

FOCUS ON MEMBERSHIP

These Dentists Have a Story to Tell; What's Yours?

Every dentist has his or her own story to tell when it comes to personal and practice success. Each is different, of course, but a recurring theme is how membership in the MDA, ADA, and their local society seems to help them succeed. They find that practice life is somehow better — more rewarding — with membership. Many will tell you that being a member makes them a more satisfied, more grounded professional.

Having a gratifying professional life makes a big difference with the personal side of things as well. After all, in a profession like dentistry, sometimes there isn't much separation between professional life and personal life.

With that in mind, in this issue we're presenting the stories of four MDA members who've found that balance, that mixture of the personal and professional that makes things — if not always perfect — better. They've discovered how membership gives them many advantages, including instant access to a network of colleagues, advice, and support that always has their back.

Dentistry is hard. And so is life. But membership can help you mix work and life in a way that leaves room for joy.

Isn't that what it's all about? Read their stories, and then ask yourself, how does my membership make my life better?

Coming Home: How Dr. Eric Tye Built a Life and a Practice Rooted in Purpose

When Dr. Eric Tye imagined his future, he always pictured it close to home, surrounded by family, steeped in community, and grounded in purpose.

That dream became reality when he returned to his hometown of Rochester Hills to take over the dental practice he once visited as a child. Today, he's not just practicing dentistry, he's preserving a legacy, investing in his community, and building a life where work and family thrive side by side.

"For us, it was a no-brainer," said Dr. Tye. "We wanted our kids to grow up close to their grandparents, cousins, and the community that raised us. Coming home just felt right."

But transitioning into practice ownership wasn't without its challenges. From securing financing to understanding insurance and valuations, Dr. Tye found himself navigating unfamiliar territory — territory that wasn't covered in dental school.

That's where the Michigan Dental Association made all the difference.

Through MDA resources, consultations, and expert guidance, Dr. Tye got answers to the questions that kept him up at night, like how to value a practice, who to talk to for analysis, and what insurances were needed to protect his new venture.

"If I didn't have the MDA, I honestly wouldn't have known where to start," he says. "But because I did, everything just clicked into place."

Later on, Dr. Tye gave back to the MDA, serving as chair of the MDA's membership committee. Maybe you recall seeing his photo in the MDA *Journal's* "MDA At



Dr. Eric Tye and wife Melissa.

Your Service" column a few years back.

With the MDA's support behind him, Dr. Tye was able to focus on what matters most: caring for his patients, mentoring his team, and being fully present with his family.

"I want to do right by my patients and my community," he said. "But I also want to be there for my wife and kids, to make memories, to build a beautiful life. That's what it's really all about."

For Dr. Tye, dentistry isn't just a career. It's a way to live out his values. And thanks in large part to the support he found in the MDA, he's doing exactly that — one patient, one family moment, one hometown smile at a time.

From Ice to Operatory: Dr. Melissa Keil Finds the Balance Between Passion and Purpose

Long before she wore scrubs and loupes, Dr. Melissa Keil, of Ann Arbor, was gliding across the ice — spinning, jumping, and performing with the grace of a seasoned figure skater.

She began skating as soon as she could walk, competing by age 4, and coaching by age 14. What started as a childhood hobby became a lifelong passion. Surprisingly enough, it also became a foundation for her future in dentistry.

"Figure skating is a mix of precision and performance," says Dr. Keil. "There's artistry, yes, but there's also strategy, discipline, and goal-setting. Dentistry taps into that same balance."

Today, when she's not helping patients achieve better oral health, Dr. Keil is coaching skaters of all ages, helping them land jumps, chase goals, and discover their potential. The parallels between both worlds are clear: She's a guide, a motivator, and a trusted partner in growth.

But just like figure skating, dentistry can feel isolating. Many dentists practice alone or lead their own teams with little peer interaction. That's why Dr. Keil relies on her MDA membership to stay connected and supported.

"Skating can be lonely, and so can dentistry," she says. "That's why having a strong community behind

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you is so important. For me, that's the MDA."

What sets the MDA apart, she says, is its commitment to the whole person, not just the professional. Whether it's advocacy at the legislative level, resources for private practice management, local meetings, or support for mental wellness, the MDA offers more than a membership. It offers a safety net.

"They don't just support you as a dentist," she says. "They support you as a human being."

From ice rinks to operatories, Dr. Keil has built a life that honors her passions while serving others. Whether she's perfecting a skating routine or helping a patient find their smile, she brings the same energy, empathy, and drive.

And with the MDA in her corner, she knows she's never skating alone.



Dr. Melissa Keil enjoys mentoring young skaters.

Wholehearted Dentistry: How Dr. Rachel Sinacola Stays Grounded in a Demanding Profession

Dr. Rachel Sinacola, of Grandville, wears a lot of hats: practice owner, provider, team leader, mother, wife. And like many dentists, she strives to give her best to everyone in her life — patients, staff, and family alike.

But she's learned that in order to show up fully for others, she has to start by filling her own cup.

"For me, that means playing piano, practicing yoga, and making time to reset," Dr. Sinacola says. "Those things help me be the best version of myself, at work and at home."

She first discovered the piano at age 3, drawn to it at a babysitter's house. Over the years, it became her emotional outlet as a way to unwind, refocus, and process stress through music. More recently, yoga has



Exercise helps Dr. Rachel Sinacola unwind.

offered a similar source of restoration, both physically and mentally.

"It started as a way to ease the physical strain of dentistry," she says, "but I quickly realized how much it helps me mentally. It's a space where I can breathe."

Dr. Sinacola took over her practice in 2021. It was a major milestone that brought excitement, uncertainty, and pressure. But through her MDA membership, she found the tools and reassurance she needed to lead with confidence.

"The MDA reminds me that I'm not alone," she says. "They provide the resources and the community that help me keep growing."

"Being a practice owner can make you question yourself," she continues. "But knowing there's an organization that believes in you and is ready to support you makes all the difference."

Whether it's business guidance, CE opportunities, or peer connection, the MDA plays a key role in her ability to thrive in a demanding profession. Organized dentistry has also helped her develop her leadership skills, serving as her local society editor, in other posts, and currently as chair of the MDA membership committee.

For Dr. Sinacola, dentistry isn't just a job. It's a commitment to others. And that starts with a commitment to herself. By making time to fill her tank, she ensures that every patient, every teammate, and every family member gets the care and energy they deserve. Because in her eyes, wholehearted dentistry begins with a full heart, and a full cup.

A Journey of Service: Dr. Lisenia Collazo on Access, Leadership, and Making a Difference

For Dr. Lisenia Collazo, dentistry has always been about more than clinical care — it’s about creating access, building trust, and serving communities that need it most.

Born in Allentown, Pennsylvania, Dr. Collazo’s path to dentistry began when her grandfather retired and moved the family back to his hometown of Utuado, Puerto Rico. There, she witnessed firsthand the challenges her grandparents and neighbors faced in securing health care.

“I became aware of the struggles that my grandparents and the people of Puerto Rico had to face when seeking health care,” she recalls. “Around high school was when I decided I wanted to pursue a career in health care because I wanted to help bridge that gap and increase access for people who need it most.”

Years later, that same awareness carried with her when she moved to Michigan’s Upper Peninsula. Much like her experience in Puerto Rico, the U.P. presented unique challenges in access to care.

“In a rural area, patients often have to travel one to two hours to see a specialist,” Dr. Collazo explains. “Each time they’re able to be seen by me or one of my colleagues, they always express their gratitude. That’s what keeps me motivated.”

Since joining the Michigan Dental Association in 2020, Dr. Collazo has leaned on the organization to strengthen her career and impact. “Something I really enjoy about being in the MDA is that it allows me to have access to resources that help me be the best dentist I can be for my organization and my patients,” she says.

The MDA’s LEAD (Leadership Exploration And Development) Program played a pivotal role in her professional journey, helping her build the confidence to step into leadership. That experience ultimately led her to serve as dental director within her organization.

Looking back, Dr. Collazo feels proud of the journey that led her here. “It makes me feel fulfilled because that’s why I wanted to go into health care, specifically public health — to make a difference for those who need it the most.”

For Dr. Collazo, dentistry is more than a profession — it’s a calling to serve, and one she continues to answer with passion and purpose.

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These are just four stories from MDA-member dentists. There are so many more. We hope that you’ll see that MDA membership has been an important part of those stories. It’s not about a laundry list of member benefits. Instead, it’s the confidence that no matter what happens, the community of dentists that makes up the MDA always has your back.

What’s your story? The MDA would love to hear yours. ●



Dr. Collazo and friends enjoy life in the U.P.

The MDA Service Promise: Helping You Succeed

The MDA works hard to provide the very highest level of service to members. The MDA stands ready to help you access member benefits such as insurance products, endorsed services, continuing education, dental supplies, and more. Plus, the MDA is your resource to answer questions about human resources, licensure, dental benefits, HIPAA/OSHA, legal questions – everything about dentistry in Michigan.

The MDA Service Promise to you:

HELPFULNESS

The MDA will work hard to make sure your individual needs are met in a timely manner.

KNOWLEDGE

The MDA will be your information resource, providing you with what you need to know, no matter what your practice setting or stage of practice.

HONESTY

The MDA will be your trusted source for accurate information, and will offer options to address your particular challenges.

VALUE

The MDA will seek your input to create products, services, benefits and resources to enhance value and help you succeed.



For more information:
michigandental.org/Service-Promise