

BY DIANE FEEN

PHOTO BY MELISSA KORMAN

# SPODAK DENTAL GROUP DENTISTRY WITH A HEART

If you head West on Atlantic Avenue you might see a cream color building with a large sign that says Spodak Dental Group. If you didn't know better you might think that it is a typical dental office where people come to get their teeth cleaned and treated.

But to those who work there (and to patients) Spodak Dental Group is much more. "We are pioneering a new idea in total dentistry," said Dr. Craig Spodak. "We searched the nation to assemble the finest dental and medical professionals from all disciplines of the field in a single facility. This team approach to dentistry delivers a full-service experience that combines the benefits of a coordinated treatment plan with access to a broad range of specialty care."

There's a surgical suite for more complicated treatment, and there are professionals in specific areas of specialty for consultation and evaluation. There is also a master ceramic artist on site, a laboratory and a board certified MD anesthesiologist to administer and oversee sedation for many of their sleep dentistry procedures.

On top of all that, Spodak Dental Group is working to ensure safety for both the environment and their patients. They have implemented digital imaging (that delivers a fraction of the radiation of traditional x-rays), a digital scan machine (that shows everything from sinus cavities to the carotid artery), a UV air purification system, non-toxic steril-

ization solutions, and a paperless charting system that leaves a flawless carbon footprint.

With all this innovation and imagination it comes as no surprise that Spodak Dental Group was awarded the title of 2010-2011 Business of the Year by the Delray Beach Chamber of Commerce.

And it's easy to see why.

The practice, which was started in 1976 by Dr. Myles Spodak, has been enlarged and enlightened by son, Dr. Craig Spodak. Dr. Craig (as he is affectionately known) has taken his love of dentistry (he sees it as an art form) and his passion for leadership and personal development and created a dental practice that Tony Robbins (or Warren Buffet) would endorse. Each of the 22 employees attends leadership and personal development courses and the entire staff is encouraged to



participate in ongoing charitable work in the community.

"We spend more time in the office than at home, so we really want to make sure that the time spent here is the best possible. Our set of agreements is that everyone be charitable and positive, and to put the patients first," said Dr. Craig, who took over the practice in 2006.

The tall handsome leader of Spodak Dental Group has delicately infused the office with a culture of camaraderie and kindness, with a bent toward practicality and growth. Dr. Craig is adamant that the office be a place that feels good to both the staff and the patients. "It feels like a family here and our patients like that," said the Tuft's University School of Dental Medicine graduate.

The family theme weighs heavily on what makes up the heritage and harmony of Spodak Dental Group. Dr. Craig's grandfather,

Harold was a dentist in Brooklyn, New York and his father Myles moved to Delray Beach to practice dentistry when the words Delray and gentrification were at odds. Dr. Craig's mother Arlene also worked in the business.

But it was his grandmother Sonia who left the most indelible mark on his future and his past. "My grandmother, who escaped from Europe, taught me that freedom is not free and that education should not be taken for granted. She said the opportunity to be educated is a gift and that the feeling of hunger is the worst pain one can imagine. That taught me about personal development and the drive for success."

Sonia would be proud of her grandson Craig if she could see the 6000 square foot office that bears his name and the family that he has created. Dr. Craig's wife Zaicha and his one-year-old daughter Sage are the light of his life. "My wife and child are the foundation for everything I do. Zaicha is a good business person, a great manager and encourages the best in people."

You could say that Dr. Craig has picked a mirror image of himself. You can feel it as soon as you walk into the Spodak



DR. CRAIG SPODAK

Dental Group office. There are smiling faces everywhere and a can-do attitude that permeates the genuinely amenable staff. They attend charitable events together and the staff works in tandem with each other on community projects. They spent a day working on a Habitat for Humanity house and also did the AVDA run in Delray Beach. "In dentistry we are paid to help people, so it makes sense that we would give back and be charitable," said Dr. Craig.

Team building is very important to Dr. Craig. As a student of successful companies he observes and tries to emulate a superior

corporate culture into his own practice. "As a consumer you become a student of business. I admire the team building culture of companies like Starbucks and Disney."

And it's fair to say that Dr. Craig has done just that. "Dr. Craig brings the art of dentistry straight to the heart with integrity and innovation. He's very thoughtful and a lot of fun to be around," said good friend and local artist Salvatore Principe.

There's another side to this hard working Delray resident (and dentist) that defines him and the practice he has built. "I like setting up new goals and

challenging myself. Once I master something, it's time to set off on the next challenge."

One of those challenges is flying an airplane. Dr. Craig had a fear of flying, so he got a pilots license and set out to fly planes. What was once a source of fear is now what he calls, "pretty cool."

But amidst it all, Dr. Craig continues to remain pretty grounded. He dreams of someday sailing off around the world, but for now his sailing is charted on Atlantic Avenue where his dental practice continues to thrive.

He values (and keeps track of time) like a watch maker, making sure he uses it wisely. Time is

a precious commodity, he says, and so is living life to the max. "I want to feel that I am where I wanted to be at any time in my life. I don't want to look back and regret a thing."

And it seems that Dr. Craig lives by that motto. "Dr. Craig is bright, personable and very sincere. He knows everyone in town and it's great to watch him build his practice. I saw him with his staff at the Business Person of the Year Award dinner and they were all having a good time. That's the future of Delray Beach – everyone getting along together," said Michael Weiner of Weiner & Lynn P.A.