Quinten VanderWerf, MD

Embracing the Desert

By: Deborah Liv Johnson

Quinten VanderWerf, MD

In the VanderWerf family, practicing medicine isn't just a vocation. It's a family tradition that began in Holland, involving aunts and uncles and parents and grandparents. The children born into the family are never pressured to become anything in particular. After all, there are many surgical specialties from which to choose…

Quinten VanderWerf, MD, Board Certified Otolaryngologist and Chair of Surgery at Eisenhower Medical Center, left Holland at the age of four, his family settling first in Miami Beach, Florida, and later in Phoenix, Arizona. Graduating with a degree in chemistry from the University of California, Davis, where he also met his wife Leslie, VanderWerf shipped off to University of California, Los Angeles, medical school where he stayed through residency. Becoming a head and neck surgeon (Ear, Nose and Throat doctor) wasn't even on his radar, but at the advice of his general surgeon brother, he checked it out. "It was great and has such an amazing breadth of interest…even within the field, there's enormous differentiation. I work both in the clinic and the operating room with patients of all ages," says VanderWerf.

Along with his wife and three children, VanderWerf has embraced desert life. Hiking, mountain biking and dirt bike riding, they explore the canyons, the Salton Sea and Yucca Valley. "There are endless things to do. I know the summer heat is difficult, but in many ways, my quality of life goes up during the summer. I'm not as busy and it stays light longer. It's amazing here," explains VanderWerf.

Joining the Desert Ear, Nose and Throat Medical Group in 1999, VanderWerf appreciates what he and the other doctors are able to offer. "The size of our expanding group allows us to sub-specialize. I can focus in the area of facial plastic surgery which includes cosmetic and reconstructive surgery, including rhinoplasty, cosmetic eyelid and eyebrow surgery, face lifts, and skin cancer reconstructive surgery. I have a great working relationship with Dr. Stuart Barton, Dr. Robert Gebhart and Dr. Syed Ahsan [all Board Certified Otolaryngologists]."

VanderWerf also acknowledges Eisenhower's tremendous support. He lists several systems which provide the state-of-the-art care — the radiology and pathology departments, the emergency department, along with the constant effort to improve things, particularly in the areas of safety and quality.

In spite of an incredibly busy schedule, VanderWerf is grateful to live in the desert and be fully engaged in a challenging practice with excellent partners and a supportive staff. "As far as my work, I feel that I've tried to define my goals more by the quality of what I do than the quantity or the income. I think I've achieved that."

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