

suburban life

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Dr. Kathleen Petrucci,
founder of Optimal
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Celebrating
30 Years of
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Take care of your *Body*.
It's the *only* place you have to live.

Our Purpose
is to *Inspire* and *Educate* others
to live a *Longer, Healthier* life.

SI PARTNER
PROFILE

by **Bill Donahue**
photo by **Alison Dunlap**

She Has Your Back

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As the founder of **Optimal Health Center** in Yardley, **Dr. Kathleen Petrucci** has spent nearly 30 years helping patients alleviate pain, boost performance, and lead healthier, fuller lives.

Kathleen K. Petrucci, D.C., adores her work as a helper and a healer. Ironically, she credits a traumatic childhood experience from a Fourth of July family party for putting her on the path to a decades-long career.

Just six years old at the time, she was playing on a swing set with an older cousin when she fell and landed on a seesaw. The blow knocked the wind out of her. Out of an abundance of caution, her parents took her to a chiropractor's office near her father's place of business.

"The chiropractor had a neuropathologist on the wall that illustrated the link between the spine, the nervous system, and how it affects the entire body," she recalls. "I loved the idea that everything in the body was connected. My mother says I turned around and said, 'This is what I want to do when I grow up.'"

She stayed true to her word.

Two years after earning her doctorate from Logan College of Chiropractic in St. Louis, Dr. Petrucci founded Optimal Health Center in Yardley. She has since spent nearly three decades using her ever-growing expertise to help patients. Optimal Health Center's purpose: to inspire and educate others to live a longer, healthier life by teaching people how to eat, move, think, and sleep better.

"Before chiropractic school, I worked for two different types of chiropractor," she says. "My experience allowed me to be a patient first, then an assistant, and then a chiropractor myself. Even though I have been practicing for 30 years, I have almost 50 years of experience in this environment. It's a job, but it's really a way of life."

Optimal Health Center treats various muscu-

loskeletal and soft-tissue conditions through traditional chiropractic care, as well as modern-day interventions such as spinal decompression, extracorporeal shockwave therapy, and pulsed electromagnetic field therapy, among others. Not only are these therapies extraordinarily effective, but they also enable patients to heal more naturally, thereby forgoing unnecessary medications or surgery.

"We're experts in treating back pain," she says, "but we're much more than a back-pain clinic."

To her point, Optimal Health Center has become a destination for prenatal and pediatric care. Dr. Petrucci specializes in treating everything from natural induction to helping expectant mothers deliver naturally when their babies are in the breach position to assisting newborns who struggle with breastfeeding, constipation, and chronic hiccups.

Dr. Petrucci, who is committed to lifelong education and personal growth, has earned multiple certifications to expand her knowledge base. In 2020 she went back to school to become certified in integrative functional medicine, which combines conventional medicine with complementary therapies to heal patients' bodies and optimize their health. Practitioners of functional medicine look at each person as a whole in order to get to the root cause of a patient's problem. Dr. Petrucci recommends only the best nutritional supplements to her patients and continues to educate herself on current treatments such as peptides, which are a hot topic right now.

Her interest in integrative functional medicine stems from her own experience with

premature menopause.

"No one was available to help guide me," she says. "People wanted to put me on a pill. I knew there was a lot more to it than that, and I was sick of the 'pull for every ill' mentality."

Some patients will come in presenting with issues such as low energy, digestive problems, and mood swings; all three issues could be attributed to hormone imbalances. In-depth patient interviews and rigorous testing help to identify the root cause, after which Dr. Petrucci designs a customized treatment plan. She strives to address the cause as naturally as possible, incorporating solutions such as lifestyle adjustments, dietary changes, and exercise regimens.

"A lot of people will wake up when they have a milestone birthday and decide, 'Now I want to take care of myself,'" she says. "I always encourage people to be more preventative with their health, not wait until something is broken. We live in an age of instant gratification; if you order something from Amazon in the morning, it will be delivered to your home by 5 p.m. Health doesn't work that way. The quick fixes we think we can do for our health are not making us healthier, and they can actually backfire."

Optimal Health Center has grown exponentially since its founding in 1998. The office itself has expanded from 750 square feet to 5,000 square feet, complete with a mobility center designed to help people gain strength, improve balance, and move better. Likewise, Dr. Petrucci has built "an incredible team," which includes multiple clinicians to serve patients. She sees continued growth on the horizon.

"My goal is give people back control of their lives and guide them to optimal health," she says. "Their hands are on the wheel; I'm just here to guide them. I always leave people with this: Take care of your own body; it's the only place you have to live." ■