

Contact Managing Editor Karl Ziomek (kziomek@heritage.com) or Business Writer Joe Slezak (jslezak@heritage.com)

## Chiropractor returns to his roots

### Clinic supports Run for Ryan, which is scheduled for tomorrow

BY LISA VIDAURRI-BOWLING

THE NEWS-HERALD

FLAT ROCK — Dr. Jeff Sergent is following in his father's footsteps.

Sergent is a chiropractor like his dad, the late Darrell Sergent, was.

The 2000 Flat Rock Community High School graduate has joined Porter and Clark Chiropractic as an associate.

The practice, 29100 Gateway Blvd., Suite 100, is owned and operated by Drs. Michael Porter of Flat Rock and Thomas Clark of Grosse Ile.

Before merging practices, Porter managed a chiropractic office in Gibraltar, a business he started in 1984.

In 1991, Clark launched his practice in Rockwood.

Two years later, he began working with Dr. Darrell Sergent in Flat Rock. Clark assumed ownership of the practice after Sergent's death in 1995.

In December, Jeff Sergent graduated from National University of Health Sciences in Lombard, Ill., the same school his father attended.

He said family ties brought him back to Michigan, and he began working with Porter, Clark and Dr. Jeffrey Featherstone. His mother, Evelyn Sergent Kosowski, is a chiropractic assistant at the clinic.

"Becoming a chiropractor kind of fell back into my life," Sergent said. "I graduated from Michigan State (University) as an environmental science major, and I was working construction and working on the environmental side."

During that time, he became interested in botanicals and their medicinal purposes, and it became a hobby.

Sergent, a Grosse Ile resident, said he considered a career in naturopathy, a system that focuses on natural remedies and the body's ability to heal and maintain itself, but naturopathic medicine is not recognized in Michigan, so he pursued chiropractic care.

"Chiropractic is very close," he said. "I chose National because the curriculum is very close. It's a very holistic approach. You learn a lot about functional nutrition and functional rehabilitation, really treating the whole body rather than just the spine."

"Each state is different for chiropractors, but in the state of Illinois we're considered primary care physicians, where as in Michigan we can only treat the spine."

As part of his education, Sergent has completed certification in kinesio taping, a technique based on the body's own natural healing process.

When it comes to seeking chiropractic care, he said 80 percent of patients have some form of spinal pain.

"Here, we use an integrated approach with a massage therapist, so a daily visit would start out with heat or ice, if

necessary, then a massage therapist comes in and we give them specific reasons to reach, like specific stretches to do with a patient," he said. "Then the chiropractor goes in. It's a four- to five-minute muscle work before the adjustment."

The concept of incorporating massage therapy into patient care was introduced by Sergent's father in his practice.

For most injuries, Sergent said ice should be used for the first 24 to 48 hours. Heat mostly is used when there is a lot of muscle tension and spasms.

Sergent said new patients can expect a full exam, neurological and orthopedic, and X-rays if they are medically necessary.

"We take a full medical history, and if it's more of an athletic-type injury, then we go into more of a functional exam, or if there's any pain that's radiating, then we go toward more of a McKenzie-type exam, which is a mechanical-diagnosis therapy. New patients should plan on spending 45 minutes to an hour at their first visit."

Sergent said the entire team will often meet and consult on the best form of treatment for their patients since they each have specialties.

On a busy day, Sergent sees 40 to 50 patients.

"My average patient load is about 25 to 30 because I'm spending a little bit more time with each patient," he said.

Sergent said chiropractic manipulation, exams and X-rays typically are covered by most medical insurance.

He said children and infants can benefit from chiropractic care, too.

"Dr. Porter is currently working on a diplomat in chiropractic pediatrics," Sergent said. "We have learned in school and have different techniques that work very well with children. There are studies that have shown success in treating colic using chiropractic methods."

The practice has introduced new methods of treatment into the business.

Sergent recently became certified in the McKenzie Method, a mechanical diagnosis therapy, which is used more for disc-type problems or any pain that's radiating.

The McKenzie Method revolves around three basic steps to success: evaluation by a certified mechanical diagnostic therapist, establishment of a treatment program and a prophylaxis program designed to prevent future occurrences.

He said it's been used more in the physical therapy world, and he is one of about 100 chiropractors certified in the McKenzie Method.

Sergent estimates that about 50 chiropractors in the world have a McKenzie diplomat. He needs to complete two classes followed by an exam before receiving his diplomat.

#### Porter & Clark Chiropractic

Location: 29100 Gateway Blvd., Suite 100, Flat Rock; 1-734-379-9200.

Owners: Drs. Michael Porter of Flat Rock and Thomas Clark of Grosse Ile.

Hours: 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays; 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. Tuesdays; 8 a.m. to 6:30 p.m. Thursdays; and 8 a.m. to noon Saturdays.

Appointments: Recommended, but walk-ins are accepted.

Web site: www.porterclarkchiropractic.com.

Staying up to date with technology, medical treatments and being involved in the community are integral parts of running a successful practice for Porter & Clark Chiropractic.

Tomorrow, the chiropractors and their staff, family and friends will host the 12th annual Run for Ryan.

The eight-kilometer run honors Ryan Sergent, a high school senior who collapsed and died in 1997 while practicing with the Flat Rock Community High School cross country team. He was Jeff's brother.

That year, Sergent's mother, with the help of friends Diane Pool and Thomas Clark, started Ryan's Friends, a charity organization to honor Ryan.

The organization helps support several southeastern Michigan communities that help people in need.

This year's race is scheduled to start at Flat Rock Community High School, 28100 Aspen. The one-mile Fun Run begins at 5:30 p.m., and the 8K Run and 5K Run/Walk start at 6 p.m.

Participants can register at the event for \$20.

After the run, there will be an award ceremony,



Photos by E.L. Conley

Dr. Jeff Sergent is following in his father's footsteps. Sergent is a chiropractor like his dad, the late Darrell Sergent, was.

music, food and refreshments. More information about the run can be found at [www.ryansfriends.org](http://www.ryansfriends.org).

Next month, Ryan's Friends will hold a food

drive called "An Apple for Ryan," which will help feed the homeless.

Donations of fresh fruit, canned goods and other food are requested.

Donations can be

dropped off before Oct. 7 at Porter & Clark Chiropractic; Flat Rock Community High School; or Bates Elementary School, 22811 Gudith Road, Woodhaven.



Dr. Jeff Sergent with Dr. Thomas Clark, Dr. Jeffrey Featherstone and Dr. Michael Porter.