

# The Woodlands PLASTIC SURGEON

—by Dusty Sabourin

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—Emmanuel De La Cruz, MD, PLLC



In a society where plastic surgeons are as ubiquitous as general practitioners, and procedures once performed by an MD are being offered at the neighborhood medspa, what sets one plastic surgeon apart from another? Referrals, board certifications and society memberships are the recommended starting points in the search for a plastic surgeon, but in spite of these, the list can remain daunting.

For Dr. Emmanuel De La Cruz, plastic surgery is more than a profession; it is a lifelong passion that took root at an early age and evolved into a career devoted to aiding his fellow human beings, a career driven by an unprecedented degree of compassion and care combined with a singular, artistic pursuit of beauty. “At 13 I started volunteering at the local children’s

hospital in the Philippines where my father, a pediatric cardiologist, practiced medicine,” Dr. De La Cruz shares. “Laughter was my medical treatment

for children with leukemia. I dressed myself like a clown and surprised them with my outlandish costumes and makeup.” Later in life, De La Cruz volunteered at a mental health and mental retardation center in Texas where he taught simple mathematics, reading, and played piano for the mentally challenged. “These interactions were invaluable since it molded the compassion and outgoing personality that I have acquired as a physician.”

With an eye toward a career in medicine, the young De La Cruz entered college at the age of fifteen, receiving his bachelor’s degree from Texas Tech University and graduating summa cum laude with a major in Cellular and Molecular Biology. Following four years of medical school training in Houston at the University of Texas in which he earned the Frank Webber Prize in medical research, Dr. De La Cruz spent the next several years in California where he successfully completed a rigorous training regimen in general surgery at Loma Linda University, ultimately culminating in him achieving board certification by the American Board of Surgery. While at Loma Linda, Dr. De La Cruz developed the “Celtic cross technique” for immediate umbilical reconstruction which was published in the Journal of Plastic, Reconstructive & Aesthetic Surgery. In order to satisfy his inner desire for perfection and to obtain an even greater degree of technical acumen, Dr. De La Cruz pursued further training in Plastic Surgery at Medical College of Georgia, allowing him to not only hone his skills in reconstructive plastic & cosmetic surgery, but to also develop a personal sense of balance regarding beauty and appreciate a patient’s view of their ideal. During this time, he assumed increasing levels of responsibility, serving as Chief Surgery Resident in Plastic Surgery. Significant time was also devoted in expanding his knowledge within the field through tireless studying, enabling him to score in the 94th percentile nationally among all plastic surgery residents on his Plastic Surgery Inservice Examination.

In spite of his reputation as an accomplished hand surgeon, a reputation supported by his research publications in medi-

cal journals across a broad spectrum of subjects, Dr. De La Cruz admits that plastic surgery is his true passion. “I view aesthetic surgery as a form of art, especially since I love to paint portraits, but there is nothing more artistically meaningful and rewarding than a successful outcome for a patient,” he explains. In addition to practicing plastic surgery, Dr. De La Cruz has developed an interest in assisting former and prospective plastic surgery patients along their medical journey. What was once answering the occasional question via email has grown into a blog devoted to the ins and outs of plastic surgery, representing a natural manifestation of his desire to maintain continuity of care.

“It began when a former classmate of mine asked me about a breast lift and tummy tuck procedure after a gastric by-pass,” De La Cruz explains. “After receiving several similar inquiries I thought, ‘Why not start writing about plastic surgery from an informative angle?’” Since the blog’s inception, Dr. De La Cruz has written about topics ranging from dermal filler complications to breast augmentation and breast feeding. Not only does this blog serve as a resource for plastic surgery patients, it also educates other physicians on treating and recognizing these increasingly common complications. From Dubai to Vietnam, his blog entitled “The Woodlands Plastic Surgeon” has succeeded in establishing an international presence, attracting countless visitors from over 100 countries.

In completing the circle of compassion which began as volunteer work as a young child, his blog’s popularity led Dr. De La Cruz to return to his humanitarian youth, this time in aid of children overseas that suffer from cleft lip and/or palate. “One of

my craniofacial plastic surgery mentors once told me that ‘to be able to speak is to be human.’ Helping children repair their cleft lip and palate not only improve one’s speech, but also enable one to live their life with dignity. It’s something I’m very passionate about, so I decided to support the cause through my blog.” Every month, Dr. De La Cruz posts an image of a child from Smile Train or Operation Smile, in hopes that his readers will donate to these non-profit organizations. “This is something that I truly believe in,” he adds, “and this January, I will be returning to the Philippines, volunteering my time and using my skills to help these underprivileged kids who suffer from cleft lip and cleft palate.”

Caring and compassionate medical service will be a large part of Dr. De La Cruz’s new Market Street practice where he plans to implement his “hug your customers” approach to personalized care. “It’s not about hugging your customers literally,” he explains. “It’s about going beyond expectations and demonstrating a true concern for your patients.” It is only through this degree of genuine compassion and personal understanding of his patients’ desires and circumstances that he believes the best outcome can be achieved. With the opening of his new practice, Dr. De La Cruz promises an elevated, individualized level of care unprecedented in The Woodlands.

Dr. De La Cruz’ plastic surgery practice is located at Market Street, and is credentialed at St. Luke’s and Memorial Hermann in The Woodlands. For more information or to book a consultation with Dr. De La Cruz, call 832-520-1844. And don’t forget to visit his blog, “The Woodlands Plastic Surgeon,” at [www.woodlandplasticsurgery.blogspot.com](http://www.woodlandplasticsurgery.blogspot.com).



## De La Cruz Plastic Surgery

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