

MONTROSE DAILY PRESS

A highly-respected physician, Dr. Rosalind Rafanelli, or “Dr. Roz” as she is also known, has become part of River Valley Family Health Center’s team. She joins eight other providers in its growing practice in three locations, Montrose, Olathe and soon, in Delta.

With over 25 years in family practice in Delta and Grand Junction, Roz brings her experience and expertise to River Valley Family Health Center as a primary care provider available to see new patients at the Olathe clinic located at 308 Main St. in Olathe.

Roz has a strong medical interest in adult preventive care, wellness and “healthy aging.” She explained healthy aging people have an optimistic attitude, are confident in themselves, have good relationships and are content with their lives.

“Preventive care focuses on keeping a person healthy and preventing disease,” she said.

She said it’s gratifying to see so many pre-cancerous polyps removed after they’re found with a colonoscopy, for example. One of her happier outcomes involved a patient who had trouble walking and with her balance. Roz discovered she had a brain tumor which was removed and, fortunately, not cancerous. Today, the woman can walk, travel and leads a full life.

Roz grew up in Florida and received her Doctor of Medicine degree at the University of Florida, Gainesville. She moved to Colorado in 1988 and lives in the Delta area. Family time with her husband and two grown daughters is important to her. She traded her love of watersports, like sailing and scuba diving, for the Colorado mountains where she cross-country skis, backpacks, rides ATVs, fly fishes and has a passion for gardening. She still sails whenever she can. In fact, if she had not become a doctor, she would have become a marine biologist.

Roz started her college education with a goal of becoming an engineer, however. Along the way, she realized she “liked the people part better than the engineering part.” And she “liked primary care better than research.”

She went to medical school about 10 years after the first

wave of women studied to become doctors. It had been dominated by men before then. Her classes were made up of about 25-30 percent women. While she never had a problem, she recognizes if she’d gone earlier, that would not have been the case. She said that she was “so lucky” to have gone when she did.

Roz remembered that one of her pediatric professors told her that he was glad that women were studying to be doctors because “maternal instincts go better with kids.” She laughed though, telling that when she was first assigned to a hospital, the doctors’ lounge was also the men’s dressing room. She said a door was eventually put into separate the two. She still was breaking fairly new ground when she began to practice medicine in Delta, where she was perhaps the second or third woman doctor in the county.

When asked what she would like to see changed in today’s health care world after over 25 years of practicing medicine, Dr. Roz said “better access and more affordable preventive care.” She remembers when a person could get medical treatment and afford to pay for it, whether or not they had insurance. Today’s costs, like \$3500 for a colonoscopy, prevent many people from getting tested, outside of Medicare. River Valley has programs that can help lower the cost of health care, however. Roz said that she “loves being at River Valley” where there is “great staff and great support.”

River Valley Family Health Center is taking new patients and accepts Medicaid, Medicare, private insurance, self-pay and has a sliding fee scale for those who qualify. Through its Outreach and Enrollment office, River Valley can assist in Medicaid applications or in applying for insurance on Connect for Health. To make an appointment, please call: (970) 323-4161.

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