

## Collaboration between the patient and dental specialists is key

Dr. Tricia Crosby learned dentistry from the ground up. Working for an oral surgeon to pay for college led her to seek a career in the field, so she became a dental assistant while she considered her future. A dental hygienist with whom she worked inspired her to train for that job, and professors in her dental hygiene program urged her to get her DDS degree.

"I was very fortunate that the program was housed in the dental college at the University of Illinois at Chicago, and a few of my professors also taught dentistry there," says Crosby. "A few of them pulled me aside and told me that they thought I had the ability to be a dentist, and I went for it."

Eleven years later, Crosby is an award-winning researcher, adjunct professor and guest lecturer, and conducts a thriving periodontics and implants practice with her mentor and partner, Dr. Martin Kolinski, in St. Charles. "I am very thankful to Dr. Kolinski because I wouldn't be where I am today without him," she asserts. "His mentoring guided me in creating a good atmosphere in the clinic that benefits the patients."

Unlike general dental clinics, Midwest



that refer patients who need dental implants or specialized periodontic care. "We believe very strongly in collaboration between us, the referring dentist and sometimes an orthodontist or other specialist if needed. We all focus on collaborating with the patient to be sure we give that patient the best possible outcome," explains Crosby.

That collaboration begins the moment a patient walks into the clinic. "The first thing we do is to make that patient feel welcome as a person," Crosby says. "We never rush patients through the process. They can sit down, chat, receive local anesthesia or

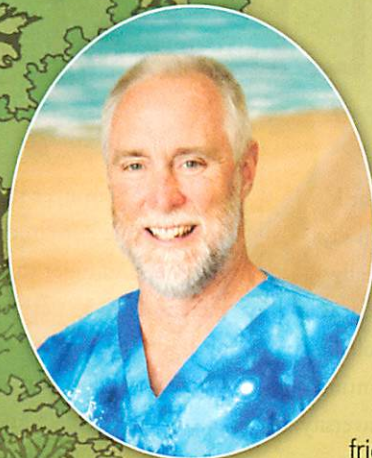
Dental Implantology does not schedule appointments with the general public. Instead, they work with about 200 clinics in the greater Fox Valley area

sedation and relax before their procedure. All of our staff members are educated about our procedures, so even if one of us isn't available to answer questions, the patient can talk with other people in the office about them. Here, patients know that they're the center of the treatment process."

Both Crosby and Kolinski make sure to call patients the evening or morning after their surgeries to make sure they're recovering well and to answer any follow-up questions patients might have. Crosby even chose to live in St. Charles so she could be closer to current and former patients. "I love being part of the community that my patients live in," she says. "It's great to see them in the grocery store or when I'm out walking. I like staying in touch with them."

The president of the Illinois Society of Periodontists, Crosby also serves as editor of the Midwest Society of Periodontology's board; serves on the board of the Fox Valley Dental Society; and works with several other national and international professional associations. "I love this field, so I want to give back to it and help shape its future," Crosby says. — Denise Linke

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Photo courtesy of College of DuPage

# Never too Late by Erin Chan Ding TO LEARN

Degree completion and graduate and professional studies programs offer older students the opportunity to pursue their goals on their own terms.

**D**avid Diehl waited and waited, but at age 50, he did it. He went back to school.

Driven by a desire to teach, Diehl, who was in technology sales at the time, returned to the classroom while working full-time. He got his master's degree in education and started on the path to a doctorate.

Now Associate Vice President for Enrollment at Aurora University, Diehl

is helping those like him.

"I realized when I got there that I had put it off way too long," Diehl says of going back to school. "It was really daunting when I started, but really, it was the best thing I've done in my whole life."

Diehl, who also teaches accounting and business courses at Aurora University, serves adult learners there by helping them transition into new careers, gain new skills and finish their degrees.

"Yeah, it can be a little scary," Diehl says, "and in many ways, you're going to be challenged, but the outcome can be so fabulous."

The number of adult learners has

boomed and is expected to outpace the number of younger students in coming years. While enrollment of students younger and older than age 25 both increased by 35 percent between 2000 and 2012, according to the National Center for Education Statistics, enrollment of students ages 25 and older is expected to increase by 20 percent between 2012 and 2023, compared with 12 percent for students younger than age 25.

At Elmhurst College, Timothy Ricordati, dean of the School for Professional Studies, says enrollment in professional studies has doubled in the last three years, to about 750 out