

Pediatrics Specialist Moves Practice to Coronado

by Vicki Raun

Mary Anne Morelli Haskell, D.O., says that as an osteopathic pediatrics specialist, she helps her patients remove the road-blocks to healthy bodies.

“I think because I was sick a lot as a child, I’ve always been looking for answers,” Morelli Haskell said. “I liked what osteopathic medicine had to offer. The osteopathic philosophy is that the body can heal itself and doctors remove roadblocks.”

Morelli Haskell focuses on the underlying philosophy of osteopathy. She helps her patients and their parents work with diet, nutrition and gentle manipulation. “We’re looking for optimal healing,” she said. She is often consulted on specific health issues in children and “send them back to their pediatricians for routine health care.”

She encourages a whole food diet, saying the advantages are “better health, brain function, attention span, less irritability and fewer illnesses.” The nutrition a baby or small child receives is “building the foundation of the body for life,” Morelli Haskell said. Many osteopathic doctors work in a very similar fashion to medical doctors, and insurance companies don’t distinguish between the two forms of medicine.

A photo on the wall of her office shows her at age 4 - a large nurse’s cap on her head and stethoscope in hand. Morelli Haskell grew up on the East Coast, but has lived in California all her adult life. “As a child I wanted to be a nurse or teacher,” but in her 20s, she decided on a career in medicine. She earned a bachelor’s degree in biology from Cal State Northridge, then graduated from the College of Osteopathic Medicine of the Pacific, now Western University in Pomona. She was a resident at Loma Linda University, where she worked with both MDs and DOs. She came to San Diego 13 years ago to practice at the Osteopathic Center for Children near San Diego State.

She and husband Lee, an attorney, have lived in Coronado for six years and she recently moved her practice to Coronado. Morelli Haskell says the rewards in her profession are in the benefits to her patients.

“The first time a child with a diagnosis of autism says hello and addresses you by name and his mother says he’s had his first successful play date,” she said. Other examples are “children with asthma become free of medication, and then go into high school athletics doing great,” or “children getting to their third or fourth birthday and

never have had antibiotics.” She also helps moms and babies with successful breast-feeding.

She also enjoys the fact that osteopathy is “hands on medicine,” “I spent a lot of time with patients.” While she doesn’t take insurance, Morelli Haskell gives her patients “superbills” so they can bill their insurance companies. A superbill has insurance codes attached. She says HMOs generally don’t cover her services but PPO’s should.

Her office is designed to make young patients feel comfortable. It’s filled with child-friendly colors, books and toys. “We use toys that aren’t scripted,” she said. “I learn a lot by watching a child play with a toy.”

