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Drs. Scott Smith (right)
and Peter Susnin



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compassion, community, and
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The SK Smith & Associates Advantage

Left to right: Dr. Peter Susanin, COO Rebecca Smith, and Dr. Scott Smith

Uncompromising devotion to compassion, community, and patients' long-term results fuel the growth of the periodontal practice founded by **Dr. Scott Smith**.

by **BILL DONAHUE** | photos by **ALISON DUNLAP**

Scott K. Smith, D.D.S., may be known as one of the area's preeminent periodontists and dental implantologists, but his commitment to the community goes much further than the health of patients' smiles. Besides his work as a healer, of sorts, he's also an educator, a philanthropist, and someone who cares deeply about making the world a better place.

"So many patients are referred to us by their general dentists because they have been diagnosed with some disease or disorder," Dr. Smith says. "Many of them have failing implants that have had disastrous results, like massive bone loss. They come to us anxious and worried, and they find an extremely welcoming physical environment that puts them at ease. Then they meet us and we tell them, 'Don't worry; we've got you. We'll walk with you down that path.'"

The practice's warm-hearted culture begins with its leadership team—Dr. Smith, COO Rebecca Smith, and Peter B. Susanin, D.D.S., a longtime peer of Dr. Smith's who joined the practice last year. That said, Dr. Smith says every member of the practice that bears his name, SK Smith & Associates, shares his devotion to compassionate care.

SK Smith & Associates takes a multispecialty approach to protecting and preserving patients' oral health. While Drs. Smith and Susanin strive to preserve a patient's natural teeth, they are adept at dental implants, which includes advanced regenerative techniques such as bone augmentation and soft-tissue grafting. They also offer solutions tied to facial aesthetics, ranging from cosmetic periodontal surgery to dermal fillers.

Technology plays a pivotal role. Of note are 3D diagnostic imaging, intraoral scanning for treatment planning, and the X-Nav guided surgical system to facilitate the precise placement of dental implants. Also, Dr. Smith specializes in LANAP (laser-assisted new attachment procedure), which uses laser technology as an alternative to invasive surgery in treating periodontal disease.

A commitment to "doing the right thing" serves as the practice's North Star. Its approach to dental implants is a fine example. The clinical team takes a measured and thoughtful approach, including making sure the patient has optimal hard and soft tissue to accommodate each implant. It's a notable point of distinction.

"Our culture has become one of instant gratification, which is why you have some companies sending out messages that 'teeth in a day' is the way implants should be done," Dr. Smith says. "I believe in the 'one miracle at a time' approach—slow and steady for a better long-term result. We certainly



have the capability to do implants quickly, and there are times when that approach is appropriate, but my primary goal is to make sure the implants last."

The practice's leaders are noticeably shy about promoting their philanthropic efforts. Just a few examples of patients who have received pro bono treatment: a woman in her early 30s who had been reduced to a state of edentulism (no teeth); a young mother who lost her husband and needed significant care she could not afford; and an older patient in the early stages of Alzheimer's disease whose required dental work included LANAP therapy to treat periodontal disease and ample bone grafting. The value of the procedures performed on those three patients alone exceeded \$200,000.

"We don't go looking for these kinds of cases, but they find us," Rebecca says. "We're in a position in our lives where we can make a difference. We do it because we genuinely care about people."

The desire to help others extends far beyond the practice's patient base. Driven by the belief that "a rising tide lifts all boats," Dr. Smith has a passion for educating others in his field. Not only does he serve as the lead clinical instructor for an international dental implant education group known as the AIC Education Center, but he also recently resurrected a local study club through which dental professionals can share best practices. He also welcomes dentists and dental students into his operatories so they can benefit from his wisdom and experience.

Thanks to the addition of Dr. Susanin, Rebecca's efforts to streamline the overall patient experience, and Dr. Smith's investment in continual self-improvement, SK Smith & Associates has enjoyed considerable growth over the past two years. And it's not done growing yet. The King of Prussia office will likely undergo an expansion in the near future and, in the process, add a third periodontist. Dr. Smith and Rebecca have also talked about adding other specialties, such as endodontics and orthodontics, so patients could receive total care in one central location.

"We have no intention of slowing down anytime soon," Dr. Smith says. "The work we're doing here is deeply personal. To us, this is more than a job; it's about legacy. What we really want to do is build and grow a community of likeminded, compassionate surgeons and dentists who want to help each other out, and who want to help patients. We want to help this little piece of the world as much as we can, in every way that we can." ■



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