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A LASTING IMPACT

Whether he is providing compassionate care to his patients, mentoring future surgeons, or giving back to the community, **Dr. Scott K. Smith** is fully committed to making a difference.

by **MATT COSENTINO** photography by **ALISON DUNLAP**

Scott K. Smith, D.D.S., has a name for the special moment when a person sees his or her smile makeover for the first time. He calls it “the great reveal.” Even after 30 years of transforming smiles for patients who have lost teeth due to trauma or severe periodontal disease, the feeling he gets after a great reveal never gets old.

“It’s always emotional,” he says. “You wouldn’t believe how many people can’t go out in public because of their smile, or when they do, they cover their mouth. Helping to restore their self-esteem is heart-warming and wonderful.”

Dr. Smith’s King of Prussia-based practice specializes in periodontics, dental implants, and facial aesthetics. Blending a commitment to technological and surgical advancements with an environment of genuine compassion, Dr. Smith strives to make a lasting impact in his community, the same aspiration that drove him when he first started out in medicine.

That means giving back in whatever ways he can, a concept that means much more to Dr. Smith than simply making a financial donation to support a noble philanthropic cause. In fact, he regularly offers free treatment to those who cannot afford it, such as a 32-year-old woman he met who had been abused as a child.

“We talked to her and realized this is the type of person we really want to help, because she can’t proceed to the next step in life—pursuing a career goal—without teeth,” Dr. Smith says. “So we began the process of placing implants and removing all of the old teeth, and now she is just about ready to get her new smile, which is always the most exciting part.

“Something like this is very personal to us,” he continues. “As an industry, there’s an understandable temptation to promote our good deeds as a way to raise a practice’s

profile, but we will always respect our patients’ privacy. We do what we do out of compassion in our heart, just to help out the community.”

Another way Dr. Smith gives back is by serving as the tri-state area’s lead clinical instructor for AIC Education Center, an international dental implant education group. Young dentists, or even experienced doctors looking to incorporate surgery into their practices, take a six-week course capped off by surgical training under the watchful eye of Dr. Smith, who donates his time on the weekends and welcomes students into his operatories.

Having benefited from similar tutelage earlier in his career, Dr. Smith is more than happy to share his skills with future generations.

“I’ve gotten to a point where I’m doing really advanced surgical procedures, and let’s face it, I’m not going to be here forever, so I have to impart my knowledge to dentists





Dr. Smith serves as a clinical instructor for AIC Education Center, an international dental implant education group. He welcomes young dentists and other clinicians into his operatories to supplement their training.

in the area,” he says. “I really want to make it a fun experience and something the doctors can remember—not just the procedure itself but understanding the principles and how it relates to them in an encouraging way. We have dental schools, but they can teach only so much. Doctors can really learn through hands-on training and through mentors such as myself.”

At the same time, Dr. Smith continues to expand his own knowledge base. For example, he is currently participating in an online course about advanced surgical bone augmentation conducted by a German organization, complemented by on-site training in Germany; Dr. Smith is one of the few U.S. periodontal surgeons to have acquired such specialized training. He is also collaborating with some of the leading oral surgeons in the world on a procedure designed to rebuild the jaw following atrophy or trauma.

In addition, Dr. Smith embraces the use of technology in periodontics, adopting state-of-the-art tools like 3D imaging for efficient and safe diagnostics; intraoral scanning to replace the uncomfortable impressions of the past; and X-Nav, a guided surgical system that leads to unprecedented accuracy in implant placement.

Dr. Smith pairs his interest in state-of-the-art technology with an old-fashioned belief in putting patients first. No one feels rushed during an appointment, as he takes the time to address all of their concerns, and his soothing bedside manner and easygoing personality help make even the most fearful patients feel at home.

“Care begins with the first phone call and the first step through the office door,” he says.

“You’re going to be met with compassion right from the get-go.”

That is especially true with a completely new management team that has taken over the front of the office. Led by Office Manager Rebecca Smith, who is also Dr. Smith’s wife, the practice has spared no expense in terms of hiring and training to enhance the service experience, as well as to facilitate the practice’s steady growth. Staff members go to great lengths to explain insurance requirements and payment options, and ensure that patients understand all of the details of their treatment. The additional structure and organization allow patients to focus squarely on getting better.

“Rebecca likes to offer that personal touch,” Dr. Smith says. “I can’t tell you how many patients express how grateful they are that everything is explained with regard to the financial end of things; getting answers about insurance and finances is just as important as the clinical end. We have worked hard to ensure that no one who comes to our practice ever feels frustrated in getting the answers they need or in the dark about any aspect of their care.”

All of these aspects together make this a meaningful time in Dr. Smith’s career. His thirst for learning new treatment methods, his interest in teaching young dentists and specialists, and his passion for improving his patients’ overall health continue to inspire him in a profession that is just as special to him today as the day he began his career. ■



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Dr. Smith credits his team for the practice’s growth. “Care begins with the first phone call and the first step through the office door,” he says. “You’re going to be met with compassion right from the get-go.”

