

April 2022

By Dr. Susan Elizondo

We Won Practice of The Year!



We were named Practice of the Year by Optical Success Academy for 2022! I wanted to take a moment to give a shout out to my staff for all their hard work that helped get us to this place.

One of the biggest themes of the Academy is CANI. Constant and Never-ending Improvement. It takes a special type of person to always be open to changing things and implementing things in a new way instead of always staying with the old. I am constantly impressed by my staff being willing to roll with the punches as we go through this journey.

We are also always open to any constructive criticism that will help make your visit a more positive experience. Almost all suggestions are welcome. 😊

Going to this conference with other business owners breeds new ideas which we are working hard on implementing. Most of them are on the backend of things.

It was a fairly tough decision to go. It marked the first time that I had left my little one since he had been born in June of 2020. I think I had a much harder time of it than he did.

I did, however, enjoy sleeping straight through the night without being woken up. Uninterrupted sleep is awesome. I highly recommend it.

I didn't want him to miss me and be miserable.... but I have to say it did feel nice that he called for me after I left and seemed pretty excited when I returned. My mom came into town to help my husband out.

On the bright-side, my husband came away with a new appreciation for what I do as a mom. He doesn't make nearly as many comments about toys left out now.

But I digress, the conference helped think about feasible ways we could aim for improvement. I already had one on the radar which I talk about constantly and that is to make the remodel actually happen. Our optical shelving is in process currently. Unfortunately, COVID hit the workers hard and it is on a bit of a delay. So that part is TBD.

Starting in April they will begin work on updating our lighting and changing out our ceiling tiles. So far, I'm told that it can be done without closing the practice and shouldn't affect things too much. If that changes, I'll be sure to send out an email. The project looks like it may take 6-9 months to complete.

I love taking classes and am the avid little student when I go. I enjoyed the experience so much that I signed up to go next year and plan to take my staff with me!

On our way to where we had dinner, I managed to goad another person at the conference to go on a ride with me called the Slingshot. I think he thought I was kidding, but I figured I was a stone's throw away from Disney World, why not take a ride.

We made the brilliant choice to ride after dinner. I think my friend was hoping the ride would be closed by then. Tough luck, Bud! After, we paid our ride fee, I started to become a little doubtful about riding this thing that would throw me hundreds of feet in the air. The seats were all torn up and the apparatus itself looked like it had seen better days. We decided to go ahead. There had to have been some safety inspection at some point, right?

I sat on my friend's right side and he wonders about his hearing in that ear now. He also said he didn't see the point of screaming since I screamed loud enough for the both of us. I do have quite the pair of lungs. I'm much louder than you would expect for someone of my size.

I'm a small person and was almost sliding off the seat as we went up and turned over. I held on for dear life. Spoiler alert, I'm alive and well. I also got it on video, and we had fun showing the rest of the attendees. You could hear my screams over the equipment noise even when I was at the height of the sling shot.

As we slowly came down, rocking back and forth, I noticed how beautiful a night it was. It was crisp, moon shining bright above and the lights of a busy city below. It was peaceful so far up above it all.

It was the cherry on top of an amazing experience. Below is a picture of me with the rest of the attendees.



Welcome BlackFin!

We have our avant garde frame line for metal frames and we now have a line that clean, easy to wear design. BlackFin pairs together the world's purest titanium from Japan and expert craftsmen in Italy to make Westlake Hills Vision Center's newest exclusive eyewear collection. Each frame feels lighter-than-air and features skin-friendly materials; Blackfin titanium is nontoxic and contains no residues of nickel or other heavy metals, meaning it won't cause allergies or irritation. The temples are cut to be thin and flexible, adapting comfortably to the wearer. Overall, the aesthetic is impeccably minimalistic: perfect for those who don't want to sacrifice comfort, style, or durability.

Thank you, Lauren, for the amazing description. If it were me writing, I would just say they are metal frames that are in more classic, easy to wear designs.

Below are a few examples of this awesome new frame line. As with all of the new lines we bring in we aim to make them unique and exclusive to us, at least they are when we bring them in. We can't help it other offices follow suit.

Off to Vision Expo East

I have another trip coming up March 31st. Myself and the staff are going to Vision Expo East! It lets us scour the brands of the globe to try and find what is the perfect fit.

Before the pandemic, I used to travel fairly often. It was like second nature to me. Now, after living in hibernation for 2 years, it feels like such a huge task. This trip happens to fall on my 4th wedding anniversary; so the hubs and my baby are going with me.

I feel so lucky that I can take them with me. Taking an almost 2-year-old does make for more difficult air travel. We practiced in October but this is a flight that is twice as long. Our flight leaves in the wee hours of the morning; so, I'm hoping that both the baby and I will just sleep the whole way. His Daddy will be keeping him entertained in the Big Apple while I meet with vendors with Julie and Lauren.

I actually went to Optometry school in New York City what feels like a lifetime ago. The last time I visited was before marriage and kids. It definitely feels different to be visiting at this point in my life. I was lucky enough to spend part of my 20s living it up in New York City. Well, yes, I was a poor student at the time, but still it was amazing.

Since I was going there for school, I had a built-in social network. I also swing dance, Lindy Hop, so that was a second network that I was able to take advantage of.

I grew up in a small-town southeast of Houston so this was a bit of a leap from what I was used to. New Yorkers have a hard edge, but if you have a friend there, they are a true hard-core friend. New Yorkers aren't just nice to anyone.

I also swing dance, as I mentioned before. I would leave to go out dancing at 9PM, get there around 9:30-45, and I was still earlier than most. These days I go to bed at 8:30PM with my little one. The dance ended at midnight, but we would often go out for a late-night snack.

I always knew that it was a city I would never stay in. I could feel that I was there for only a brief period of time. I think because of that I took advantage of every opportunity that I could.

I would often go out to listen to live music or karaoke with friends. Since then, I have been told I'm tone deaf so it makes me even more appreciative of those who would go out with me and listen to me try to sing along. What good friends they were.

I still keep in touch with a few people from that time. Baby, Husband, and Vision Expo East permitting I'm hoping to meet up with old friends and classmates to catch up on life. At the New York Optometry school most of us came from all around the country and after graduation very few people ended up staying in the city. I can't believe that it's been 12 years since I graduated. I am the same person at the core but much more introspective and thoughtful.

I think of where I was and how far I've come and I am pretty proud of what I accomplished. I graduated broke, without a job, no place to live, and almost 200k in student debt. I found a job (sometimes working 7 days a week), an apartment (did a 6 month stint with my Mom), and managed to pay off my loans before buying the practice. Those were some penny-pinching years, but I did it.

Then I went looking for a practice to buy. I don't come from an affluent background, but I have managed to own a business. The funny thing was, when I was originally looking to purchase the practice, no one wanted to give me a loan. Apparently, no one wants to give you money if you don't already have it. I had one banker ask me if I had a rich uncle that could be a cosigner. I was like no, I'm currently the highest earner in my family. If there was money to be loaned, I was doing the loaning. If I had money, I wouldn't have been asking them for the loan in the first place. Since you are reading this you know that I did end up getting a loan after all.

Now, I'm fortunate enough to be able to return to NYC with my family and my staff. I'm lucky that I am able to combine a work and family trip as one.

As I write this, it has made me quite sentimental. I am grateful for the support that I have had along the way from family and from patients as well.

Featured Client



Wearing one of our brand-new lines Henry Julien, these mirrored sunglasses do double duty. They provide UV protection for both the skin and eyes AND make her look amazing

Westlake Hills Vision Center Life is a monthly conversation about life as it looks from the helm of Westlake Hills Vision Center.

I believe in relationships and having a strong relationship with our customers. This is our way of being open and showing people what we're like.

I recently changed the way the list was generated to hopefully end all the duplicates that have been sent out. I apologize if you ended up back on the list. It was a painstaking process I did manually sorting through all the names. If you ended up on the newsletter list again after being asked to be removed, I apologize.

For regular clients, many of you only come in once a year or once every two years. So, we can go a long time without seeing you. A lot can happen in a year or two. Hence, the newsletter to keep in touch.

I'm extremely interested in what our customers have to say. That feedback is invaluable. I enjoy responding to the comments. Finally, I enjoy writing it! Send any comments to appointment@westlakehillsvision.com

Every month I try to rise to the mammoth challenge of making a "newsletter" a riveting read. If I've failed, in your eyes, to do that, you can unsubscribe by just sending an email the same email address as above but asking to unsubscribe.