

SHEPHERD EXPRESS

JULY 24, 2013

INVIVO's Maurice Dumit on Health and Fitness

By Marie Kohler

Overlooking a breathtaking section of the Milwaukee River at 2060 N. Humboldt Ave., INVIVO offers an array of health and fitness resources. Founder, owner and physical therapist Maurice Dumit discusses the creative nature of his work.

How did you arrive at your career as a physical therapist?

Circuitously! I worked as a professional actor in Texas for four years, but couldn't live with the looming uncertainty of acting contracts. I wanted to nurture my creative side so I studied marketing and ended up working in men's apparel in Chicago. The '80s recession hit and I was up against the wall. Lost. So I picked up the book *What Color is Your Parachute?* and half way through doing "inventory," I thought, "I love working with people, I have an exercise ethic and I have nothing to lose." So I started from scratch and went back to school—UW-Milwaukee kinesiology degree in 1995 and PT degree from Marquette in 1998.

In 2002 I founded INVIVO in a small facility on Farwell Avenue and we moved to this location in 2006. It's funny. Medicine runs in my family—my stepfather is an anesthesiologist, my mother is a foreign-trained physician and PT. Lots of cousins are doctors. The last thing in the world I'd have thought would make me feel self-actualized would be this. But I'm very, very happy.

Is working in physical therapy creative?

Incredibly creative. I look at patients as whole people. Then I visualize how I'd like to see them when they're discharged, walking through life. "Biology is destiny"—we can always re-invent ourselves, right? Being a business owner is also creative. I thought I'd never need my marketing degree again. But running INVIVO, I do!

What is the mission behind INVIVO as a whole?

I recognized that there were gaps in the business. People I helped would say, "What do I do now?" when I discharged them. I'd say, "Go join a gym! Stay active!" But they'd sometimes get lost. I also realized that for those I couldn't help, I needed input from other practitioners—alternative and complementary—who could and should be a part of the process. I started to see the patient as the center of a wheel. He or she can enter into a paradigm of wellness from different spokes or avenues. We have a gym. We also offer massage, yoga, nutrition, naturopathy, acupuncture, chiropractic, pedorthics—all scientifically measurable within their fields. Patients need resources, options, guidance. And they appreciate that we come from a philosophy of being humanistic and building community.

The INVIVO facility is beautiful. Are aesthetics a conscious part of your philosophy?

Yes! Everything is a part of wellness! The view of the river, the architecture and the colors—we try to bring the elements of nature inside. We want to create a bit of an urban sanctuary.

www.MarieKohler.com