

Lake Jeanette Orthodontics & Pediatric Dentistry: Our Premier One4Zero Sponsor



As the 24th Annual Winter Walk for AIDS approaches, we want to highlight and thank our long-time community partner and Premier One4Zero Sponsor, Lake Jeanette Orthodontics and Pediatric Dentistry. Lake Jeanette is a dedicated supporter of the Winter Walk for AIDS along with numerous other worthy causes in the Triad. We asked the owners and staff of Lake Jeanette Orthodontics and Pediatric Dentistry to tell us more about what drives their commitment to the community and their passion for the Winter Walk for AIDS.

If you look up Lake Jeanette Orthodontics and Pediatric Dentistry on www.rateabiz.com, the most striking thing that you will find are the glowing comments: “Five stars,” “amazing,” “awesome.” Time and time again, one phrase appears over and over - “this is a practice that cares.” These reviews written by Lake Jeanette’s clients reflect the overwhelming feeling of warmth, care and professionalism felt when one walks in the door of the practice. “It’s hard to find a practice that genuinely cares about their patients and the community,” one staff member shared, “but this is an office filled with care for everyone.”

The staff at Lake Jeanette regularly attends and participates in fundraisers and community events, and volunteers in the community. “There is always some opportunity for the staff or patients to get involved in helping,” one staff member reflected. “It’s not required of us; the thing is, everyone wants to.” While it may seem odd that staff at a pediatric dentist’s office could all be so passionate about the community, Lake Jeanette Orthodontics and Pediatric Dentistry has created a culture of giving back that starts at the top. Dr. Mike Ignelzi and his wife Gay Maness, the practice’s business manager, as well as their associate Dr. Rebecca G. Andrews, are passionate about serving where there’s the most need.

They are also committed to caring for their staff. “When I think about the people who work here, I think how you treat people who need help is a truer reflection of who you are than how you treat everyone else. We feel a moral obligation to treat our employees well, and we actually believe it’s a good business decision – if you treat people well, they’re loyal,” says Gay.

Dr. Mike attributes his Christian faith as the chief motivation behind his personal and professional commitment to serve: “To whom much has been given, much is expected - so we try to do better every day and do more for others. We’re not trying to be the richest people in Greensboro, we’re not trying to be the biggest practice in Greensboro – we’re trying to be the best practice in Greensboro and do the right thing for the people we serve and the people who work here. We believe if we’re doing the right things, all of the money stuff will take care of itself. Every time we meet with the bankers, by every metric, they tell us this practice is strong. So, we’re going to keep doing what we’re doing.”

In fact, Lake Jeanette has invested significant time, money and care into several causes in Greensboro and High Point and has become a pillar in these communities. Lake Jeanette takes a special interest in Triad Health Project. Gay Maness regularly bakes an abundance of delicious treats from scratch using the finest ingredients for their church’s monthly lunch at Higher Ground for people living with or affected by HIV/AIDS. She is affectionately known as “The Calorie Lady” there, preparing extras for guests to take home to enjoy later or share with their families and friends. “I am humbled by how little some people seem to have and how much we’ve been blessed. It doesn’t really seem like there’s a choice but to give back some of we’ve been blessed with to help others.”

“Every single month when I’m there, someone says how great it is to have a place where they feel cared about, and no one is judging them, and I feel two ways about that. On the one hand, I think, wow, it’s great that we can offer a place where people can feel respected, not judged, and not discriminated against. The other side of me thinks what does that say about how they’re treated in the world that it makes such an impression to be treated with basic human dignity that they’re shocked almost by that. There is nowhere else I feel more appreciated than at Higher Ground,” Gay reflected. “When I leave, I just feel like the kindness is really appreciated, and I think if there was more kindness in the world, we’d have a great place to live.”

Gay continued, “I think people have all of these assumptions about people with HIV/AIDS – so they have all of these ideas built up in their heads, and fears and sometimes they’re based in ignorance. I’d like to see people be more accepting and take the chance to get to know people – because sometimes after I’ve gone to Higher Ground and I think of some of the things other people say, and I want to say to them, ‘everything you *think* that you know, you couldn’t be more wrong’.”

These beliefs and tireless efforts to better the community expressed through the leadership of Dr. Mike, Gay, and Dr. Andrews, are further demonstrated by the inspiration and hope in their staff. When answering the question “why do you like working at Lake Jeanette Orthodontics

and Pediatric Dentistry,” one staff member perfectly summed up the feelings of the entire staff and community: “This is a family. Every office provides care, but we care about the people. Care isn’t just about the patients, it’s about *everyone*, and I couldn’t imagine a better place to be.” It was a message we heard consistently from everyone with whom we spoke.

When asked about the legacy he hopes to leave, Dr. Mike simply said, “I just want my children to respect their father, to think that he was a good person, and he tried to set a good example for them.” Gay shared, “I think about this more in the context of Higher Ground. I just want to be remembered for being kind.”

For more information on Lake Jeanette Orthodontics & Pediatric Dentistry’s services, office hours or mission, please visit their website at www.smilegreensboro.com.

Written by Julia David and Ken Keeton