



In Her DREAMS

Dr. Caitlin Barnes Creates her Dream Practice in Anchorage, Alaska

BY CHERYL WIKI, PHOTOS BY DAVE DAVIS

Providing the highest quality patient care for children of all ages and those with special needs is the key to success for Caitlin Barnes, DDS. Personal connections with her patients and exceptional care utilizing the most advanced technology has allowed Dr. Barnes to create a special niche for this Alaskan community.

Q. WOULD YOU SHARE A LITTLE ABOUT YOUR EDUCATION AS WELL AS THE JOURNEY THAT LEAD YOU TO WHERE YOU ARE TODAY?

A. I grew up in Newport News, Virginia and was the first in my family to pursue a career in dentistry. I attended Virginia Commonwealth University for both college and dental school, enjoying my time there very much. The itch to travel enticed me to visit Alaska for an externship during my third year of dental school, and at that point I completely fell in love with the state. Following graduation I was offered a position as a general dentist in Barrow, Alaska, an area unique for being the northernmost city in the United States and also one of the largest Alaska Native communities. Barrow is known as "the land of the midnight sun" in the summertime, and also for its majestic northern lights during the long winters. I came to love the culture and beauty of this remote community, and during my time there also realized how much I enjoyed working with children as my patients. This is what inspired me to go on to complete a

OFFICE DESIGN

OFFICE DESIGN

CABINETS A-dec **STERILIZATION CABINETS** Biotec
CHAIRS & STOOLS A-dec **DIGITAL PAN** Vatech
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(mlierman@rim-design.com) **CONTRACTOR** Jonathan
Hornak, Roger Hickel Contracting



pediatric residency at the Alaska Native Medical Center in Anchorage. Over the course of the next few years, I finished my residency, had many Alaskan adventures, and decided to call Anchorage my home.

Q. HOW LONG WERE YOU PRACTICING BEFORE YOU DECIDED TO OPEN YOUR OWN PRACTICE?

A. I have been practicing dentistry for nine years, the last five of which were as an associate in private practice. I reached a turning point when having a family of my own. I felt that if I was going to be away from my family, I wanted to be doing something that I felt passionate about. I've been lucky enough to take all the positive things I've learned from my previous opportunities in dentistry and apply them

here. Starting this office has been a dream of mine for some time, and it has been so rewarding to see that dream finally become a reality.

Q. WAS THERE AN INSPIRATION FOR HOW YOU WANTED THE PRACTICE TO LOOK AND FEEL?

A. Absolutely! Alaska is such a beautiful place that it was easy to feel inspired.



Burkhart Equipment Specialist Louis Ullrich and Dr. Caitlin Barnes

From glaciers to mountains to wildlife, there are so many aspects of where we live that I wanted to incorporate into the design of the practice. I especially wanted to showcase the aurora theme, as the northern lights are so uniquely Alaskan. From a practical standpoint, I also wanted my office to meet the needs of every patient from infant to teenager. In addition, we are compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act and welcome patients with special needs.

Q. HOW DID YOU GET STARTED WITH THIS PROJECT?

A. Partnering with Burkhart, my vision was to design an office that would maximize treatment space while maintaining a private, comfortable feel for patients and their families. In addition to an open hygiene bay, my priority was to incorporate two "quiet" treatment operatories based on each

patient's unique needs, with a third "quiet" operatory that could be built out at a later date. Burkhart meticulously designed my office space, offering several layouts which incorporated all the details I envisioned. A very important feature that Burkhart assisted with was an efficient office flow. I felt it was imperative to create a separate entrance and exit in order to

be conscientious of patient privacy. After several revisions, Burkhart assisted me with an optimal plan that helped turn my vision into reality.

Anchorage Burkhart Equipment Specialist Louis Ullrich and Account Manager Arne Valdez carefully attended to every detail, creating the perfect space. I couldn't be more pleased with the end result!

Q. HOW WOULD YOU BEST DESCRIBE YOUR TREATMENT PHILOSOPHY?

A. I want every patient to feel comfortable and confident about their teeth. I strive to provide the highest quality patient care as well as an overall positive experience for every patient. I am excited to build long-lasting relationships with the families in my practice. I love hearing about baseball

games, dance recitals and family vacations. What I enjoy most about being a pediatric dentist is watching every child grow up and truly being a part of that process.

Q. WHAT ADVICE WOULD YOU GIVE TO A DOCTOR WHO IS BUILDING A NEW OFFICE?

A. The most important aspect of a dental office is location. We are adjacent to two



OFFICE DESIGN



pediatric offices in a hospital setting. We make it convenient for parents to bring their children to the dentist. Find a location that works for you and go from there.

The second most important aspect is identifying how many providers the space should accommodate. This determines the size of the office and appropriate number of operatories required. In addition, plan for success with the possibility to expand. Having room to grow is of the utmost importance.

Third, stick to a budget. When planning a build-out and purchasing dental equipment, prioritize the "must-haves" and the "nice-to-

haves." As the practice gains momentum, there will be opportunities to purchase equipment or incorporate design features that may have been out of reach at the start.

Last but not least, it is crucial to surround yourself with a successful team. The team at Burkhardt made my practice start-up easy and streamlined. Louis Ullrich (Burkhardt Equipment Specialist), Arne Valdez (Burkhardt Account Manager) and Cheryl Wika (Burkhardt Account Manager) have been extremely accessible throughout the entire process, and I couldn't have asked for better service. Thank you Burkhardt! 

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