Smile. It’s Free. 15 Years of Dentistry From The Heart

When I opened my first dental practice, I was faced with the harsh reality that millions of people don’t have the health insurance they need to afford necessary dental care. They live with constant pain and health risks as a result, unable to even smile. Seeking to do what I could for my community, my practice held an event the day after Thanksgiving, providing free dental services to those who couldn’t afford it.

When my wife, Dr. Natalie Monticciolo, was offered a residency in her field of dermatology here in Florida, I brought my passion for helping people with me. Our special event found a new home in the month of February, evolving into the nonprofit Dentistry From The Heart.

This year, the Dentistry From The Heart event in New Port Richey marked our fifteenth anniversary. Every event takes three months to prepare for, and we see a massive turnout. People start camping out the day before the event. At 4 a.m. when we reached the office, at least a hundred people were already waiting in line. Sixteen doctors and around 100 volunteers worked together to provide dental service to well over 400 patients. We performed roughly 100 fillings, 100 cleanings, and 600 extractions.

This entire event is a positive day for the community. Florida Blood Services joined us, collecting blood donations. My wife, Dr. Natalie Monticciolo, offered free skin cancer screenings. My two daughters were there, too, helping the community with their own nonprofit Socks 4 Love. This is a charity my girls started in December 2014, donating socks stuffed with soap and other basic necessities to the needy. They’ve partnered with Dentistry From The Heart and local ministries to donate over 1,300 socks.

I’m very proud of my girls and of the good work accomplished by Dentistry From The Heart. This event is the hardest day of the year, but it’s also the most gratifying. There’s a lot of tears and hugs. It feels good to offer something so many people desperately need. It’s such a huge relief for these people to be out of pain, to be able to smile confidently, to seek work, and to present themselves without fear or self-consciousness.

In 2015, we sponsored over 310 Dentistry From The Heart events that took place all over the world and were held in all 50 states and 5 countries. We’ve been able to provide over $17 million in free dental services to date, and I hope to see us keep growing. I believe our smiles, like our eyes, are reflections of our soul, and everyone should have the opportunity to smile.

www.dentistryfromtheheart.org

Monti’s Memo:

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A Reason to Run

TEAM MEMBER PROFILE: JODI STONER

Jodi Stoner has been a hygienist with Dr. Monticciolo for 16 years. She joined the team right after Dr. Monticciolo opened his first office in New Port Richey. There are patients who have been with Jodi during the entire length of her career here. In fact, Jodi met her husband, Gene, when he came in as a patient 12 years ago.

Outside of work, Jodi is a runner who dedicates her time to some very noble causes. Jodi paired with River, a 4-year-old boy in Mississippi. She’s met River and his parents in person, and they’ve become like her own family. When Jodi wins a medal, race officials will sometimes grant her a second medal for River. There’s an entire rack of race medals in River’s home.

Along with her husband, Jodi is an ambassador for another running nonprofit: Ainsley’s Angels. They help handicapped individuals complete races themselves by providing them with athletic wheelchairs and teaming up with runners to push them through the race. Jodi and Gene manage the Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, and Alabama areas. This past March, The New York Yankees recognized Ainsley’s Angels during their HOPE week, awarding the charity $10,000.

“I sometimes ask myself what would happen if I couldn’t run anymore,” Jodi says. “But it wouldn’t change anything. I would still get out there and find runners and get them chairs and be the best cheerleader ever.”

Jodi is such an amazing woman who gives so much to so many people. We are proud to have her as part of our team. Thanks for 16 wonderful years, Jodi!

A Dental Dream

HOW SEDATION DENTISTRY CAN HELP YOU

When you suffer from dental anxiety, going to the dentist can truly be a more painful experience. Fear and anxiety can make you tense up as your body goes into fight or flight mode. This can lower your pain threshold and make even usually mild procedures hurt much worse than they should.

The Journal of the American Dental Association reported that almost 30 percent of Americans experience some form of dental fear, ranging from moderate anxiety to an extreme phobia. That’s around 90 million Americans, the majority of which will postpone going to the dentist. As a result, those with dental anxiety are at a higher risk for gum disease and early tooth loss.

To help patients struggling with anxiety, Dr. Monticciolo offers sedation. With the use of IV sedation, patients can have a comfortable, relaxing visit to the dentist. Dental sedation does not require invasive surgeries to be deemed necessary. Even a simple procedure like teeth cleaning can be made easier for the comfort of our patients.

A vegetable garden may be a bit too much of a project for your younger children, though. If that’s the case, try sowing a potted herb garden or create a window-planter masterpiece. Come fall, you’ll have delicious foods, spices, or beautiful flowers that your kids can be proud of.

Is your kids’ cabin fever driving you crazy? Get them out and moving in the spring sunshine! Whether you start your own flag football team or plant your very first family garden, now is the perfect time to get outside — together.