

Traficante Chiropractic makes adjustments

The challenges that many businesses have faced as the result of Covid-19 have brought many of them to their knees. Others, fortunately, have determined ways to stay positive and explore alternative ways to be successful. One of those is Traficante Chiropractic in Altoona.

"It's been an interesting time for sure," acknowledged Chiropractor Brandon Traficante. "For a good part of 2020, we were only working three days a week due to the decreased number of patients. We remained confident that things would get better. In 2021 we were busier than ever."

While the pandemic has continued to wreak havoc on businesses that rely on scheduling appointments, Traficante and his staff have never deviated from the plan.

"Recently with weather, the holidays and the new variant, we have seen another decrease in visits," Traficante pointed out.

"Those things, we know, are unavoidable to everyone in our industry. So we don't dwell on them."

"We do what we're supposed to do. We clean the tables and chairs after every patient, added an air purifier and we constantly keep-up on current CDC guidelines. I think our patients notice it and appreciate it."

Traficante Chiropractic has been in business for eleven years. There are two chiropractors – the other is Dr. Melissa Kneidinger. Brooke Zimmerman and Sharon Burke are the chiropractic assistants; Cole Young is the licensed massage therapist; Adeline West is the medical biller.

Between Dr. Traficante and Dr. Kneidinger, there is eighteen years of chiropractic experience. They treat everything from headaches, neck pain, and back pain to extremity, TMJ pain and vertigo. The office has a digital x-ray machine, muscle stimulation, ice/heat treat-

ment and ultrasound machines.

"We also offer massage therapy for 30, 60 or 90 minutes," Traficante explained. "Since everyone's needs are different who come into our practice, we can do low force adjusting to manual adjusting and anything in between."

The practice offers care to people of all ages.

"We adjust patients of any age including pregnant patients," Traficante disclosed. "We actually have a lot of kids as patients – they may have bowel/bladder issues, ear pain, neck and back pain or other ailments. We also like to work with medical doctors and physical therapists since collectively we can offer a wider array of benefits."

As Traficante and his staff prepare for the next group of challenges, it does so with the realization that a pandemic has drastically impacted the type of patient coming through the door.

"I do believe that with



Dr. Brandon Traficante and Dr. Melissa Kneidinger have expanded their services to meet the needs of patients still suffering from the effects of Covid-19.

many people working from home, we're seeing more of the injuries that occur from sitting at a computer all day long," Traficante stated.

"Clearly, there are more posture-related issues than we usually see. We've definitely

seen a lot more stress-related conditions like headaches, insomnia, muscle spasms and gastrointestinal pains. It's kept us on our toes."

It's also apparently been appreciated by those close to the practice. Five times

Traficante Chiropractic has been selected as the Altoona Mirror Hometown Favorite Chiropractor. "We're proud of that," Traficante admitted. (Traficante Chiropractic has been a Blair County Chamber member since 2011.)

Small businesses step-up to support others

As small businesses in Blair County continue to fight an uphill battle – some for acknowledgement, others for survival – a couple of those businesses have decided "to create the rising tide that lifts all ships."

Three years ago, Lightning Bug Gift Company in Hollidaysburg started what they called the Shop Small Crawl. A year later, Humble and Kind Boutique in Altoona joined the party.

"We wanted to encourage people to start their shopping at small businesses before going to larger ones," explained Becki Hollen, who owns Lightning Bug with her husband Chris Bencivenga. "We have nothing against large businesses but we know how difficult it can be for small businesses to gain traction, especially during the holiday season. We felt the Shop Small Crawl would help."

The premise is simple. Shoppers who want to participate purchase a tote bag and then visit shops on the "map" to collect a button from each shop where they've made a purchase. If they've visited but haven't purchased anything, they can still buy that business's button for one dollar.

The buttons are attached to the tote bag and people who collect all the buttons



Becki Hollen (left) and Ashley Hinterberger have helped put the needs of small businesses front-and-center during the holiday season.

are eligible to win a grand prize. Collecting at least half the buttons qualifies you for a secondary prize. Shoppers have four weeks to complete the crawl.

From the business standpoint, any Blair County small business can participate. A small fee to the business covers the cost of the buttons, informational pamphlets, signage and paid ads on Facebook. Lightning Bug absorbs the cost of making the tote bags. Businesses are required to be open regular hours at least four days a week including Black Friday and the Small

Business Saturday weekend.

Nineteen businesses participated in the 2021 Shop Small Crawl. Nearly 140 tote bags were sold. A total of 56 people visited all of the businesses.

"We felt good about the number of people who took part," Hollen pointed out. "All told, 98% of the businesses told us that the event had a positive impact on their holiday business revenue. It's a lot of work for us but the upside is worthwhile."

Ashley Hinterberger, owner of Humble and Kind, agreed.

"Supporting other local

small businesses is essential," she admitted. "We love this event and we'll do it as long as Becki and Chris want to continue it."

From early indications, it's likely that a Shop Small Crawl will take place in 2022.

"So many people who have been part of it have approached us and asked us to do it again," Hollen disclosed. "As a small business ourselves, we recognize that increased awareness can make a big difference."

(Lightning Bug Gift Company and Humble and Kind are members of the Blair County Chamber.)

Courtois to address business challenges at the federal level

The Blair County business community faces a number of challenges in 2022, particularly at the federal level, and those challenges will be the topic of the next Chamber "Breakfast Club," set for February 10th at 7:45 a.m. at The Casino at Lakemont Park.

Kevin Courtois, Executive Director of Congressional and Public Affairs at the U.S. Chamber's Great Lakes Regional Office in Chicago will be the speaker at the breakfast. Courtois will outline the issues that his organization will be addressing including the midterm elections.

"Kevin has provided us valuable insight at several events in the past," reported Chamber President Joe Hurd. "He's at the forefront of discussions that will influence whether the business community thrives or struggles for the remainder of the year. At a



Kevin Courtois

very critical time to be in business, this presentation will be extremely important."

The cost to attend the Breakfast Club is \$20 for Chamber members and \$30 for non-members. A buffet breakfast is included. To register, call the Chamber at (814) 943-8151 or register online at www.blairchamber.com. Corporate sponsor of the February Breakfast Club is Leonard S. Fiore, Inc.

It's Happening at the Blair County Chamber

- The first meeting of the planning committee for the annual BASICS/Rotary Career Fair will be held tomorrow, February 8th, at the Devorris Center for Business Development. The Career Fair is for high school sophomores from all Blair County schools. The event is set for April 27th at the Blair County Convention Center.

- The Attractions/Hotel Roundtable, a partnership between the Blair County Chamber and Explore Altoona, will meet Wednesday at 8:15 a.m. in the conference room at Peoples Natural Gas Field. The Roundtable will discuss better ways to transport visitors from hotels to other destinations within the county of which they may have an interest.

- The Chamber's Sustainable Blair County Committee meets on Wednesday at the Devorris Center at 1:30 p.m. The committee is in the process of planning a Visioning Workshop on March 1st to raise awareness of the importance of sustainability to the business community. Interested people should contact Joe Hurd at the Chamber at (814) 943-8151.

- The Leadership Blair County Adult Class will have its fifth session on Friday at the Devorris Center. The session will focus on Economic Development and include a "big picture" presentation by Stephen McKnight, President of Altoona-Blair County Development Corporation. There will also be a panel discussion with local business leaders.

Contact the Blair County Chamber of Commerce at 814-943-8151 ■ www.blairchamber.com

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