadership is a shared practice. Every member of our team expresses the Loving Leader spirit in unique ways — through kindness, guidance, and service that extend beyond the chair.

True leadership is not about titles or years of experience but about the consistent choice to show up with presence and care. From the warm greetings that welcome our patients to the steady support offered throughout treatment, our team shows that leadership can shine in everyday moments. It's often the quietest gestures — a listening ear, a word of encouragement, a calm presence — that create the strongest impact. Together, we are "Leading with Love, Growing with Grace."



Team  
Highlight



*Patient*  
**OF THE MONTH**  
**Debra  
Delcarmen**

**BEFORE & AFTER**

**HER JOURNEY**

Debra's smile story is one of resilience, dedication, and transformation. As a hospital professional working night shifts, she often came straight from caring for patients to care for herself — showing up for every appointment with determination, even when the process felt long and tedious.



**AN UNEXPECTED ACCIDENT**

Her treatment plan addressed microdontia, beginning with a full cleaning (prophylaxis) and continuing with Invisalign to align her bite. The final stage brought her smile to life with custom veneers, creating balance, harmony, and the radiant look she had envisioned.

Her treatment plan addressed microdontia, beginning with a full cleaning (prophylaxis) and continuing with Invisalign to align her bite. The final stage brought her smile to life with custom veneers, creating balance, harmony, and the radiant look she had envisioned.

**IN HER WORDS**

“Through the process, it was tedious. It wasn't easy, but I feel good now. I would do it again. Now, when I talk to people, I don't know if they're paying attention to the conversation or my teeth — I love it. Do it. Not only for cosmetic reasons, but because of the confidence it gives you.”

Dr. Cristian shared that Debra's case was a thoughtful, step-by-step journey toward both function and esthetics. By combining preventive care, orthodontic alignment, and veneers, the treatment plan addressed not just appearance but long-term health and stability. “What I love about Debra's result,” Dr. C noted, “is that it doesn't just look beautiful — it's built on a foundation of health, balance, and durability. This is the kind of comprehensive approach that makes smile transformations last.”



# Happy Early Halloween!

## TREATS THAT CARE FOR YOU



### Lily's No-Sugar Chocolate

Lily's makes rich, creamy chocolate without added sugar, using stevia and sweeteners that don't spike your teeth's acid load. [lilys.com](http://lilys.com) It gives you that chocolate fix with less risk of decay.



### Hard Candies (But In Moderation)

If you want something sweet that lasts longer, pick hard candies instead of sour ones. Sour candies are super acidic and weaken enamel, while regular hard candy rinses off easier with water.



### Smart Sweets

Smart Sweets offers gummy candies sweetened with plant fibers and minimal sugar, letting you enjoy chewy treats without the same sugar crash.

## After the Treats: Repair & Protect

Halloween candy can leave more than just a sugar rush — it can start the earliest signs of tooth decay. Curodont™ Repair Fluoride Plus is a gentle, non-invasive treatment designed to stop those first spots of damage before they turn into full cavities.

By delivering fluoride, calcium, and phosphate directly into weakened enamel, it helps your teeth naturally heal and rebuild. The result? Stronger enamel, less risk of cavities, and peace of mind even after a sweet-filled season.



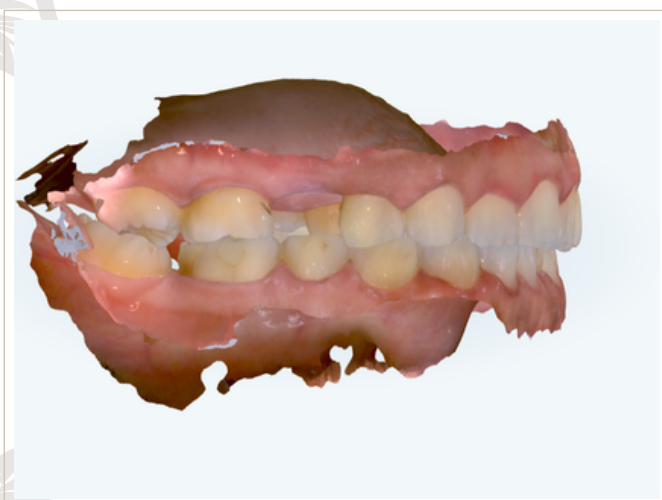
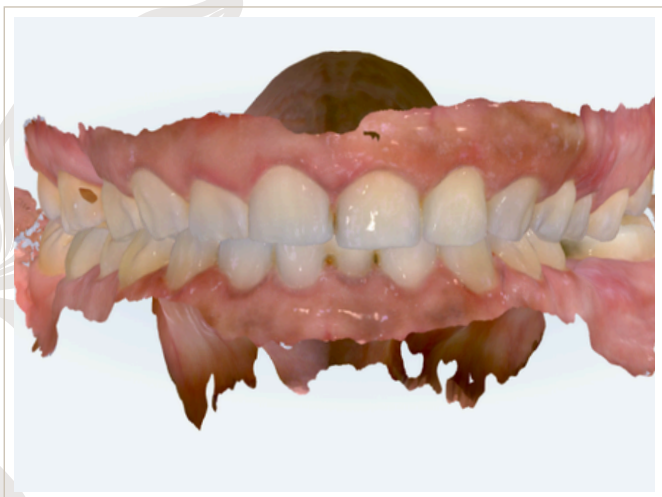
“I FINALLY HAVE ‘ADULT’ TEETH!”

**Debra Delcarmen**



# “FROM INVISALIGN COMMITMENT TO TRANSFORMATION”

Debra Delcarmen



# Salt & Light Gala

LEADING WITH LOVE



## A Mission That Heals

The Salt & Light Coalition is a Chicago nonprofit founded by Dr. Izabel Olson that supports women who are survivors of human trafficking. Their program combines trauma-informed healing, yoga and mindfulness, job training, and community support to help survivors rebuild their lives with dignity and independence.

✦ [Learn more or get involved:](#)

## A Night to Remember

On September 27th at The Drake Hotel, Salt & Light hosted their annual gala to raise awareness and funds for this mission. The evening included stories of resilience, an inspiring program, and a headline performance by international music duo Sofi Tukker. Proceeds from the event go directly toward wellness and workforce readiness programs for survivors.

✦ [Learn more or get involved:](#)



## Why We Showed Up

Dr. Cristian and Dr. Danielle attended on behalf of Smile First Dental Wellness to stand in solidarity with this powerful cause. For us, leadership means serving not just our patients but also engaging with our wider community. Supporting Salt & Light is one way we live out that commitment, and we are proud to stand alongside their life-changing work.

✦ [Learn more or get involved:](#)

# CORE VALUES

## Wellness Warrior

### Intentional Living in Every Step

Wellness isn't a finish line, it's a rhythm.

At Smile First, we believe being a Wellness Warrior means tuning into that rhythm and caring for yourself in ways that restore energy, create peace, and spark joy. Whether it's the food you eat, the way you move, or the breath you pause to take, every choice can bring you back to center.

This month, we're elevating those small but powerful habits that build a big, sustainable impact on how we live and how we care for others.



## From Self-Awareness to Self-Care

We've all heard "put your oxygen mask on first," but how often do we actually live that way? Being a Wellness Warrior means taking time to know your own needs, physical, mental, and emotional, and honoring them.

For our team, that might look like breathwork before a patient day, journaling in between shifts, or setting up healthy boundaries around rest. Self-awareness is the foundation of self-care, and self-care is how we stay grounded enough to give from a full heart.



## Your Wellness Sets the Tone

From the front desk to the op, wellness is not a bonus, it's the baseline. At Smile First, we know that how we show up for each other starts with how we show up for ourselves. That's why we're cultivating a culture where breaks are respected, movement is encouraged, and joy is part of the workday. When we prioritize hydration, healthy communication, mindfulness, and fun, everyone benefits especially our patients. This is what it means to lead with wellness.



# CORE VALUES

## Holistic Healer

### Healing isn't a single treatment

—it's a lifestyle.

At Smile First, being a Holistic Healer means honoring the full spectrum of health—physical, emotional, and spiritual—and treating the person, not just the smile. We believe that restorative healing emerges when oral care becomes part of how we live: in how we breathe, what we nourish our bodies with, and how deeply we connect with ourselves and others (mind–body–spirit balance)



## Intentional Harmony in Every Action

### From Awareness to Alignment

Holistic healing starts with listening—to our bodies, our emotions, and our instincts. Encouraging moments like breath-centered mindfulness before appointments, gentle stretch-breaks between patients, or intention-setting journaling all renew our clarity and compassion. Awareness leads to alignment; alignment leads to authentic care.



## Wellness Ripples Outward

Self-care isn't just personal  
—it's communal

Holistic health is about creating spaces where stress is eased, joy is invited, and every choice nourishes wellbeing. By fostering hydration habits, mindful communication, and ease in our day-to-day rhythm, we amplify wellness—for our team, our patients, and our community. That's the power of healing beyond the chair.

