

A NOTE FROM DOCTOR SAMANTHA

Hello Everyone!

Happy New Year to all of you. We are off to a great start here at MFEC and I just wanted to provide a little update into what is on the horizon in 2024.

We were sad to see Dr. Warr leave us at the tail end of 2023, but we are excited to have Dr. Nelson join our team. She will be starting February 5. Her background is similar to Dr. Warr's and she hopes to devote herself to pediatrics. She has been in practice since 2020. For any of you who were worried that we wouldn't see as many kids with Dr. Warr's departure, you can rest assured that that will not be the case! She hopes to see children as young as infants up to age 18. She will offer guidance as to how the little ones need to be worked up. Of course, she will see adult same day office visits and there will likely be adult patients that will be following her from her previous practice. She will also see adults on Saturdays and some parents of her pediatric patients. But please do your best to fill her schedule with as many children as possible. She will do MiSight contact lenses and will eventually start up a vision therapy clinic. She will add different myopia management techniques that we have not done in the past and she plans to learn more about CRT contact lenses. Dr. Warr was an exceptionally independent and efficient doctor with six years of experience here at MFEC. It will take time for Dr. Nelson to get comfortable with a new environment and systems so we expect that her clinic will not have the same volume as Dr. Warr's for quite some time. She will need a lot of support from all departments, so please make an effort to welcome her and offer your assistance when possible.

Dr. Jeelan Rahhal will be starting with us on February 1st. That's today!! She has an interest in primary eye care and dry eye. She graduated from Southern College of Optometry in 2023 and will be sitting for the NC licensing exam in mid-February. This means that she has the credentials to practice optometry, (i.e. she is a "doctor") but she is not yet legally allowed to see patients in North Carolina. She will act in the role of a technician until she gets the notice that she has passed the exam, which hopefully will happen in early to mid-March. During this time, she will help wherever help is needed in clinic and gain valuable insight into how the office runs, our equipment and how visits are billed. She will do normal patient work-ups and testing but depending on what is going on, she may also refract some patients, do contact lens

fittings, evaluate patients and put in assessments and plans. Before they leave, all patients will be seen by the doctor with whom they are scheduled. Technicians especially will be critical in helping her get the hang of how things operate around here so please be kind and generous with your depth of knowledge! Since we are unsure when she will be notified of the exam results, we will not open a schedule for her until we get official word. As a result, her schedule will be very light the first few weeks. She will likely work as a 5th doctor and will take on the same day office visits and any exams that want to be seen soon. We do not currently have the capacity or staff to have five or six doctors working full schedules simultaneously. When she is up and running, the doctors' schedules will be modified so that we will still have four doctors working each day. There may be days when I am down as a 5th doctor for a half day, but I will try to make those dry eye days as much as possible so that I am working out of only one room and will not need as much tech help. This will be her first job working as a doctor so she will start out slowly and increase her schedule as she feels comfortable.

We have engaged with an architect and are having plans drawn up for the big space upstairs. We are still in the very early stages of this process, but we hope to make significant strides in 2024. It will be a big undertaking! The very general plan for the space will be to build a pediatric/VT clinic on one side and then a dry eye/medically oriented space on the other. Some of you may have met Macy Lewis when she visited recently. She is currently a student and will graduate this year. She will take the NC licensing exam in August and if she passes, will be able to start seeing patients in September. She has currently only expressed an interest in joining us and we have not gotten any further than that. We have been looking for a doctor to join us for years. There were no suitable candidates for the longest time and now suddenly there are several. We have talked to many doctors over the past few months and two have checked all the boxes and worked out. We will not turn down an opportunity to talk to anyone who thinks that this might be a good fit for them! We will see if Macy turns out to be a match or not. When the upstairs space is completed, we will have more space for additional doctors.

January was a very hectic month for us because we were down a doctor, a technician and front desk staff. We have been booked solid and are currently booking into March. Things will start to calm down a little bit once Dr. Nelson and Dr. Rahhal are available to help with the backlog and reduce the stress on each of the doctor's clinics. Morgan and Jessica have recently joined

the PSR team and are off to a great start. Please offer your encouragement and help them to be successful in their positions! We have had interviews with potential technicians, but we promise that none of them have been anybody that you would want to work with. We have a couple more lined up, so we will remain optimistic! The optical team continues to be a steady, stable force so we are very grateful for that. Thank you all for your hard work and for keeping the experience positive not only for patients, but for each other.

We are always looking for ways to improve. We want to make tasks less cumbersome for all of you and make the patient experience even better. If you have suggestions, please let us know. Things are continuing to change with these goals always in mind. Thank you for your flexibility and open minds. I know that change can be hard on many of you.

Let's keep things rolling!

Samantha McPherson