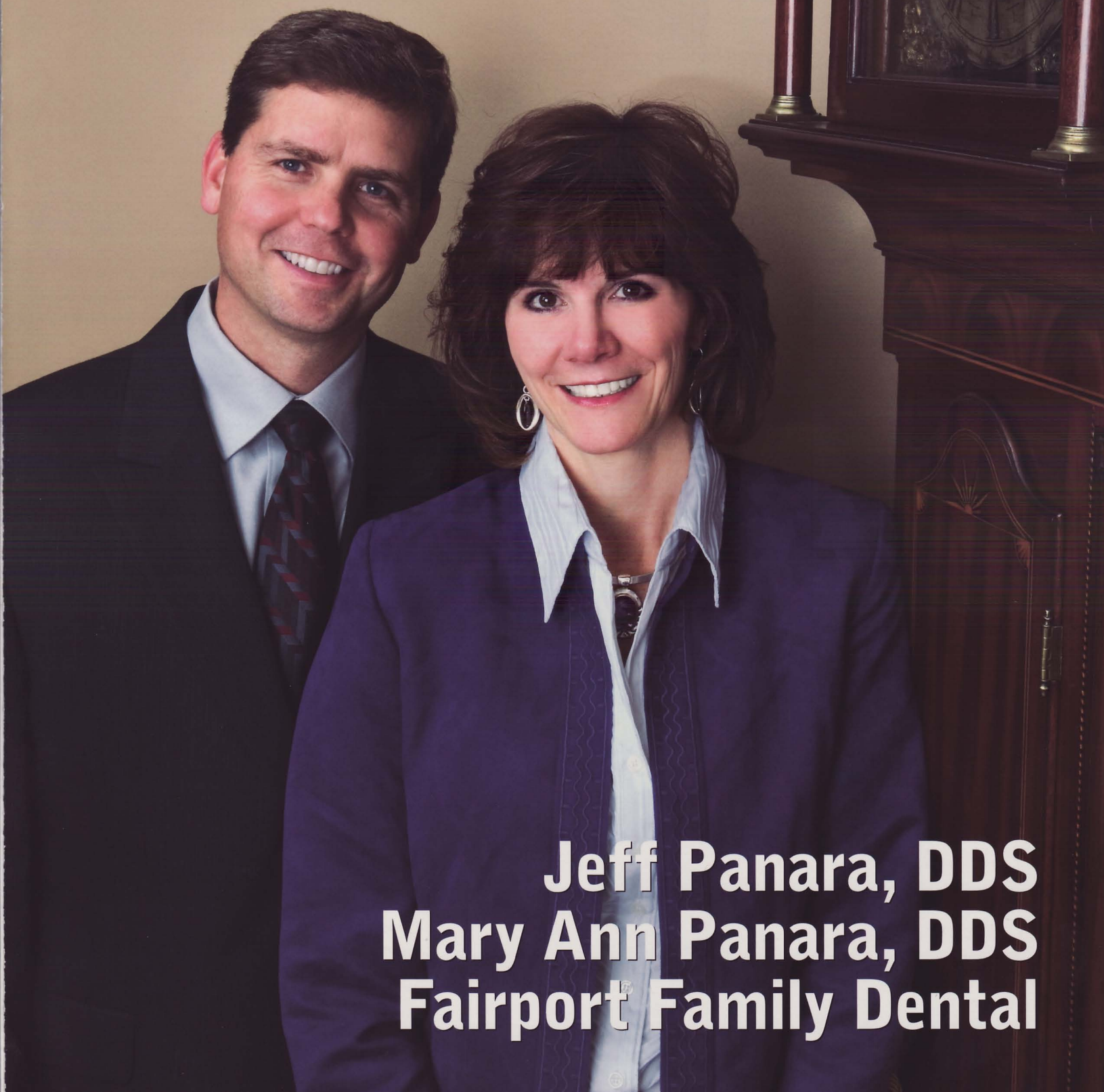


DOCTOR *of* DENTISTRY

Special Feature



Jeff Panara, DDS
Mary Ann Panara, DDS
Fairport Family Dental

Treating Patients Like Family — Fairport Family Dental

Smart Practice Philosophies That Work for All

By Robert Fischl

Growing a successful practice while raising three children keeps both Jeff Panara, D.D.S., and Mary Ann Panara, D.D.S., focused on “family” in a big way at Fairport Family Dental.

In fact, there isn’t much white space on the Panara family calendar. That’s because virtually every evening and weekend is penciled in or overwritten — with ideas and plans, arranged and rearranged for everything from sporting events to pool parties and backyard barbecues.

“I have a separate calendar in my office that lists who’s doing what, when

and where. Then, of course, there are my patient assignments,” said Jeff with a smile.

It all spills over into day-to-day operations for Jeff and Mary Ann, two general dentists who have made family a priority while balancing a dental practice aimed at providing quality dental care to area families.

In practice for over 16 years — over seven years as a husband-wife team — Fairport Family Dental — FFD — today provides comprehensive patient care using the very latest digital X-ray and laser technologies, intra-oral cameras as well as working with the newest state-of-the-art dental materials for restorations. “We’re proud of how our computerized operatories help educate patients,” said Jeff. “Every chair has a computer screen so that we can share what we see with patients in a meaningful way.”

The staff at Fairport Family Dental are treated like family; some have been with the Panaras for up to 15 years. Front: Mary Ann. Rear, left to right: Jeff, Shelli, Linda, Yvonne, Mary, Jennifer, Annette and Carolyn



ON BEGINNINGS

Although Jeff and Mary Ann are very pleased with their career choice, their paths were quite different. “I knew I wanted to be a dentist since I was in the ninth grade and geared my coursework that way,” said Jeff. “Initially, my family was surprised because I hated the sight of blood as a kid. I needed a Band-Aid to cover every scratch.”

Unlike Jeff, Mary Ann didn’t think about becoming a dentist until almost completing her degree in biomedical computing. “I was in my third year of school on a co-op in Philadelphia, doing work in a research lab. There wasn’t enough social interaction, and I wanted to be around people. My guidance counselor suggested becoming a dentist and the rest is history.”

The Panaras met while working on the student council at the University at Buffalo School of

Fairport Family Dental uses the new Diagnadent system, a clever pen-like laser device that’s making the finding of decay and cavities much easier. The Diagnadent gives visual and audio cues while scanning each tooth. The higher the pitch and number, the more likely it is that decay is present. This diagnostic system helps catch decay smaller. Cavities are found much earlier, before minor decay causes a patient to experience major dental pain or other related problems.



One thing that sets FFD apart is their excellent Smile Makeovers. “We are amazed how improving someone’s smile changes a person’s whole outlook on life, giving self-confidence, and that is rewarding for us,” said Dr. Mary Ann Panara.

Dental Medicine. Both are from upstate New York — Jeff grew up in Rome, NY, and attended Rome Free Academy, where he was captain of both the basketball and soccer teams. He also played soccer while completing his undergraduate studies at Hamilton College.

Mary Ann (formerly known as Mimi Dvonch) grew up in Webster, NY, and attended Bishop Kearney High School. She played soccer, basketball and softball while at Bishop Kearney, and later attended RIT. Both graduated from the University of Buffalo School of Dentistry — Jeff in 1990 and Mary Ann in 1992. They did general practice residencies after dental school — Jeff at the Veterans Hospital in Buffalo and Mary Ann at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Syracuse.

Initially, Jeff and Mary Ann set up separate private practices. The burden of two businesses and a growing family led Jeff to sell his practice and join Mary Ann in 2000.

In 2003, they renamed the practice to Fairport Family Dental to emphasize family and personal attention.

ON PATIENT CARE

Using the very latest clinical skills, FFD provides high-quality dental care, treating each patient the way he or she wants to be treated. “We are very conscientious about being on time for patient appointments. It’s important to us not to keep patients waiting. We know they are busy, too,” explained Mary Ann. “Also, laughter is important to us. It’s not uncommon to hear people laughing with team members in the next operatory. We want people to be comfortable at our practice.”

Both doctors also share a common practice philosophy that includes empowering their staff to provide courteous, kind and above all professional services to every patient. “It is our mission to make everyone, patients and employees, work as a team,” said Jeff. In the initial screening, new patients have a choice of working with either Dr. Jeff or Dr. Mary Ann. Some people are just more comfortable working with a man or a woman. The doctors spend an hour during a patient’s first appointment to do a thorough comprehensive exam. “We want to gain their trust and educate them on their options. We don’t want a person to feel rushed. Many times, they come back for a second visit to discuss any concerns,” explained Jeff. The personal attention provided by FFD goes a long way toward ensuring that everyone

is satisfied with the way they are treated.

Another idea that sets FFD apart is its Staff Dental Days. On two days each year, Jeff and Mary Ann provide a comprehensive exam, preventative care and restorative dentistry for all employees at no charge. This innovative practice does more than just help keep team members healthy. It keeps them up to date on new procedures and lets them personally feel the care that each patient experiences.

ON SPECIALIZATION AND CE

Both Jeff and Mary Ann have studied extensively in the areas of cosmetic and implant dentistry, as well as TMJ disorders. They have made a commitment to stay current with the advancements in the dental profession by attending education classes yearly. They are proud to have completed the Mastery Series at the Dawson Center for Advanced Study, and are alumni of the Pankey Institute.

TMJ disorders originally captured the doctors’ interest because Mary Ann had suffered from the condition. “From our education, Jeff and I

Restorations and implants, including hybrid dentures where the implant acts as an anchor for the dentures, are among the variety of important services provided. Since implants do not decay, they offer patients a long-term restorative option.



have been able to alleviate the symptoms of my TMJ. Firsthand, I know the discomfort TMJ can cause, and I want to help others who have it." The temporomandibular joint disorders often cause facial pain, tooth sensitivity and headaches. TMJ is a chronic condition and can be debilitating for a person. It can be especially difficult to treat some patients who grind their teeth at night or for those whose teeth are badly misaligned. These patients can benefit from the use of occlusal guards or bite splints, as well as other methods of treatment to make them comfortable and alleviate pain.

In aesthetics and cosmetic dentistry, the doctors listen to what the patient would like to accomplish, and then work toward the projected outcome until the patient is satisfied. Jeff will tell you, "I enjoy working with veneers and all porcelain crown restorations. I have surprised myself at times with how much a person's smile changes. It makes being a dentist very exciting and rewarding."

Jeff recently had Invisalign treatment. Invisalign is an orthodontic system that uses removable trays to reposition teeth, instead of traditional brackets. "I had some minor crowding on my lower teeth and I wanted to correct it," said Jeff. "It worked out so well that I have enrolled in the course and plan to offer it to our patients in the future."

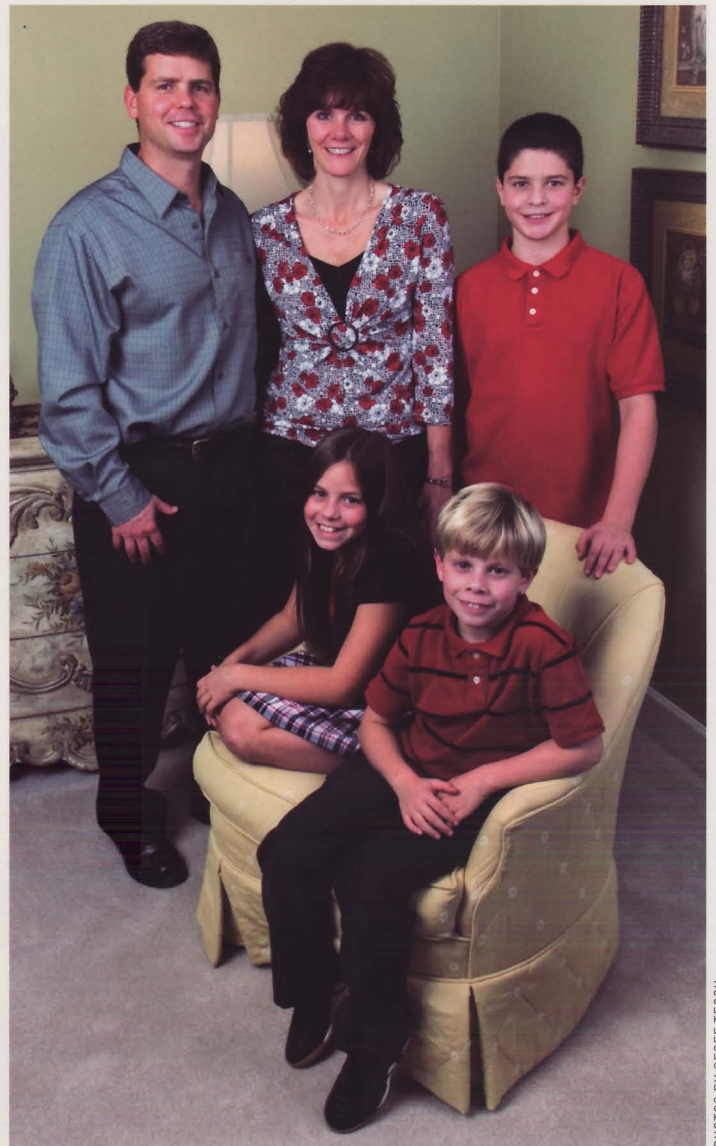
The use of dental implants is on the rise and is changing the quality of care patients receive. At FFD, implants are used to replace a single tooth or used in bridgework. Also, implants are now used to anchor a denture so it does not slip or move while chewing. Implants benefit patients who have uncontrollable decay, periodontal disease or who cannot wear a complete denture due to lack of stability. The overall health of the patient improves with this type of dentistry. They can enjoy their food anywhere, without worry or fear of embarrassment.

ON FAMILY

With three children at home, the Panaras are adept at juggling family and practice, all while still finding time for Travel Soccer, Travel Basketball and Travel Hockey. Case in point is Jeff's past involvement with the Boy Scouts and his current work as a soccer coach. Mary Ann has been involved with Girl Scouts and Odyssey of the Mind.

The family enjoys golfing, fishing, boating and jet skiing in summer as

Coach, soccer, dedicated fan, lacrosse, basketball, hockey (aka Jeff, Allison, Mary, Matthew and Nicholas).



PHOTOS BY GEOFF TESCH

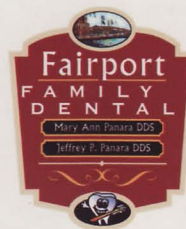
Front: Allie and Matthew. Rear: Jeff, Mary Ann and Nick

well as downhill skiing and skating during winter. From fantasy football to book and Bunco clubs, the Panaras do find time for themselves. "We love to travel," said Mary Ann, "and we love entertaining. On weekends, it's not unusual to find a house full of people swimming, eating and having fun."

Both are also involved with community activities, providing dental health education and other support. "It's a way to give back," said Jeff.

"We are always looking for ways to help others both personally and professionally."

In the end, it all comes back to the quality of care that's provided to people. Whether they are patients, associates, friends or family, all appreciate that extra bit of effort on their behalf. It's just one reason why the practice has grown steadily. Most important, growth has occurred because patients are happy with the treatment they receive, and pleased with the thoughtful way in which they are treated. ■



**83 South Main St.
Fairport, NY 14450
(585) 223-9323**