

## **Providing dental care to clients at Caridad a highlight of man's life**

Palm Beach Post Staff Writer Eliza Gutierrez/The Post

Wednesday, February 06, 2008

Dr. Paul Archacki decided to move to Florida after a big scare one morning on an icy Philadelphia expressway.

"I was crossing a bridge and some idiot cut me off," he said. "The next thing I know, I'm doing 360s and staring down at a 40- to 50-foot embankment.



*Dr. Paul Archacki works on Julia Cibrian, with the help of Beatriz Troncoso, at the Caridad Center. Archacki, a prosthodontist with a practice in Boynton Beach, volunteers at the Caridad every Wednesday. 'I do a lot of extractions,' he said. 'Everybody we see on Wednesdays is in pain.'*

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"After that, I said, 'I've had enough of this. No more winter.' I remember walking into my then-wife and saying, 'I've had it and I'm going south.' "

Archacki, a prosthodontist who lives and works in Boynton Beach, meant what he said that day. For 27 years, the Connecticut native has called Palm Beach County his home.

"I love it here," said Archacki, who's divorced and has a son Paul, a 30-year-old University of Florida grad living in Sarasota. "I'd rather go through a hurricane than have to deal with snow, ice and cold."

One of the things Archacki enjoys about his work in South Florida is volunteering at the Caridad Center in west Boynton, where he's director of dental services and a member of its board.

Founded in 1989, the Caridad Center provides free dental and medical care, as well as education programs, food, clothing and housing, to the county's poorest residents, many of them migrant farm workers.

Suzanne Guyette, vice president of development for the Caridad Center, called Archacki "extremely generous" with his time.

"He works a full day at his practice on Wednesdays and then comes here and works a full day. He has boundless enthusiasm and energy for Caridad," she said. "He's just a wonderful man."

A diplomate of the American Board of Prosthodontics, Archacki earned his doctor of dental surgery at New York University and his specialty credentials at Temple University in Philadelphia, where he also taught for six and a half years.

He describes the nature of his work by saying, "I put Humpty Dumpty back together again."

At the Caridad, though, the 20 or so patients he sees every week need urgent care.

"I do a lot of extractions," he said. "Everybody we see on Wednesdays is in pain. We see it all. It's really just going in and trying to get people out of pain."

Archacki said his patients at the Caridad, which has treated folks from more than 30 countries, are "hardworking people who are here to make a better lives for them and their children.

"They're the people in the background," he said. "You don't really think about it, but they do a lot."

Archacki, 61, gets a lot of satisfaction from volunteering at the Caridad and plans to continue as long as he's able.

"It gives you a great feeling just to be able to help somebody," he said. What do you do to relax?

"I love to play golf (a passion), scuba dive, read, listen to smooth jazz, love the crossword puzzles and fine dining."

What is your favorite snack food? "Toasted almonds."

If you could have dinner with anyone, who would it be and why? "My father. He died in 1982. He had just retired and was diagnosed with terminal lung cancer. ... The older you get, the more you realize just how much wisdom your parents really have and it's a resource that you didn't avail yourself of. ... There is so much I would love to have been able to sit down and talk to him about."

What's the best advice you ever received? It came from a college physics professor who talked about how much he loved his work. "I remember him looking out on the class and saying the world was our oyster, so why not do something you love and have a passion for. ... I remember saying to my son the same things that professor said."