

Southern Village Pediatric Dentistry

BY GINNY JANZEN

The offices of Southern Village Pediatric Dentistry feel like a tree house. From the second floor of the 410 Building on Market Street in Southern Village, patients overlook the trees and houses of Southern Village through a huge glass wall. The waiting room features a large tree, decorated with hanging ornaments that change each month—umbrellas and raindrops for April showers, flowers for May, beach balls and sunglasses for June. The translucent glass between the business office and the waiting room is etched with leaves. The cabinet hardware looks like twigs; there are metal sculptures of trees on the wall. There is a calm feeling throughout the facility. Dr. Annelise Hardin, the dentist, and Emily Hardin, the business manager, are both tall and willowy, despite their pregnancies!



Dr. Hardin has just received her Board Certification from the American Board of Pediatric Dentistry. She took the written portion of this exam after her residency at Virginia Commonwealth University in Richmond, where she received the Pugh Award for placing in the top 3% of the nation on that exam.



“After that, you have about five years to take the second portion, which is an oral board exam, offered twice a year in Dallas,” explained Hardin. “Two people ask you questions for an hour, then another two ask you questions for another hour. Each pair presents you five cases, or vignettes, in which they give you a patient’s background, current problem and a list of complications. You then tell them how you would treat that patient. You are scored on each vignette, then the scores are submitted to a central location where they are standardized by computer. The results are pass/fail.”

“You get a pin when you get your results and you’ve passed. I wore it during work that day, but I didn’t wear it to the dental meeting I went to right afterward,” Hardin says in a statement that shows both her pride in her accomplishment and her unassuming manner.

“The certification is the final exam of my career, and now I can really feel like I have accomplished something. It feels like the cherry on top.”

Hardin’s baby is due June 11. Emily Hardin’s due date is August 1. If all goes as planned their maternity leaves will not overlap. Dr. Hardin will be on maternity leave for six weeks—a long maternity leave for dentists, according to Dr. Hardin— during which time the office will be open full time, with Dr. Christina Powers, a friend of Hardin’s from Southern Pines, coming in to see patients two days a week.

And yes, the Hardins are related—they are married to brothers. Dr. Hardin was married first, but all three Hardin brothers were married within a year of each other. Emily Hardin has been with Dr. Hardin’s practice since it opened two years ago.

When asked what distinguishes Southern Village Pediatric Dentistry from other pediatric dental practices, Dr. Hardin responds, “All the pediatric offices in town are paying a lot of attention to their patients and working on preventive strategies. Our strengths are our location and our comfortable environment. We have new technology and good equipment. We have digital X-ray and the latest sterilization equipment. We have our own spore test so we can get the autoclave results immediately to insure that our instruments have been properly sterilized. We have nitrous oxide pumped in. We have a TV on the ceiling and the kids can pick a movie to watch during a procedure. We have a defibrillator, which we hope never to use. We have paperless charts, so I can look up a patient’s chart at home in an emergency.”

Hardin offers the standard advice, “Bring your child in for the first visit at age 1. Give only white milk and water to drink—no juice. No gummy fruit snacks or gummy vitamins—those really get stuck in the teeth and cause cavities. Brush twice a day. The parent should brush the child’s teeth till he is 8 years old. If teeth are tight, then parents should floss, but if there are spaces between the teeth then toothbrushes will work.”

Emily says of Annelise, “The moms and dads say what is special here is her demeanor. She is calm, patient and encouraging. I get at least a comment a week from a Mom asking, ‘Can I come here?’ We have a welcoming environment and our patients feel like part of our team here.”