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"OUR CULTURE IS ONE OF EMPATHY—TREATING PEOPLE, NOT TEETH."

— DR. PHILIP L. FAVA, PENNSYLVANIA CENTER FOR DENTAL IMPLANTS AND PERIODONTICS

The Right WAY

by BILL DONAHUE

photos by
LEIGH PHOTOGRAPHY

AS THE PENNSYLVANIA CENTER FOR DENTAL IMPLANTS AND PERIODONTICS GROWS AND EVOLVES, THE SPECIALIZED PRACTICE REFINES ITS CULTURE OF EDUCATION, MENTORSHIP, AND PATIENT-CENTERED CARE.

Philip L. Fava II, D.M.D., believes in doing things right the first time, never cutting corners, and treating people as if they were members of his own family. Regrettably, not everyone seems to agree with him.

Dr. Fava cites a recent interaction with a home contractor that involved uninspired workers, shoddy craftsmanship, and a result that required revision. While the experience proved frustrating, it also gave him a deeper appreciation for the work he does, the importance of a job well done, and the enterprise he

has helped build.

"Running a business is a heavy challenge because you have a lot of people counting on you," says Dr. Fava, who leads the Pennsylvania Center for Dental Implants and Periodontics. "If you don't take it seriously, you're going to end up with situations where everyone is disappointed. You need a culture that prioritizes loyalty, rapport, and teamwork. Without those things, you're going to end up with unexplained problems and unmet expectations."

His sentiments could apply to practically

any business, but they certainly do to the Pennsylvania Center for Dental Implants and Periodontics, which has offices in Ambler and Northeast Philadelphia. The practice specializes in the surgical placement of dental implants, soft-tissue aesthetic procedures, and the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of periodontal disease. Every member of the team strives to deliver the best possible care to every patient, as the team prides itself on caring for people, not just treating patients' teeth.

"I absolutely have a higher calling to help people, and I know everyone on our team shares the same mentality," Dr. Fava adds. "We partner with our patients; as the patient, you have to team with us so everyone can move in the right direction. Our culture is one of empathy—treating people, not teeth—and that's why we do things the right way."

The practice's well-established culture helps to ensure that patients will continue to be treated "the right way" as the enterprise grows and evolves, and as new team members come into the practice and established ones step away. For example, Robert A. Levine, D.D.S., the practice's founder, will soon retire after 40 years, while Dmitry Klass, D.M.D., MDS, will join the ranks.

"Legacy is a big part of this practice," says Dr. Fava. "Bob and I have worked together for

almost 10 years, and he and I will continue to maintain a study club in connection with the practice. With Dmitry, we're bringing in a young, bright, kind, and thoughtful doctor from Boston University, originally from Brooklyn. He's already very capable, and we will introduce him slowly so he gets used to our culture.

"Mentorship is a big part of what we do here, so Dmitry will spend a lot of time learning what everyone on the team does," Dr. Fava continues. "We want him to continue our legacy and continue our culture; he will learn to serve like I learned to serve. I also want him to spend time with our referring doctors and learn what their treatment philosophy is like. He'll get fully acclimated into our culture, team, and community prior to providing any care to our patients."

Dr. Klass, a board-eligible dental implant surgeon and periodontist, is a member of the American Board of Periodontology and International Team of Implantology. He earned his dental doctorate from the New York University College of Dentistry, and completed his special residency in periodontics at Boston University's Henry M. Goldman Graduate School of Dental Medicine.

Due to join the practice in August, Dr. Klass will work closely with Dr. Fava and fellow practitioner Eric F. Schoenebeck, D.M.D., a 23-year veteran of the U.S. Armed Forces who retired from the military in March 2021.

"Continuity of care is of the utmost importance," says Dr. Schoenebeck, who works primarily out of the Ambler office. "As Dmitry joins the practice, we want patients and referring doctors to see a seamless transition: the same quality of care, the same patient experience, the same commitment to doing things right the first time, because with some surgeries, you only have one chance to get it right."

Dr. Schoenebeck specializes in advanced dental implant procedures, gum and bone-grafting techniques, and regenerative treatments to combat periodontal disease. He recently became credentialed in laser dentistry, meaning he can provide less-invasive options such as LANAP® (Laser-Assisted New Attachment Procedure) to reduce the risk of systemic and chronic inflammation. The treatment may also help to preserve teeth that otherwise would have required surgical extraction.

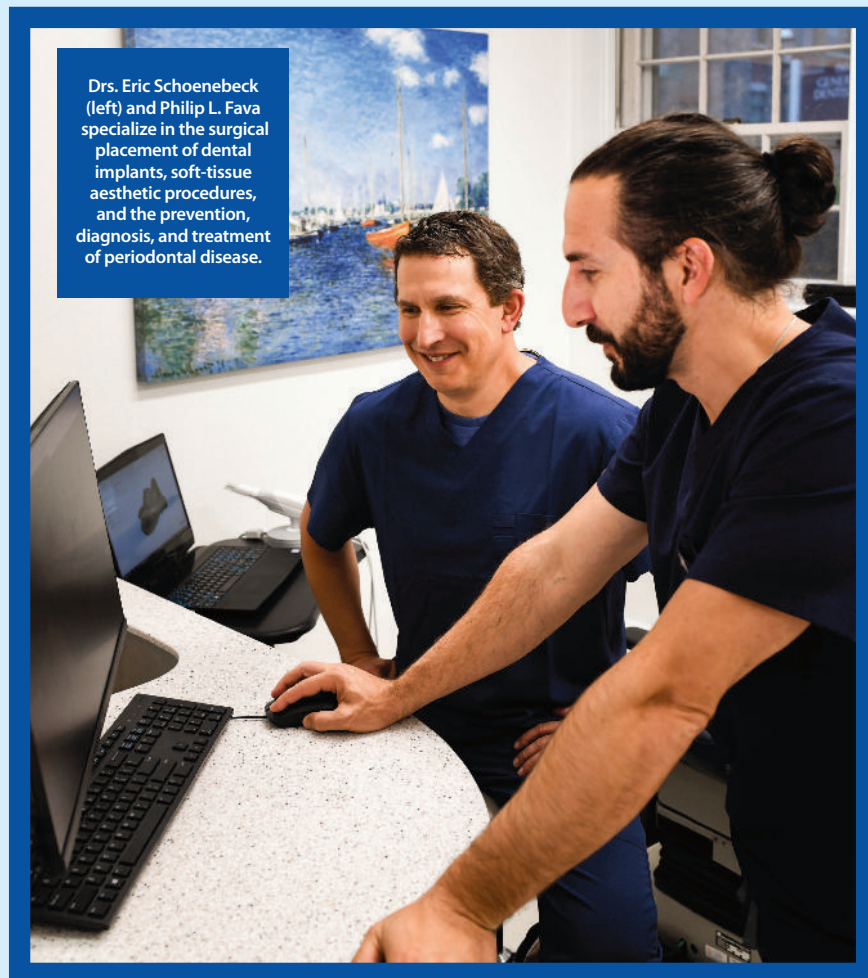
"As periodontists, we're truly physicians of the mouth," Dr. Schoenebeck adds. "We can arrest periodontal disease, but we can't quite cure it. It's a disease of inflammation, so by treating it effectively you can control a lot of the symptoms and problems to make sure the patient doesn't lose any more teeth. We're always trying to educate patients so they understand that the mouth is part of the whole body system; everything is connected."

To his point, Dr. Schoenebeck and his fellow clinicians at the Pennsylvania Center for Dental Implants and Periodontics see themselves as educators first and foremost. Their educational efforts extend far beyond direct patient care. Drs. Fava, Levine, and Schoenebeck have established and maintained

several study clubs to share the latest research, treatment protocols, and practice-management guidelines with other practitioners locally, and possibly much farther afield.

Put simply, be it his family life or his professional life, he wants to do things the right way.

"I'm always thinking about ways to grow



Drs. Eric Schoenebeck (left) and Philip L. Fava specialize in the surgical placement of dental implants, soft-tissue aesthetic procedures, and the prevention, diagnosis, and treatment of periodontal disease.

"We have colleagues around the world who have asked to join one of our study clubs—Australia, Italy, China, Chile—so we're looking into streaming them virtually," says Dr. Fava. "I'm running two SPEAR study clubs in conjunction with Eric, and Dmitry is excited to be intimately involved with them once he formally joins the practice; leading the study clubs will suit his personality very well."

In addition to running the local study groups, Dr. Fava likes to teach regionally, nationally, and internationally. Recently he was appointed the East Regional Education Chair of the International Team of Implantology, a prestigious organization known colloquially as ITI. In this position, he will work closely with the ITI's leadership to reimagine the organization's education programs. He has also been tapped to teach the periodontics curriculum for Albert Einstein Medical Center's Advanced Education in General Dentistry program.

Dr. Fava has a young family at home, including two babies under the age of one. He's very mindful of the importance of balance—devoting ample energy to teaching and growing the practice, but not at the expense of time with his wife and children.

the practice and give back," he says. "With so many older clinicians who are now phasing out of practice, I'd like to be able to help some younger clinicians get their levels up by coming to work with us. My goal is to get to the point where I have a team of great periodontists that allows me to do surgery three days a week and spend the other two making an impact on the field and our community. I also want to give more time to teaching, but you have to earn that." ■

➔ Pennsylvania Center for Dental Implants and Periodontics

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