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Making Sense of It All

DR. JEFFERY SCHOONOVER

OBSERVING A CHILDHOOD TRAGEDY STARTED DR. JEFFERY SCHOONOVER ON THE TRACK TO A CAREER IN MEDICINE, COMBINING HIS LOVE OF SCIENCE WITH HIS INNATE DESIRE TO HELP OTHERS.

BY MATTHEW HUME
COVER AND INSIDE PHOTOGRAPHY BY EDUARDO PEÑA

A portrait of Dr. Schoonover, a man with short brown hair and a friendly smile, wearing a white lab coat over a grey t-shirt. He has his arms crossed and a stethoscope around his neck. The lab coat has 'INDIANA VEIN SPECIALISTS' and 'Options. Healthier Legs.' on the left chest, and 'Dr. Schoonover, MD, RPVI' and 'Chief Medical Director' on the right chest. A circular medical seal is also visible on the right chest. He is wearing a silver watch on his left wrist.

DR. SCHOONOVER
AND HIS FAMILY ARE
PROUD TO CALL
CARMEL HOME,
AND INDIANA VEIN
SPECIALISTS EXTENDS
ITS PHILOSOPHY OF
PATIENT CARE TO THE
GREATER CARMEL AND
FISHERS COMMUNITIES.

Think back to your childhood for a moment. I m a g i n e that you're out on the

playground at recess, grabbing onto the monkey bars, taking turns down the slide and pushing each other higher and higher on the swings. Then, in the midst of that idyllic childhood scene, something goes wrong. "One of my classmates had collided with another kid on a swing," recalls Dr. Jeffery Schoonover, MD, owner and Chief Medical Director at Indiana Vein Specialists. "He kind of walked off, but a few steps later he collapsed." The ambulance was called, first aid was administered, but sadly, the student passed away as a result of the injury. The accident was hard for the young Schoonover to come to terms with. "Afterwards, my primary coping mechanism was to try to understand the science behind his care, what was going on physiologically," he says. "That event really started pushing me down the road to science." Over time, Dr. Schoonover realized that a career in medicine would challenge him to combine his love of science with his innate desire to help others.

LIVING A MISSION

Having grown up in the small farming community of Blissfield, MI, Dr. Schoonover credits the sports he played as a youngster as having a significant role in his life-long held attitudes towards respect, leadership and pride in working towards a common goal. His discipline grew stronger during his four years serving as a physician in



the Air Force. "Similar to the ROTC scholarship," he explains, "the military has the Health Professions Scholarship Program (HPSP) for med school students. You go through a rigorous application process and if you've been accepted to med school and meet the requirements, the program covers four years of med school tuition." The flip side of that is that you'll

serve in the military when your schooling is complete, and Dr. Schoonover started his active duty at Randolph Air Force Base, outside of San Antonio, in August 2001. "I'd been on base a couple of weeks and 9/11 happened. There were so many additional responsibilities because of that, but it ultimately opened up different doors for me in leadership and

management," he says. During his years there, Dr. Schoonover eventually served as chief of the medical staff at his clinic, and worked himself up to the rank of Major. "As I've looked back on my military experience, I always appreciated that clarifying your mission objectives daily is the key for success," he tells me. It's this philosophy that he has brought to his practice at Indiana Vein Specialists, with a mission based on respect and compassion for patients and their concerns. "We treat our patients as extended family and live that mission every day."

How is it that Dr. Schoonover made the decision to specialize in venous medicine? "During my time in family medicine, I saw my patients' frustration with the downtime and expense related to traditional treatments for vein disease," he says. "Previously, the main treatment for people with venous disease was vein stripping, where you were admitted to the hospital and put under general anesthesia so that the diseased vein could be pulled out." All that changed about 10 years ago, he explains, with the advent of two new procedures: laser ablation and radiofrequency treatments. "When these newer, office-based and minimally invasive venous treatment strategies were introduced, I pursued the necessary training and certification, and decided to devote my entire practice to the care of patients with venous disease." Dr. Schoonover explains that with laser ablation, instead of admitting to hospital and being put under, the diseased vein can be treated with local anesthesia, sealing down and closing off the vein. This is the procedure used at Indiana Vein Specialists. "It's much more cost effective, the

recovery time is better and recurrence rates are significantly lower compared to more traditional methods."

UNPLUG AND CONNECT

When not caring for his patients, you're most likely to find Dr. Schoonover spending time with Kari, his wife of more than 20 years, and their two children, Erik and Kristian. (Two cats—Duncan and Tori—and two dogs—Hank and Emmet—make the family eight.) "We're constantly working toward a better work / family time balance," Dr. Schoonover says. One of the key ways the family has found to come closer together is to close down the laptop, lay down the smartphone, and unplug. "I've been exploring the concept of mindfulness over the past year or so," he explains. "As a society, we are getting increasingly distracted and insular with so many social media and technology outlets. Taking time out to reflect and focus on the relationships that are important—and putting the smartphone down—has become a priority for our family." On a recent vacation to California, Dr. Schoonover and his family spent most of the trip hiking and exploring the coastline, managing to leave technology pretty much by the wayside. "We love going on bike trips as a family, as well," he tells me. "Traveling together strengthens and reconnects us in a way that our daily routines can erode."

Dr. Schoonover and his family are proud to call Carmel home, and Indiana Vein Specialists extends its philosophy of patient care to the greater Carmel and Fishers communities. "We support a variety of fundraisers

and activities," Dr. Schoonover tells me. "The Carmel Marathon was one of the first events in the area we became one of the primary sponsors for, and it's been tremendous for us to see an event like this grow and get recognized nationally." This year, the Marathon saw over 4000 participants from 38 states! Since opening the practice in 2011, one of Dr. Schoonover's big commitments has been to support grassroots organizations. "We love these smaller athletic events, and we donate to schools, fundraisers, cancer events," he says. "It's what we're all about in our mission—community involvement is a huge part of what we do." From their sponsorship of the Carmel Marathon and Geist Half Marathon, to their support of Carmel Lacrosse and The Sharing Place Food Pantry, Dr. Schoonover and the staff at Indiana Vein Specialists make it a point never to stop giving.

I asked Dr. Schoonover to define himself in 20 words or less. "I think of myself as a man of faith, compassion, devotion to my family and commitment to my patients and community," he says. "It's been a great blessing to have opened and successfully grown both of our medical offices in Fishers and Carmel." Dr. Schoonover's career path has transformed him from that scientifically curious child on the playground into a life-changing physician. And he couldn't feel more blessed to help others. "One of the best parts of taking care of our patients is seeing the vast majority improve in a relatively short time frame," he says. "I love knowing that our patients are doing the things they love—whether that's getting out for a run or chasing after the kids or grandkids again."



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