



Dr. Chelesa Phillips

Pine Dentistry and Braces

A Dream Come True

For Dr. Chelesa Phillips, the dream of becoming an orthodontist came at a young age. As a child, she always loved going to the dentist. Then, in third grade, she got braces — much earlier than most kids. She was elated.

“I was one of the first of my friends to have them, and I just thought they were the coolest things in the world,” said Dr. Phillips, who practices at Pine Dentistry and Braces in Washington, D.C. “I remember saying back then, ‘I’m going to put braces on somebody someday.’”

As a young adult, Dr. Phillips considered numerous possible career paths. She explored becoming an engineer, a physician, and a forensic scientist, among other professions, but her dream of becoming an orthodontist always called her back.

Making the Right Choice

Dr. Phillips attended Washington University in St. Louis as an undergraduate before going on to Howard University College of Dentistry. Those four years at Howard were life-changing, she said, especially going into a profession in which fewer than 5% of U.S. dentists are black.

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College or University (HBCU) was very important,” Dr. Phillips said. “I didn’t want to bypass that opportunity. Being able to see the people who have gone before you, getting their advice, and having those footsteps you can walk in and learn how to navigate the dental arena is so valuable.”

A Valuable Experience

Her experience at Howard University afforded her numerous opportunities to grow professionally and personally. So many people stepped forward to mentor and support her. Dr. Phillips said she still stays in touch with dental school instructors, friends, and colleagues.

“At an HBCU, people look out for you,” she added. “Everybody knows what you’re going through and they’re all rooting for you and pushing you. They know the struggles you are facing, and they will help you succeed one way or another whether you like it or not. You can’t beat the

mentorships and networking at an HBCU. It’s like a family.”

After graduating from dental school, Dr. Phillips accepted a job with Benevis in New Orleans to be close to family. Seven years later, she remains a passionate member of the Benevis team. There are many opportunities for orthodontists, but Dr. Phillips said she stays with Benevis because she

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Dr. Chelesa Phillips Pine Dentistry and Braces

values the company's mission to provide high-quality dental care for all. Working for a Dental Services Organization (DSO) also means less stress for her and better work-life balance.

Giving Back to the Community

Now that she is living her lifelong dream of being an orthodontist, Dr. Phillips said she never forgets all the people that helped her along the way. She takes every opportunity to give back by mentoring her young patients.

The close connections she makes with patients and their families is one of the best things about her job, Dr. Phillips said. She enjoys learning about their lives, seeing them grow, and encouraging them on their journeys. Some patients come into the office just to show her their latest report card or a college acceptance letter, and proud parents reach out to share graduation pictures of former patients and say "Look at my baby. They did it!" Those moments are priceless.

"Patients sometimes become more than patients," Dr. Phillips said. "They become family."



About Pine

Pine Dentistry & Braces is one of Maryland, Virginia, and DC's leaders in Medicaid and affordable dental care for children and their families. Supported by Benevis, Pine Dentistry's seven locations serves over 35,000 children on Medicaid annually. Pine Dentistry and its doctors are committed to improving lives by providing high-quality dental care in a fun, compassionate environment. To learn more about Pine Dentistry, visit PineDentistry.com.



About Benevis

Since 2002, Benevis has provided dental practice management services to over 150+ supported offices across 15 states. With a network of 45 different brands, we provide care to more than 620,000 patients each year. Eighty-five percent of those patients are enrolled in state Medicaid programs. Benevis is dedicated to improving lives and communities by providing high-quality dental care in a fun, compassionate environment.

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