

DOCTOR *of* DENTISTRY

Special Feature



Dr. Julie Saviano, Andover
Endodontics, North Andover, MA
Compassion and Skill Combine in a Top-Flight Endodontic Practice

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By Margo Steiner

North Andover endodontist Dr. Julie Saviano is all too familiar with the trepidation with which patients approach a root canal. That's why she makes it her mission with every patient to change the perception.

"Besides the obvious goal of providing the highest level of expertise in clinical care," she says, "the mission of my practice is to allay people's fears and show them through compassion and understanding — and with the gentlest manner I can — that root canal treatment is an extremely comfortable procedure."

Dr. Saviano knows she's been successful when she gets positive feedback from patients. "The most rewarding aspect of my work," she says, "is when, at the conclusion of a procedure, a patient says,

'That's nothing like I thought it would be!'"

Although Dr. Saviano realizes that much of her patients' satisfaction comes from her dental expertise and the compassion she shows them when they're in her chair, she is quick to deflect patients' compliments off herself and onto those with whom she works.

"I get so many compliments on my staff," she says proudly, and it's obvious she has a great deal of respect for those who comprise her team. That team currently consists of two receptionists and two dental assistants, and at some point in the future she'd like to bring an associate on board as well.

"When patients and their families enter our office, they pick up the vibe immediately," she notes. "They can tell that we're more than

Dr. Saviano with her staff (L-R): Sylvia, business office coordinator; Harmony, dental assistant; Marie, business office coordinator; and Andrea, dental assistant.





An enjoyable family life and an interest in outdoor activities like kayaking balance out an excellent professional career as Dr. Saviano poses with her husband, Paul Maltacea, and her son, Luke, at the 100 Pleasant Street, Marblehead location of Paul's place of business, Muscular Sports Therapy Center. A second location is in Wakefield.

colleagues, that we're actually like family. In fact, I tell my staff all the time," Dr. Saviano adds, "that I probably spend more time with them than I do with my husband!"

The feeling that patients and their families get upon entering the office is important to Dr. Saviano, for she knows that every experience a patient has in her office is a direct reflection of her. Perhaps that's why she works so hard with her staff to ensure that from the moment a patient has contact with her office — whether by telephone, letter, e-mail or in person — the impression is a positive one.

"My staff takes this responsibility very seriously," she notes, "and I'm so proud of the comments I get about them." A stack of thank-you notes attests to patients' gratitude, not just for the expertise of the clinical care, but also for the caring, respectful manner with which they're treated.

For Dr. Julie Saviano, the path to dentistry was a fairly straight one, one that actually began when she was quite young. Growing up in Danvers, MA, her own youthful dental experiences were very positive. A strong interest in science and exceptionally fine motor skills — manifested in her childhood hobbies of pottery and building models of things such

as planes, boats and the human body — further propelled her toward a profession that might make best use of her talents.

Dr. Saviano entered dental school at the University of Florida and from the beginning had a particularly strong academic interest in endodontics, one that was encouraged and nurtured by a dental professor who recognized not only her interest, but her unusual aptitude as well.

"His name was Dr. Gordon Mattison," she remembers fondly, "and he's the reason I'm an endodontist today. He was the director of my graduate program, and he taught me so much more than simple clinical endodontics. He impressed upon me that dentistry is about more than just a person's oral health; it's about treating the *whole* person."

Sadly, Dr. Saviano's mentor died after a short battle with pancreatic cancer just three months before her graduation from her endodontic residency program, but not before encouraging her to pursue yet another challenge — board certification in endodontics, which she achieved in 2000.

After practicing for seven years in Florida, Dr. Saviano returned home to Massachusetts to establish her own practice. Now, from her well-equipped office in North Andover, she primarily serves patients on Massachusetts' North Shore and in the Merrimack Valley, although her clientele extends up into southern New Hampshire as well.



PHOTOS BY DANIELLE DELUCIA

“It’s personally satisfying to me, for instance, to get referrals from patients who have shared their positive experiences in our office with friends, family and colleagues, as it means we’re providing them with quality care in a comfortable environment.” From Dr. Saviano’s point of view, a personal, word-of-mouth reference is more valuable than an ad could ever be.

Although nothing can replace the innate skills that all top dentists must demonstrate, Dr. Saviano also successfully incorporates much of the latest — and most effective — technology into her practice. A perfectionist at heart, she realizes that to be able to utilize her skilled hands and extensive dental knowledge to best advantage, she must partner with technology.

“We have an extremely high-tech practice,” she says. “We’re paperless with electronic record charting, and we incorporate digital radiography, high-magnification surgical operating microscopes and all of the latest endodontic materials and technologies. In fact,” she adds, “we often communicate and collaborate with referring dentists electronically.”

Where does Dr. Saviano see dentistry and, in particular, endodontics heading in the future?

Despite the increasing popularity of implants, she feels there will always be a place for endodontic dentistry. “As a matter of fact,” she notes, “retreatment and surgical endodontics are becoming an increasingly larger percentage of my practice.”

Actively engaged in the dental community, Dr. Saviano is currently a member of the Merrimack Valley District Dental Society, where she serves as Scientific Chair, planning lecture topics for meetings and securing speakers. Perhaps more important than her work with the local dental community, however, is the work she has done for those in need.

In 2000, Dr. Saviano was part of a medical/dental missionary trip to Nicaragua arranged by the Archdiocese of New Orleans. She was accompanied on the mission by a dental team consisting of another endodontist, a general dentist and a pediatric dentist, as well as two dental assistants, and provided endodontic care to those in Granada, Nicaragua, who may never have seen a dentist before and could not afford care.

More important than the immediate care she provided, however, was what she left behind. When not seeing patients, Dr. Saviano taught local dentists how to provide endodontic care for their patients, lending credence to the Chinese adage: Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish and you feed him for a lifetime.

Every dentist has a memorable case or two, and Dr. Saviano is no different. The little 7-year-old referred to her Florida practice many years ago is one she remembers well. The girl suffered from a rare birth disorder which involved, among other things, an enamel dysplasia. This caused her permanent teeth to come in with defective enamel, and over the course of several years, Dr. Saviano painstakingly performed root canals to each of the little girl’s teeth as they came in. The two endured a great deal together and over time bonded in a very special way. That little girl is now 22, with a child of her own, and she and Dr. Saviano are still in touch. She also pursued a career in dentistry herself and is presently practicing as a dental hygienist.



PHOTO BY DANIELLE DELUCIA

I ask Dr. Saviano why she considers herself good at what she does. “Probably because I’m a perfectionist!” she answers quickly, “which is a good thing for an endodontist. I’ve also always cared about treating people gently and with respect,” she adds. “My biggest satisfaction comes from my patients’ reactions when I wake them up after surgery and tell them it’s all over!”

When not treating patients, Dr. Saviano can be found at her home in Marblehead, enjoying life with her husband, Paul Maltacea, and her 2-year-old son. Dr. Saviano’s husband is the owner of Muscular Sports Therapy Center in Marblehead, where he is getting ready to open a brand new, state-of-the-art facility to include a private gym, one-on-one personal training and a physical therapy center. He also has a second location in Wakefield. Fitness is obviously a big part of the family’s life, and Dr. Saviano always finds times to stay physically active, be it with an early morning run or exercising her passion for kayaking. ■

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