

WSDA

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2023 WSDA Citizens of the Year

Drs. Neil Hansen & CR Anderegg

VOLUNTEER ISSUE

'IT KIND OF GETS IN YOUR BLOOD'

2023 Citizens of the Year
Drs. Neil Hansen & CR Anderegg

DR. NEIL HANSEN

Resides: Bellevue

Undergraduate Education: University of Washington

Dental School: University of Washington School of Dentistry

Private Practice: Bellevue Hilltop Dental (sold); Rose Hill Dental in Kirkland

Years in Practice: 42

Volunteer Service: Great Shapel, Inc.; Wings World Wide/The Air Medical Foundation; Seattle/King County Clinic; Medical Teams International; and Remote Area Medical (RAM)

Other Volunteer Activities: Teaches in the dental hygiene and assisting school at Lake Washington College; long-time member and volunteer with the Bellevue LDS 1st Ward where he previously served for eight years as a Bishop.

Family: Married to Bobbi, his wife of 48 years; 4 children and 11 grandchildren





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hen it comes right down to it, the 2023 WSDA Citizens of the Year (COY) might never

have met, were it not for a single phone call from another WSDA member dentist, setting in motion a story that's more than 40 years in the making.

The professional partnership and eventual friendship of Bellevue dentists CR Anderegg and Neil Hansen, their staffs and families,

has literally changed the lives of thousands of patients all over the world. Their teamwork in coordinating and delivering humanitarian care in remote locations has become a remarkable example of what it means to give back.

And while WSDA doesn't make a habit of having multiple honorees the same year, in the words of COY Committee Chair Jeff Parrish, this year, "It just made sense."

Especially when one honoree nominates the other.

DR. CR ANDEREGG

Resides: Bellevue

Undergraduate Education: Rice University

Dental School: West Virginia University School of Dentistry

Military: U.S. Navy

Private Practice: CR Anderegg DDS Periodontics and Implants (1992-2020); Associate in Anderegg & Thomas Periodontists (2020-present).

Years in Practice: 43

Volunteer Service: Great Shapel, Inc. (current president); Wings World Wide/The Air Medical Foundation; Seattle/King County Clinic; Bellevue Boys & Girls Club

Family: Married to Marianne, his wife of 38 years; two adult children (Erik and Sarah)



THE PHONE CALL THAT STARTED IT ALL

CR Anderegg grew up spending time in both the US and Europe with his family; his dad was a pilot in the Air Force. After traveling the world, he decided the area around the nation's capital felt most like home. He attended Rice University in Texas, earning his undergraduate degree in psychology. Then, it was up to West Virginia where he eventually graduated from dental school.

Before heading off to private practice, Anderegg joined the Navy for a three-year commitment (which eventually became nine), where he served as a general practice dentist on the CV-66 USS America, an aircraft carrier based in Norfolk, Virginia. While there, he also completed a residency at Bethesda Naval Hospital outside of Washington, D.C., and had every intention of building his career in the area.

It was during this residency, conducting research on the treatment of furcations – using a combination of a bone graft and membrane versus either one alone – that he received that life-changing call. It was from periodontist Dr. Harley Sullivan, a noted researcher in the other Washington. He'd heard about Anderegg's research interest and invited him to visit his practice in Bellevue.

"I said, 'I've never been there before, and just know that it rains a lot,'" recalled Anderegg.

Together, he and his wife, Marianne, made the trek out to Washington state for the visit.

That was all it took; they've been here ever since.

"It was the best decision I ever made – I'm very pro [this] Washington now," he said jokingly. "I love where we live. And I like the rain."

He went on to found his own practice in Bellevue, which he has since sold to Rosemary Thomas (Anderegg & Thomas Periodontists). His early years were spent building up the practice,

connecting with other area dentists and eventually, finding time to give back.

At first, he became active in organized dentistry, through WSDA, the ADA, the Pierre Fauchard Academy, the American College of Dentists and the International College of Dentists. Next, he started branching out into philanthropic care, spending time with Medical Teams International, providing aid to cities around the U.S. Later, he heard about an organization called Great Shape!, Inc., providing care in Jamaica and other Caribbean Islands.

About that same time, another Bellevue dentist found Great Shape! Inc., too.

'A LOCAL BOY'

Neil Hansen was as much a local boy, immersed in the Pacific Northwest, as CR Anderegg was rooted in DC. Despite growing up

on different sides of the country, both spent time abroad.

Hansen grew up in Burien, a small city located just south of Seattle. After his high school graduation, he served a two-year mission to Switzerland and France with the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, where he quickly refined his French language skills. (Despite trying to learn Spanish later in life, Hansen concedes jokingly that he has a "two-language brain" – English and French.)

Upon completing his mission, he returned to Seattle, where went on to attend the University of Washington for both his undergraduate studies and dental school. Then, he shifted his focus to getting his career started: At first, with Pacific Medical Center in Seattle and six years later, moving into private practice in Bellevue.

As a new dentist, Hansen was quickly immersed in the practical and operational aspects of dentistry. After finding his footing, he decided he wanted to get back to his mission roots and engage in humanitarian outreach efforts. Coincidentally, Hansen's





hygienist, Diana Wake, shared his vision, and they challenged each other to find the right opportunity. That's when they discovered S.M.A.R.T. (Surgical and Medical Assistance Relief Teams), based in Overland Park, Kansas.

In short, the challenge was accepted.

"We took a red-eye to Honduras Wednesday, came home Sunday," Hansen recalls. They proceeded to make one trip each year for four years.

"It kind of gets in your blood," he said. "You don't really meet bad people doing that kind of work."

During this same time, Wake's husband, Bob, was in the process of creating Wings World Wide/The Air Medical Foundation, to provide international disaster response and medical relief care. Soon Hansen began traveling with the Wakes and WWW, helping to supply the group on trips to Honduras, Peru, Ecuador, Guatemala, and the Galapagos Islands.

"It kind of gets in your blood," he said. "You don't really meet bad people doing that kind of work."

Eventually, he worked with other groups, including Great Shape! Inc., whose board included that other Bellevue dentist, CR Anderegg.

The humanitarian efforts aligned with Hansen's own religious beliefs, which include a strong commitment to public service.

Would other local dentists be interested in also sharing their talents abroad? Hansen was about to find out.

NOT ALWAYS A PERFECT SETTING

Finding the time to volunteer outside of regular office hours is challenging enough. Finding the time and resources to participate in international humanitarian efforts requires next level planning.

What's more, the volunteer opportunity also needs to be a good fit.

"I had opportunities to go on other trips. I wanted to take staff, as a staff team-building event," said Anderegg. "I've traveled most of my life, and I think one of things I can do is help expose people to other cultures and environments."

He found his first opportunity through Great Shape! Inc., and took his entire staff to Jamaica for their first trip. The dental clinic was set up in a beauty shop: they used a microwave as an autoclave.

"We do not always have a perfect setting for dentistry with these trips," said Anderegg. "And my staff really bought into this; they became really active. That's how that started, and it's now been 20-some years in this one organization."

"The first dental clinic

was set up in a beauty shop: they used a microwave as an autoclave."

As a Bellevue periodontist, Anderegg met Hansen, a general practice dentist, through patient referrals. Eventually, they struck up a conversation about volunteering.

Anderegg knew Hansen worked with Wings World Wide in Guatemala and Peru. Hansen knew Anderegg was involved in the trips to Jamaica through Great Shape! Inc.

"It started out as a professional relationship – he would refer patients to me. Over conversations, we talked about what we did, what we liked. He invited me to come with him on one of his projects and then I reciprocated," said Anderegg.

Soon, their staff and families were trading off on these trips. And for more than 30 years now, the two have traveled to small villages and remote communities to share their talents with those in need.

"Our families have been very close. Neil is a bit older than me. He's a lot more religious. But he's one of my better friends, and I admire him"

EQUALLY DESERVING

Dr. Jeff Parrish, who heads the WSDA Citizen of the Year committee, said the association typically doesn't honor two people with the award in the same year. But something about this nomination was different.

It started with the fact that Anderegg had actually been the one to nominate his friend.

In his nomination, Anderegg singled out Hansen for his professional, personal, and spiritual strengths.

Wrote Anderegg: "I challenge the committee to find an individual that deserves this honor more than Dr. Neil Hansen. His scope of involvement includes family, spiritual, humanitarian, educational, and the love of helping others, and this is why I am nominating him for Citizen of the Year."

Parrish said the committee was aware of a connection between the two, but didn't quite know just how closely they were connected.

"But when we started looking at them, it

didn't take long for us to wed the two of them together as a package. We liked that they worked together, that CR nominated Neil," he said. "It was too great to not select the two of them. So why not give them the award together?"

ANOTHER IMPORTANT PHONE CALL

Parrish then had a little fun when it came time to notify the recipients, calling Anderegg to share the good news about his nomination of Neil. Only after Anderegg had a chance to celebrate did Parrish share that Anderegg, too, had been selected. Anderegg was speechless.

"After a hard day of clinic, to just go out to the ocean and discuss how wonderful the world is. I've never met a nicer person than Neil," he said. "The only reason I received this award is because I'm his friend."

Like his friend, Hansen, too was taken by surprise with the award.

"I was shocked, actually!" said Hansen. "Jeff Parrish called me up and I thought he was going to invite me on another trip to Haiti. When he told me what it was – I thought I was being punked!" he said. "I finally figured out that he was serious – and when he mentioned CR as co-honoree. I got kind of a chuckle that he'd have to share the award with me," he added.

"I was very humbled by it. There are a lot of past winners that have done some amazing things, so it's a very humbling thing," he said. "I don't seek that out. It's fun to share it with CR, too. He's a good person to share it with."

Looking back on the nominations, Parrish said each is equally deserving of the recognition.

"They are strong candidates as individuals, but even more so combined. It's their long-term commitment," he said.

"Aside from the hands-on, practical aspect of providing the dental services, there's a lot of organizational structure they've contributed to make it happen. I've gone on enough of these trips to know they don't just happen on their own – there's a lot of homework to be done before, during and after."

"Not a time goes by that I am not humbled.

I am appreciative, I am very lucky I have the opportunity to do the things I do," said Anderegg. "We tell our kids: If everyone did a little bit, we'd all be a little better off."

Hansen also takes pride in being able to help people, even if it means reaching just one person at a time.

"In some of the villages of Peru, these people haven't been to a dentist or seen a dentist forever," he said. "A little boy – probably about six – and his mom came in. She described how he was crying himself to sleep every night for a month [due to dental pain]. It was fun to see him – his whole demeanor changed after



we treated him, since he had been in so much pain. There are a lot of cases where we help people like that," he said.

"We're helping one person at a time, but we enjoy doing that."

"Not a time goes by that I

am not humbled. I am appreciative, I am very lucky I have the opportunity to do the things I do," said Anderegg. "We tell our kids: If everyone did a little bit, we'd all be a little better off."

"There is such a need – I can do dentistry and I think any dentist can, giving a day every once in a while. You don't have to fly all the way to Jamaica, Grenada – just volunteer at any place locally," said Anderegg.

"One of my favorite quotes is from Winston Churchill: You make a living by what you get. Make a life by what you give. Dentistry has given me a good living, but it has also given me a good life," he said.



“One of my favorite

quotes is from Winston Churchill: You make a living by what you get. Make a life by what you give. Dentistry has given me a good living, but it has also given me a good life.”

“We make other people’s lives better. Hope I can continue to do this as long as possible.”

THE NEXT GENERATION OF VOLUNTEERS

While both Anderegg and Hansen continue their volunteer efforts at home and abroad, they’re also training the next generation of humanitarian leaders.

“I’m trying to semi-retire,” Anderegg said. “I’m trying to take a watercolor course.”

So far, it’s not working. In September, Anderegg returned from Grenada, working with dental students from the University of Toronto on the heels of another SEAL GRENADA project. It was an idea that surfaced during a previous trip to Grenada in a conversation with Dr. Julie Du Bois, the country’s chief dental officer. Hansen was supposed to go, but could not due to kidney surgery.

“I really wanted to go, but just could not due to surgery,” said Hansen.

“I like these projects because I can pass on my knowledge to the next generation of dentists. It’s nice working with a young group of people and mentoring them and seeing the enthusiasm,” said Anderegg. “Maybe they’ll come back as a full-fledged dentist who volunteers - maybe not even internationally but in their own community.”

In Grenada, children suffer from a lack of access to preventive care, a problem worsened by the prevalence of sugar cane, a major export product.

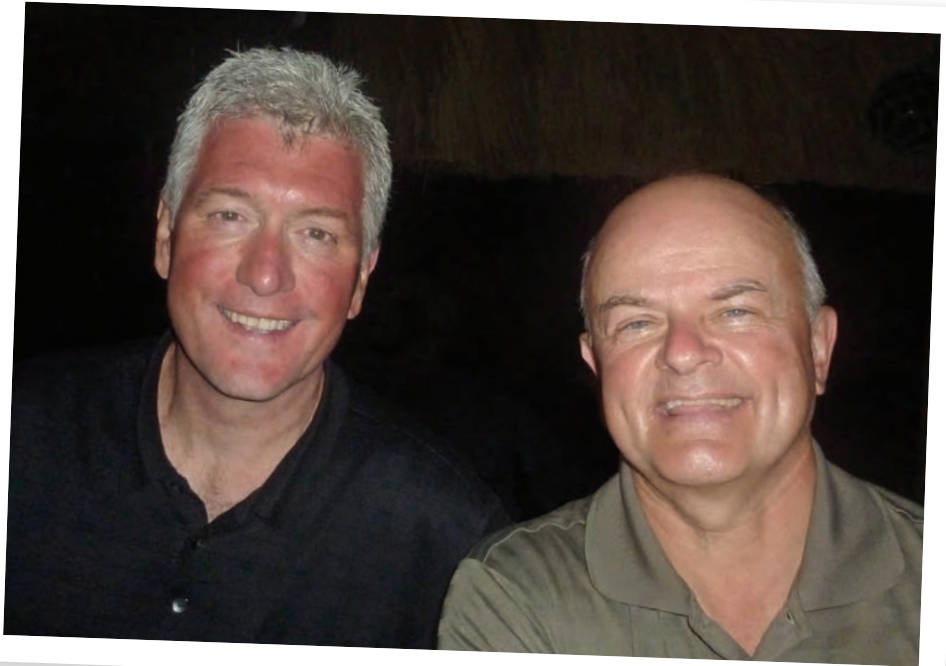
“We were working under a cricket stadium – we’d set up 20 dental chairs to do fillings, extractions, cleanings – and we were taking a break, sitting outside watching cricket when the chief dental officer in Grenada introduced herself. She explained the concern in Grenada is kids not getting preventative care. There are no sealants,” he said.

From there, SEAL GRENADA took shape. At the first clinic, they saw 500 patients. This September, they saw 2,000 in two weeks.

“It was just remarkable how a simple conversation at a cricket stadium could turn into something,” he said.

“I’m hoping it continues. In a country like Grenada, it can make a big impact.”

And making big impacts – one patient at a time – is what this year’s Citizens of the Year are all about. [WV](#)



DO YOU KNOW A PROSPECTIVE CITIZEN OF THE YEAR?

The Citizen of the Year Award is given each year to recognize a member dentist who has given outstanding service to a domestic and/or foreign community; to encourage others toward such activity; to reinforce values of service to the profession; and to promote the image of dentistry. Jeff Parrish, a previous Citizen of the Year recipient, oversees the the WSDA COY nominating committee.

In previous years, candidates were only considered in the year they were nominated. That all changed a few years back: Now, the committee selects a few to be carried over to the following years because they are considered of such quality.

“It’s interesting how often we will know of people that should be considered, but then somebody comes out of the woodwork because of a nomination. And it’s like, ‘How come I don’t know this person? Where’s this little secret been?’ And rest assured, there are still plenty of dentists out there who deserve to be recognized,” said Parrish. “Please keep your eyes peeled.”

To learn more about WSDA’s Citizen of the Year Award, visit: www.wsda.org/COY.