

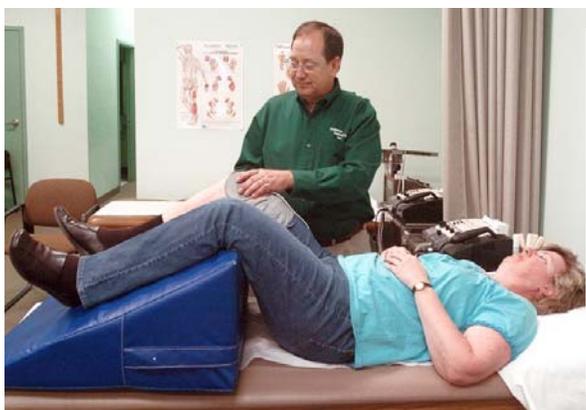
## Getting people back on their feet

By GAIL T. BOATMAN Special to the BCT Calkins Media, Inc.

DELRAN - Even when they were very young, James Rushmore and his wife, Colleen, had a good idea about what direction they hoped their lives would take.

Both imagined themselves helping people who were in pain.

"I came from a family of health professionals, and I'm also a teaching kind of person," James Rushmore said. "Physical therapy was a good fit."



He realized that teaching was an important part of the profession. Today, he sees himself, in part, as a coach who instructs and inspires patients to follow a regimen that will ease their pain and restore them to a meaningful life.

"When I see people with chronic problems, my aim is the return of function," said Rushmore, who graduated from Boston University with a degree in physical therapy.

"I always have a home program for my patients."

Early in his career, he met his future wife, a physical therapist herself with a degree from the University of Scranton whose mother had been a nurse in a home for the elderly.

"When I was little, I saw a lot of elderly, ill people, and I thought it would be cool to be able to help them help themselves," Colleen Rushmore said.

Encouraging independence and self-reliance is still a cornerstone of her philosophy.

"My approach is to incorporate mind, body and spirit in my programs," said Rushmore, who has been a yoga practitioner for 18 years.

"I don't think you can heal the physical body if an emotional component hasn't been resolved."



Married for 22 years, the pair established Rushmore Physical Therapy, which two years ago moved into the Hartford Corners shopping center off Route 130. It is one of three facilities they operate, dividing their time among them. The others are in Hainesport and Voorhees.

A shopping center location has many advantages.

"It's a neighborhood," James Rushmore said, noting that the visibility is important, as are the owners of nearby businesses, some of whom become patients.

Rushmore also likes the small size of his family-owned enterprise. In a field dominated by large, corporate-owned entities, he can offer something they can't: a personal connection with patients.

"It's not only what we do," he said. "It's part of who we are."

The Rushmore's, who live in Moorestown, begin their days early. Up by 6, they get their three children off to school before heading to work.

In many ways, it's like running a small business, James Rushmore said.

"It's service-oriented, and we must be here when patients can come in," he said.

As a result, he begins seeing people at 7:30 and often leaves for home 12 hours later, he said.

Many athletes are among the Rushmore's' patients, and a favorite success story centers on one. A goalie on an ice hockey team was struggling after his knee was surgically reconstructed.

After therapy sessions, the highly motivated young man was able to return to his varsity team on time.



Another story, less dramatic but equally satisfying, concerned a senior citizen whose arthritis was keeping her from her favorite activities: baby-sitting her grandchildren and volunteering.

After a program of treatment, she too was able to return to what gave her joy.

Patients of all ages make their way to the Rushmore's' business. One of the youngest was an infant with a stiff neck caused by the way he was positioned in his crib.

When a new patient comes in, the therapists take a complete medical history, evaluate the problem, discuss the limitations, and devise a treatment plan. They also aim to establish mutual goals so that therapist and patient see the situation through the same lens.

Colleen Rushmore devotes part of her time to women's issues, always remembering the whole person.

"I don't see a diagnosis; I see a person who is connected from head to toe," she said, adding that the food one eats can affect arthritis.

She has had her own problems, including brain surgery several years ago.

"I have learned through my life experience," she said. "I use what I learned as a person in my work."

She and her husband complement each other in their approach to their practice, she said.

"We're a nice balance."