



IPED's Rising Stars



NJ Podiatrist Puts Her Best Foot Forward and Wins First Prize

When we were children growing up, the Land of Make Believe was fun and in a child's mind it was probably very real. We could be anything we wanted to be in that land, and in our opinion, we excelled in everything we tried. In the Land of Make Believe we were undaunted and dreams did come true.

Recently, the Land of Make Believe made a dream, or probably more of a passion, come to fruition for Helene Nguyen, DPM of Hackettstown, NJ. Her podiatry practice - Feet 'N Beyond of New Jersey and sponsored booth – The Land of Make Believe, took home first prize at the Hackettstown Spring Festival held on May 4-5. Dr. Nguyen and her husband, Yong J. Zhu, DPM took advantage of the 2day celebration to share their message on the importance of good foot care and the value of getting to know the people in the town they serve.

Ironically, one of Dr. Nguyen's patients who was involved with WRNJ Radio – the sponsor of the Spring Festival, was in her office for an appointment and he encouraged her to participate in the event as it was a great way to introduce themselves to the community. Feet 'N Beyond had recently moved to a new location and the Festival would be a great opportunity to let residents of Hackettstown get to know Drs. Nguyen and Zhu and the services they provided. Promotional items as well as important information about taking good care of your feet were distributed to the Festival goers.

Obviously, Feet 'N Beyond took advantage of a wonderful marketing opportunity to get their message out to the public – community involvement. Dr. Nguyen said that in building a practice, community involvement is critical as you begin to understand the culture of the city or town you are in and this helps when interviewing a patient. She continued saying, "It is so important to know your patients. And you need to involve your entire staff in all aspects of your practice. I want them to be on the front line because these individuals are usually the first ones patients see."

This same professional mission gives credence to the name of her practice – Feet 'N Beyond of New Jersey. Dr. Nguyen knew that she did not want a traditional name.

She wanted a name that would signify what the practice did and how they would take care of their patients. She wanted these patients to know that this practice would go above and beyond to provide the patients with quality care. Hence, Feet 'N Beyond of New Jersey was born.

Dr. Nguyen knew early on that she wanted to go into medicine and was leaning towards a specialty that she would be able to perform surgery as well as patient contact. When she accompanied her Dad, who was just diagnosed with diabetes, to a routine visit with his primary care practitioner, she was "hooked." She was introduced about Podiatry as a specialty along with ophthalmology and cardiology. The discovery about Podiatry began while in college she shadowed a local podiatrist who was also a mom, and she learned that a podiatric career was a great profession where the life/work balance could be achieved. You could have a family and a career. When she finished her residency, she knew she wanted to open her own practice. She stated, "I knew was going to have to work hard anyway, so why not work for myself!" Initially she started out part time with her own practice but was also hired by a wound care center. Here, she realized the value of referrals from primary care physicians and the importance of networking.

When asked what advice she could share for anyone entering the profession, she said, "This does not come without hard work. It takes a lot of time and effort but with patience and a plan you can achieve this. There will be stress. There will be mistakes, but if you love what you do, you can do anything."

Bottom line.....The Land of Make Believe certainly can become a reality. Feet 'N Beyond did.