

T E E N L I F E



‘I smile a lot, and my friends don’t care what I look like.’

Chiara Herlihy, 13, of Contoocook opens wide as orthodontist assistant Amy Mordarski wires together her first pair of braces at the offices of Luba Richter and Steven Christensen in Concord. Herlihy decided to start with alternating bands of dark and light blue, because she was wearing a lot of blue that day and because it is one of her favorite colors.

Once I had my first orthodontic appointment, I kind of figured out that I would eventually have braces, because of how my adult teeth started to come in. So I started to try to picture myself with the braces and what my face would look like afterwards.

But, I didn’t really know until afterwards and I looked into the mirror. It was kind of a shock to see that my face had changed. My cheeks got a little fuller and my top and bottom lips kind of bulged out more. It was kind of a shock. I like the way I look now, but I also like the way I looked before.

I’ve noticed that the guys don’t usually care about the colors as much. They usually just do their school colors because they’re in a lot of sports.

Or, they just pick random colors. But, the girls, they think about what they wear and what sports they’re in and a lot of stuff like that. It’s a lot of fun just to talk about it with your friends and ask their opinions. I think it’s really cool because you get to show your individuality.

I realized that I would probably like blue the first time, and then the next time I’d probably get my school colors because I’m in a lot of sports. For Christmas, probably green and white. For Valentine’s Day, red and pink. For Halloween, orange and black or orange and green or something like that.

I don’t really like the space between my two front teeth. But, right now, I smile a lot, and my friends don’t care what I look like. They just care about what’s on the inside, and that’s the same for me too. Part of me will care, just because it will make me a little more comfortable around people I don’t know. It gives you a sense of confidence. It’s like, you can smile a lot more and you don’t have to, like, think about your teeth being crooked all of the time.

The other part of me doesn’t really care because I’m happy with myself.

photos and interview by Danny Gawlowski

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