

TOUCHING PEOPLE'S LIVES



Paul Hawthorne/The Times Herald

Dr. Thomas J. Balshi works with ceramist Robin Mongeon on the construction of an implant of teeth. The prosthodontist, who was honored by Congressmen, customizes permanent teeth.

Fort Washington dentist offers patients permanent solutions

By Carl Rotenberg
Times Herald Staff

A Fort Washington dentist specializing in permanent teeth implants has been recognized on the floor of Congress for his efforts.

Dr. Balshi, a prosthodontist who has taught implant surgery and conducted clinical research, has been honored for his work with tributes by U.S. Congressman Jon D. Fox (R-15th Dist.) and U.S. Sen. Rick Santorum.

Balshi, owner of Prosthodontics Intermedica, received a glowing tribute, recorded in the daily Congressional Record, from Santorum.

"Dr. Balshi and his staff of 23 have touched the lives of many, replacing countless lost, damaged or diseased teeth with secure, permanent prosthetic smiles," said Santorum on July 12 on the floor of the U.S. Senate in Washington, D.C.

"He welcomes students from around the world to his clinic, teaching them not only his clinical skills, but also his business skills."

On Monday, Fox is scheduled to give Balshi a copy of his tribute, which Fox read on the House floor and was entered into the Congressional

Record on Feb. 29.

Fox said that Balshi "commits himself clinically and personally to the careful renewal of every patient's smile."

"He trained others from Bosnia and Herzegovina to bring healing and restoration to that war-torn population," said Fox.

"To spend time training people from a war-torn country is an important thing to do. It's something he's done out of a sense of charity and goodwill," said Jan Friss, Fox's chief of staff.

One of Balshi's older patients, Harry Kahn, is an enthusiastic booster of Balshi's work.

"You're talking to a fan," said Kahn, an 82-year-old patient and owner of Jonns Contemporary Interiors of Montgomeryville. "He is an excellent dentist."

Kahn got dental implants — seven bottom teeth and six upper teeth — more than 20 years ago. The replacement of an upper plate was important because Kahn scuba dives to depths of more than 100 feet when he does underwater archaeology. The implants allowed Kahn to grip the aqualung mouthpiece with his teeth without fear about chok-

ing on a dental plate.

"For me, the implants made all the difference in the world," said Kahn.

Under the auspices of Balshi's Institute for Facial Esthetics, the prosthodontist has taught hundreds of foreign dentists how to install dental implants since 1984. He has trained dentists from China, Pakistan, Saudi Arabia, Japan, Korea and the Philippines.

The one-week, intensive course for eight dentists is held three to four times each year. Tuition is \$1,800.

The institute is also conducting ongoing clinical studies to determine the effectiveness of permanent tooth replacement. In one study begun in 1985, Balshi is following the progress of 250 patients, aged 60 to 91, who have lost between four and five teeth up to all teeth. Dental implants have replaced removable dentures for these patients.