

Journey to a Bunion-Free Existence

Written By Dora Calderon

Vanessa, an energetic second grade school teacher from Katy, Texas and member of Lakewood Church, was only 17 years old when she first noticed a burning, prickling pain at the base of her big toe on her left foot. At first, the pain wasn't overwhelming or even constant, so she just ignored it. Over the years, however, the pain got worse and she noticed that her big toe seemed to be curving inward towards her other toes while a protruding bony bump was making her foot look – well, "deformed."

"In college, I hated my feet, so I made it a point to never wear open-toe shoes even though, in my condition, they were the most comfortable," she recalls. "Luckily, on campus, you can get by with wearing sneakers every day and no one notices. Though I envied my roommate's colorful assortment of flip flops – a style for every occasion," she adds.

Vanessa was on the track team in both high school and college and her grandmother and aunt suffered with bunions as well. Little did she know that not only was her love of running exacerbating her symptoms, but she was also genetically pre-disposed to inherit the unsightly bunion deformity.

One warm day in November, after a long morning on her feet, Vanessa slipped her shoes off in the teacher's lounge as she sat down to enjoy her tuna fish sandwich. She overheard Mavis the school secretary recount her story of how she had suffered with painful bunions on both feet for years. She told of how she had participated in a clinical trial of an investigational pain medication following bunion removal at SCIREX Research Centers. The surgery was performed by a board-certified podiatrist and she was very pleased with the results.

"I'd heard about SCIREX clinical trials before on the radio on my way to work," Vanessa admits, "but I didn't act on it because I wasn't sure what to expect. Hearing someone I worked with talk about their experience gave me confidence, and I made a commitment to do something about my bunion during the Christmas break once and for all. When I called SCIREX, the only surgery date available was December 11 and Christmas break didn't start until December 18. I made arrangements with my supervisor who I knew would be understanding. I hated to do this to my second graders at this time of year, but I knew that my being pain-free would benefit them as well."

On December 11, Vanessa participated in a clinical trial at SCIREX Research Centers in Houston and she is very happy she did. "I don't know why I waited so long to do something about it," she beams. From the time I arrived at the clinic to the time I was escorted out to the parking lot, the surgeons and medical staff impressed me with their professionalism and dedication to making sure I was as comfortable as possible every step of the way."

"Sure I had to wear a big ugly boot for a few days and I had to return for a follow-up visit, but it was well worth it! By the second week after returning to school from the Christmas break, I was on cloud nine and so were my feet! It was a great spring semester without the throbbing pain of a bunion distracting me from my main focus – teaching my second graders."

For more information about clinical research studies, you may contact SCIREX Research Centers, Premier Research Group, plc, in Houston at 800-320-1630 or visit their website at www.byebunions.com. SCIREX has been involved in the conduct of clinical research studies of investigational pain medication for over 20 years and specifically following bunion removal for the last 8 years. All bunion surgeries are a standard of care procedure and are performed by board-certified podiatrists. Clinical trials are performed to evaluate investigational pain medication following bunion removal. Qualified study participants may receive study-related medical care, surgery, physical exams and lab tests – all at no cost. Financial compensation is provided.



The podiatric boot Vanessa wore for a few days. This special boot helps protect the foot and keeps it in a constant position.



SCIREX surgical team: board certified podiatric surgeon, surgery tech, anesthesiologist, and surgical nurse



Kelli, SCIREX pre-op nurse, preps Vanessa before surgery.



Vanessa is greeted by Shantell, SCIREX admit staffer, as she signs in on day of surgery.



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