

## **The DC Dentist**

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### **Member since 2023**

Winner of the 2021 District Sustainability Award

## **Reported Environmental Activities**

### ✓ **Environmental Policy/Sustainability Mission Statement**

When we set out to design our dental practice sustainability was at the core of our thought process. How to have a safe, cleaner space that is also efficient, and it also had to be beautiful. Our philosophy is we will always do our part to make DC a more sustainable city.

### ✓ **Environmental Management System**

Our office is on the forefront of sustainability. We have many sustainable practices. Our ceiling tiles are made from recycled plastic bottles to decrease plastic in landfills. The building that houses our dental office was built in 1904 and we restored the original Terrazo floor which looks beautiful. Our front windows and door have a window film which prevents UV light from coming in. In the summer it keeps the inside cool and in the winter it assists in keeping our office warm. It therefore decreases our utilities. Our reception area chairs and carpet were not only brought used, they are reupholstered with post-consumer recycled material. All the paint in the office is No VOC which is less toxic to staff and patients. We have a high efficiency HVAC system. The office reduces the use of paper by having all charts electronic.

Our counter in the reception area is IceStone which is made of compressed glass instead of Marble which has off gas. The bulbs in our work stations are LED. We have a tankless water heater. Skylights are in the ceiling to increase natural light. The office has a green roof with plants year-round. The office also has a ductless heating system which requires less energy than ducts. The office has an amalgam separator which stops mercury from going into our city waste water. We have had it for 12 years and it was mandated for all dental offices to have it in 2020.

### ✓ **Environmental Team**

You could almost consider us trendsetters as this part of the world slowly catches on to the benefits of holistic and sustainable practices. One way we strike equitable change is by educating our community to the importance of oral health and its direct relationship to overall health and well-being. Pre-pandemic we offered Yoga classes on Fridays for our staff, patients, and community to learn, grow and exercise together. For three straight years our staff began the year with a juice fast to introduce the new year, new beginnings, and patients asked to join in. We have had Book Club meetings to share in our goal setting for both individual as well as

office goals, followed by meetings with financial experts to empower our staff to prepare for their future goals. Each of our dentists has spoken at various vegan expos enlightening the people of the importance of good healthy food entering a healthy clean mouth.

Our dentists have spoken to neighboring schools both live and most recently via Zoom encouraging students to stay healthy by taking good care of their teeth. Older students interested in dentistry have shadowed our dentists. Every year Howard University hygiene students visit our office to see and learn of sustainable and holistic practices. Every year we participate in Bike to Work day as some of our dentists bike to work. In fact, we asked DDOT and now have a bike rack in front of our office for all of our bikers. We've shared the connection between heart disease and oral health and have taught others that 90% of diseases begin in the mouth. During the age of Covid we have convinced our patients and community that they could safely come in to our office and be well taken care of and that having a clean mouth is the first defense against disease. We see ourselves as a vital part of our community.

### ✓ **Environmentally Preferable Purchasing**

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### ✓ **Commit to Environmental Restoration and Community Environmental Projects**

One of the ways our office addresses this is by being visible. We believe if those in communities of color can see that one of their own is able to move forward then they can also move forward. This is especially true of young children, for them to see someone who looks like them. Our office visits elementary schools to talk to students about being a dentist. Our doctors and staff have been to many organizations to speak and be visible including the Southeast Tennis and Learning Center, Dunbar High School, NBC4 Health & Fitness Expo, etc.

Our office also provides financial support to many groups and organizations in the metropolitan DC area that are involved with bridging the equity gap. We have assisted the organization, Feed the Hood, who distribute food for the Homeless. We have provided them with toothpaste, toothbrushes, and mouth rinse for the homeless population. For three straight years our staff began the year with a juice fast to introduce the new year, new beginnings and patients asked to join in. We have had Book club meetings to share in our goal setting for both individual as well

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#### ✓ **Equity Considerations in all Activities**

Our owner dentist, Dr. Victor, is African-American and he is well aware of the inequities that exist in communities of color versus other communities. One of the ways our office addresses this is by being visible. We believe if those in communities of color can see that one of their own is able to move forward then they can also move forward. This is especially true of young children, for them to see someone who looks like them. Another way we support communities of color is to hire staff from these communities where an opportunity is given to those from a disadvantage background.

#### ✓ **Solid Waste Reduction and Reuse**

Our office is a big proponent on recycling. The cleaning products we use are housed in recycled containers; we have alerted our staff in ways to observe the varying degrees of plastic as well as the dental products we use are mainly in adherence with recycling guidelines.

#### ✓ **Recycling or Donation**

We have worked with local professionals in upholstery to cover our recycled chairs. Our office collects gently used and new clothing and toys throughout the year to provide to different organizations that are helping those in need. We also collect food that may otherwise go to waste and give to those in need. If we have an in-house event with an overflow of food, it is always given to staff as well as our community in need.

#### ✓ **Water Conservation**

We have a tankless water heater. The office has an amalgam separator which stops mercury from going into our city waste water. We have had it for 12 years and it was mandated for all dental offices to have it in 2020.

#### ✓ **Stormwater Management**

The office has a green roof with plants year-round. This helps to eliminate the storm water runoff from our roof top.

#### ✓ **Energy Efficiency**

The office has a ductless heating system which requires less energy than ducts. We use LED lightbulbs throughout the office, saving energy. Our washer/dryer all in one is energy efficient as well.

✓ **Employee Commute/Customer Travel**

Every year we participate in “Bike to Work Day” as some of our dentists bike to work. In fact, we asked DDOT and now have a bike rack in front of our office for all of our bikers. At times we have hired those who could not afford to take public transportation to and from work. Our office implemented Smart Benefits from DC Metro which the staff gets a stipend from our office to ride metro bus and train. This is in line with our philosophy of mass transportation to decrease cars on the road.