

A Community Pillar

by Chelsea Knorr, Associate Editor, *Orthotown Magazine*



Patients teasingly refer to Dr. Neal Kravitz as the mayor of South Riding because of his extensive community involvement. He and his team show up at community sporting events, school fundraisers and graduations, and happenings at the town center. With this kind of concern for and participation in the local area, it's no wonder he is considered the community orthodontist. Herein, *Orthotown Magazine* chats with Dr. Kravitz about how he runs his practice and why he is so passionate about being an orthodontist.

How and why did you get into orthodontics?

Kravitz: I do not think anyone enjoys his job as much as I do. I feel very lucky to be an orthodontist. I

really have a passion for my profession, which is why I put so much energy and heart into what I do every day. I make such an effort to interact closely with my patients. I always tell my patients, "I care about you beyond the doors to this office."

In dental school at the University of Pennsylvania, orthodontic hand skills came very naturally to me, however, I truly loved all fields of dentistry. For a time, I even strongly considered becoming an oral surgeon. I credit my first orthodontics course, taught by Professor Joseph Ghafari, for truly inspiring me to become an orthodontist. In his class, we were asked to treat malocclusions by thinking 10 moves ahead. It was then that I knew I was going to be an orthodontist.

Who are some of your mentors?

Kravitz: There are so many doctors who I truly admire and consider my mentors. As a resident, orthodontists such as Dr. Budi Kusnoto, Dr. Peter Tsay, Dr. Tony Eltink, Dr. Terry Sellke, Dr. Cyril Sadowsky, Dr. Greg Jackson and Dr. Robin Silberte in had such a tremendous influence over my personal and professional life. As a teacher and speaker, I have been fortunate to form incredible relationships with remarkable orthodontists such as Chairperson Dr. Stuart Josell, Dr. Jay Bowman, Dr. Neil



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Name: Neal D. Kravitz, DMD, MS

Graduate From: University of Pennsylvania School of Dental Medicine

Practice Name: Kravitz Orthodontics

Practice Location: South Riding, Virginia and White Plains, Maryland

Staff: Eight per location

Web site: www.kravitzorthodontics.com



Office Highlights

Bonding Agents

- MonoLok paste (RMO) with RM bond primer (RMO) for labial brackets
- Transbond IDB Pre-Mix (3M Unitek) or Bond Resin A + B (Reliance) for lingual indirect bonding
- Multilink Automix (Ivoclar Vivadent) for rebonding lingual brackets or bonding to gold or porcelain crowns

Brackets/Wires

- O18 Synergy-R (RMO) and FLI (RMO) with Orthonol and CuNiTi
- Incognito (3M Unitek) and Incognito Lite (3M Unitek) for all my lingual cases
- WildSmiles brackets (maxillary canine-to-canine)

Cements

- Light Cure Band Cement (RMO)
- GC Fuji II LC (GC America) for appliances

Class II Appliances

- 3/16" diameter x 5oz. elastics
- Herbst appliances with Rollo Bands and Miniscopes (AOA Labs)
- Forsus Fatigue Resistant Device (3M Unitek)
- Bionator in Phase I (AOA Labs)

Class III Appliances

- Hyrax with protraction hooks (AOA) and Delaire Facemask (RMO) in Phase I

Hygiene

- Plak Smaker pre-fluorided toothbrushes
- WP-360 Cordless Water Flosser (Waterpik)
- MI Paste (GC America)

Patient Financing

- All PPO insurance carriers
- Same-day start and family discounts
- CareCredit

Technology

- Dolphin Management
- Dolphin Imaging
- Dolphin Aquarium
- Virtual lingual case submission via the 3M Treatment Management Portal (TMP)
- Web design and SEO by OrthoSesame and Zenman
- Instrumentarium Digital Orthopantomograph OP200 D
- Canon 60D Intraoral Camera
- Biolase EZ 940 soft-tissue laser

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Warshawsky, Dr. Robert Rudman, Dr. Clarke Stevens, Dr. Dan Grauer and many, many more. I am always trying to learn and always trying to be better. I feel fortunate for the mentors I have had in my life, and I try to make an effort to help as many doctors as possible who ask for my assistance.

What motivates your continuous learning?

Kravitz: I am always trying to improve myself and keep our office at the forefront. Every day, I review journal manuscripts, research for my own publications, prepare new lectures and read the latest journal articles. Our patients love that we are recognized as leaders in our profession, and that we are continually striving to be even better each and every day. There is incredible satisfaction in mastering something new, and there is so much to learn.

Tell me about your writing and lecturing experience.

Kravitz: I am constantly writing or lecturing. I try to write a publication at least once a month and lecture twice a month either at a university or throughout the country. I am so happy when I am teaching. I am filled with so much energy and enthusiasm. I love being able to share my experiences with others. I think my practice philosophies on patient care and community service are unique, and I welcome every opportunity to share this with others. Teaching and writing are also power tools for self-learning.

What is your practice philosophy?

Kravitz: Our practice philosophy is based on unconditional support and care for our patients and our community. We

believe that little things make a big difference. From greeting patients with a handshake when they arrive, making them gourmet coffee or hot chocolate with whipped cream while they wait, to providing complimentary mouth pieces or replacement retainers. We feel very lucky to be recognized as the community orthodontist for South Riding and Stone Ridge.

At the core of our practice philosophy is community support. This is the one thing that separates our office. Our office tag line is: "Continually Supporting Our Community." This truly represents the heart of our office. The difference is that our office does not just give; rather, we participate too! Our entire team attends elementary, middle and high school functions, as well as the sporting events and organizations we sponsor. We genuinely care and we try to lead by example.



Tell me a little about your practice – how is it laid out? What is the workflow like? What is the staff size?

Kravitz: Our office was designed by Agnes Kan of CIVITAS Architects. Our office feels like a spa with soft lighting in the waiting room, elegant seating, scented candles, a quiet atmosphere and classical or spa music playing. It is a true open-bay design. The treatment bay is open from the waiting room so parents can watch us work at all times or come directly back to speak with a technician or myself.

The office is centered around two semi-circular consult rooms, which are separated by an accordion wall. The rooms connect to form a large circular classroom, where I give in-office CE courses to dentists and orthodontists.

Dr. Kravitz's Top Three

Incognito Lingual Braces

"My first case with Incognito lingual braces was in 2006, which at the time was iBraces. We try to treat 100 Incognito patients a year. I have experience with a variety of lingual systems, and I firmly believe that the Incognito system is by far the premiere lingual orthodontic system in the world. We do not have high treatment fees for these procedures."

Invisalign and Invisalign Teen

"I began using the Invisalign system in 2004. Invisalign and Invisalign Teen has become such a major part of our office. We currently start 25 cases per month with these systems."

Biolase EZlase Diode Laser

"I began using soft-tissue lasers in 2005. I was trained with a Waterlase MD; however, I began using the diode laser after reading Dr. David Sarver's work in 2006. Soft-tissue laser procedures, including gingivectomies, gingivoplasties, frenectomies and canine exposures, to name a few, are provided quickly, painlessly and at no expense to our patients. Use of the soft-tissue laser has certainly increased treatment efficacy, helped our patients maintain good oral hygiene and enhanced our patients' beautiful smiles."

We have the most amazing team. I truly feel like the luckiest orthodontist to be able to work with such remarkable individuals. I hire only professionals and I am continually teaching and training. We have eight team members: an office manager/treatment coordinator, two front desk concierges, a community service and marketing director, three expert orthodontic technicians and a sterilization/laboratory technician. Between the two offices, we start about 1,200 patients per year and see 90-110 each day.

What is the competition like in your area of orthodontics right now?

Kravitz: There are seven orthodontists within five miles of my office; however, we feel very fortunate to be recognized as the community orthodontist in South Riding and Stone Ridge. We believe our office stands alone in regard to reputation, hours of operation, generosity and community support.

What separates your office from all others?

Kravitz: This is easy. We simply refuse to operate a business. We care about our patients and we focus on customer service. We participate with all PPO insurance carriers, we are open early mornings and late evenings, including Saturday, we provide patients with my cell phone so I can be reached anytime and most importantly, as our office continues to grow exponentially, we give it right back to the community. I want patients to have such an amazing experience with us that they insist that others choose our office. And they do!

How has the economy affected your practice?

Kravitz: The economy has not affected our office. Rather, we have seen consistent record growth each year. Our South Riding office starts more than 800 patients per year and our White Plains office more than 450 starts per year, and these numbers continue to rise. We attribute our success to our reputation, our flexible hours and weekend availability, the number of insurance carriers with which we participate and our community involvement.

And what creative strategies do you use to keep your practice running smoothly?

Kravitz: Every morning, our administrative team meets to review our daily goals and the schedule. We always anticipate the day's events. We are proactive with our schedule. If a patient comes in with an emergency appointment, we perform the next appointment at that visit. If a patient reschedules, we always try to fill the vacancy with either a debonding appointment moved up from the following day or patients who we have on a "ready"



list who have asked for earlier appointment times. To keep the day fluid, we schedule long appointments such as bondings and debondings in the morning and shorter appointments in the afternoon. Like appointments are scheduled with other like appointments. We never schedule long-short-long. This is important to not only start the patient on time but to end the appointment on time as well. Additionally, we schedule quick emergency appointments before the office opens in the morning, before school and longer emergency appointments right after lunch at 2 p.m. We also schedule retainer pickups between 11:30 a.m. and 3 p.m. to avoid congesting the office during our busiest times.

Who is your primary clientele?

Kravitz: We treat young children (Phase I Interceptive), adolescents and adults. Even though we have a very large Incognito clientele, our primary patients are children. Each year, we average approximately 25 percent pre-adolescents, 50 percent adolescents and 25 percent adults.

How do you get the word out about services to patients?

Kravitz: Our team is recognized everywhere we go because we make ourselves present. I certainly believe in traditional marketing: we have a strong Internet presence, including

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Facebook, and we send out high-quality direct mailers and our office information is on grocery carts and local magazines. However, we are most recognized for our community support and school contributions.

What is your favorite procedure or part of orthodontics?

Kravitz: My favorite procedure is lingual orthodontics. Our office has really developed an expertise with Incognito and patients travel all over the Virginia-Washington, D.C.-Maryland area to have lingual treatment with us. Every day, we are treating 15 patients or more in lingual braces. With our team, routine adjustments with lingual braces take no longer than traditional braces. It is easy and enjoyable for our team.

Unquestionably, my favorite part of orthodontics is interacting with our families. Orthodontics should be family-oriented, not business-oriented, so we try to become involved in their lives – from sending birthday gifts, to get-well flowers, to placing braces on their American Girl dolls, our office tries to go the extra mile to show that we care.

What do you find in terms of technology has the biggest “wow” factor for your patients?

Kravitz: The two biggest technological “wow” factors are our Incognito custom lingual braces and our iTero digital scanner for Invisalign and Invisalign Teen patients. The iTero scanner is remarkable because it not only obviates the need for impressions, but it also provides an immediate ClinCheck simulation of the patient’s treatment. We will also use the scanner to make laboratory appliances at AOA labs in young children with severe gag reflexes or anxiety.



What do you like to do when you are not working?

Kravitz: I work six long days a week, but when I am not at the office, my wife and I love experiencing the great restaurants of the Washington, D.C. area. We try to attend as many school, sporting and regional events as possible. ■



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