

2017 a year of accomplishment for Headwaters Dental



By Mike Pickford

It has been a landmark year thus far for local dentist Raj Khanuja and his clinic, Headwaters Dental Centre.

A second successive national award, notable local recognitions and a Canada 150 Medallion are just a few of the highlights for 2017. While Dr. Khanuja speaks of these accomplishments with pride, there is a distinct humbleness to his words. He's eager to point out the fact that he's had a lot of help in forging his practice into what it is today.

Since launching Headwaters Dental more than a decade ago, Dr. Raj has prided himself on providing the best level of service to the community. That commitment has once again been recognized on a national scale after Headwaters Dental was named a recipient of the 2018 Canadian Business Excellence Award for a Private Business. This marks the second straight year the local facility has landed the award.

"It is incredibly humbling, especially considering this is our second straight year being recognized," Dr. Khanuja told the Citizen. "This is a national award, so literally hundreds of businesses from across Canada are considered. It was hard enough believing last year that they wanted to recognize us, but for it to happen again this year? I couldn't believe it."

The award, presented to Dr. Khanuja at a ceremony in Toronto on Oct. 3, is designed to recognize organizations that demonstrate a strategic approach towards achieving its goals, successfully improving business performance and immersing themselves with the local community. It's that last part that sets Headwaters Dental apart from the chasing pack, with Dr. Raj placing an incredible emphasis on "Doing Positive in my Backyard".

That's the name of the annual community day Headwaters Dental hosts every summer. On that day, the practice clears its schedule, brings in as many dentists as it possibly can and invites members of the community to stop in on a first come, first served basis for costly dental procedures. The real kicker? All procedures on that day are performed free of charge.

Taking place on June 29 this past summer, Dr. Raj and his team treated 35 patients over the course of 12 hours, sending many residents home with an improved smile on their face. This marked the sixth successive year the local practice has offered the program, completing close to \$60,000 worth of in-kind work.

"That has sort of turned into our biggest day of the year. It's one I look forward to and one many of my employees look forward to. It's a day that we're able to help those in need and make a real difference," Dr. Raj said.

While his work has been noted locally, with Orangeville Mayor Jeremy Williams this year taking the time to stop by the office on community day to offer his thanks, Dr. Raj's work captured the attention of Dufferin-Caledon MP David Tilson this summer as he was one of a number of prominent area residents to receive the prestigious Canada 150 Medallion.

"What a special moment that was, a very pleasant surprise," Dr. Raj recalled. "It was an incredible honour."

More recently, Dr. Raj made the top three in the Citizen of the Year award at the Dufferin Board of Trade's annual Business Excellence Award ceremony. Headwaters Dental also finished in the top three for Business of the Year (10+ employees).

Perhaps his proudest accomplishment this year, however, came back in January when a lengthy case study he had been working on was published in Ontario Dentist magazine. Centring on computer guided implant surgery, the article explained in great detail how Dr. Khanuja had developed a technique that would enable dentists to install dental implants in a non-invasive manner.

"Because of the way our technology has involved, extensive surgery is no longer necessary for some procedures," Dr. Raj explained. "The way this particular technique works, we send patients for a 3D x-ray of their mouth; then, when we have that, we are able to

figure out how to place the implant in the most perfect position. The best way to describe it would be to imagine a space shuttle leaving earth to visit the International Space Station. All the work is done on a computer before the shuttle leaves. Same idea here. The procedure is planned out on a computer, from there we are able to create a 3D splint that helps to guide the implant. That particular study went out to almost 7,000 dentists across Ontario. Dr. Raj noted he had been using this technique on patients in Orangeville for well over two years now, estimating he has completed between 175 and 200 procedures. As he looks forward towards 2018, Dr. Khanuja says he's already looking forward to the next community dental day, set to take place in late May or early June next year. Besides that he hopes to continue the fine work that has seen Headwaters Dental recognized on both a local and national scale over the last 12 months.

“We are a small, community-oriented business. Our commitment to our patients and our commitment to social responsibility is our secret to success,” Dr. Khanuja said. “We have an amazing team of professionals here at Headwaters Dental. All of the awards and accomplishments this year is a testament to the staff I have here. Without their hard work, dedication and commitment none of this would be possible.”