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Neighbors

DURANGO

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LA PLATA AND MONTEZUMA COUNTY RESIDENTS



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**The Schaefer Family and the Creation of
Whole Health Family Medicine Clinic; Home
Life as well as Health Care Simplified**

Cover photo by Allison Ragsdale Photography



Best Version Media



The Schaefer Family and the Creation of Whole Health Family Medicine Clinic; Home Life as well as Health Care Simplified

In this photo left to right is Jori, Wesley, Dr. Dan, Wauker, Karassa, Charlene and Lacey, on the bridge near WHFMC in the Rivergate Community in Durango.

*By Dena Wnorowski | All photos by Allison Ragsdale Photography.
We would like to thank Will Construction for bringing you this month's cover story.*

There is certainly something inviting in today's world about simplicity, stepping back to a way of life that is less hurried and more personal. Many of us strive to reach a more relaxed, easy pace for our lives and our families. The Schaefer family seems to have obtained that goal with both their home life and through their family business. Dr. Dan Schaefer, wife Karassa and their staff of extended family have created an avenue that allows a more simplified, grassroots type of direct primary care for area families, Whole Health Family Medicine Clinic, located in the Rivergate community near Animas Surgical Hospital in Durango.

What, exactly, is direct primary care? "A model that allows us to practice medicine in the way that it should be practiced; thoughtfully, sincerely, respectfully and personally" says Dan Schaefer, a board certified family physician. "This model certainly takes time with our patients, so we have structured the clinic and daily schedule intentionally with these priorities in mind." The clinic was designed as a solution for patients experiencing frustrations with health insurance and traditional fee-for-service primary care facilities. "Our clinic promotes and prioritizes patient advocacy, affordability, cost-transparency, accessibility and

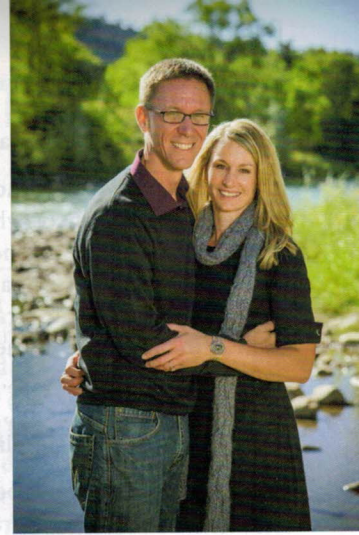
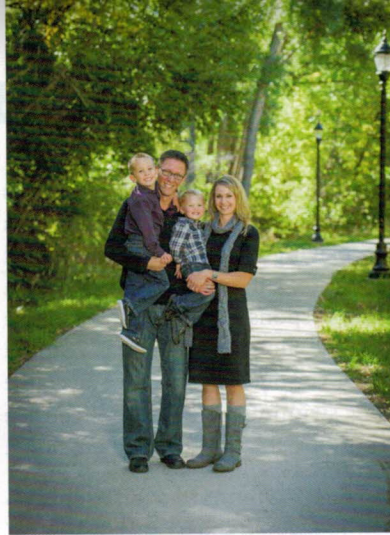
quality care," according to Dan's wife Karassa, who is the Physician Assistant at Whole Health Family Medicine Clinic (WHFMC), "We value the patient-doctor relationship, and the direct primary care model restores trust for this relationship to thrive." With a restored relationship between patient and care provider, patients receive a full range of primary care services including routine care, wellness visits, preventative care, minor procedures and care coordination in exchange for a flat monthly fee that is paid directly to WHFMC. There is no contracting with insurance companies; thus no insurance co-payments, deductibles or co-insurance fees. Without involving insurance companies, this type of practice eliminates the many distractions that can interfere with patient care and it significantly reduces costs to the clinic, which is then passed on to the patient. "Our model allows WHFMC to provide a much more desirable primary care experience and returns healthcare to what patients want and deserve," says Dr. Dan.

Dr. Dan Schaefer, originally from Waukesha, WI, obtained his medical school training at the University of Wisconsin, School of Medicine in Madison, WI. He completed his family medicine residency at The Harbor-UCLA family medicine program in Los

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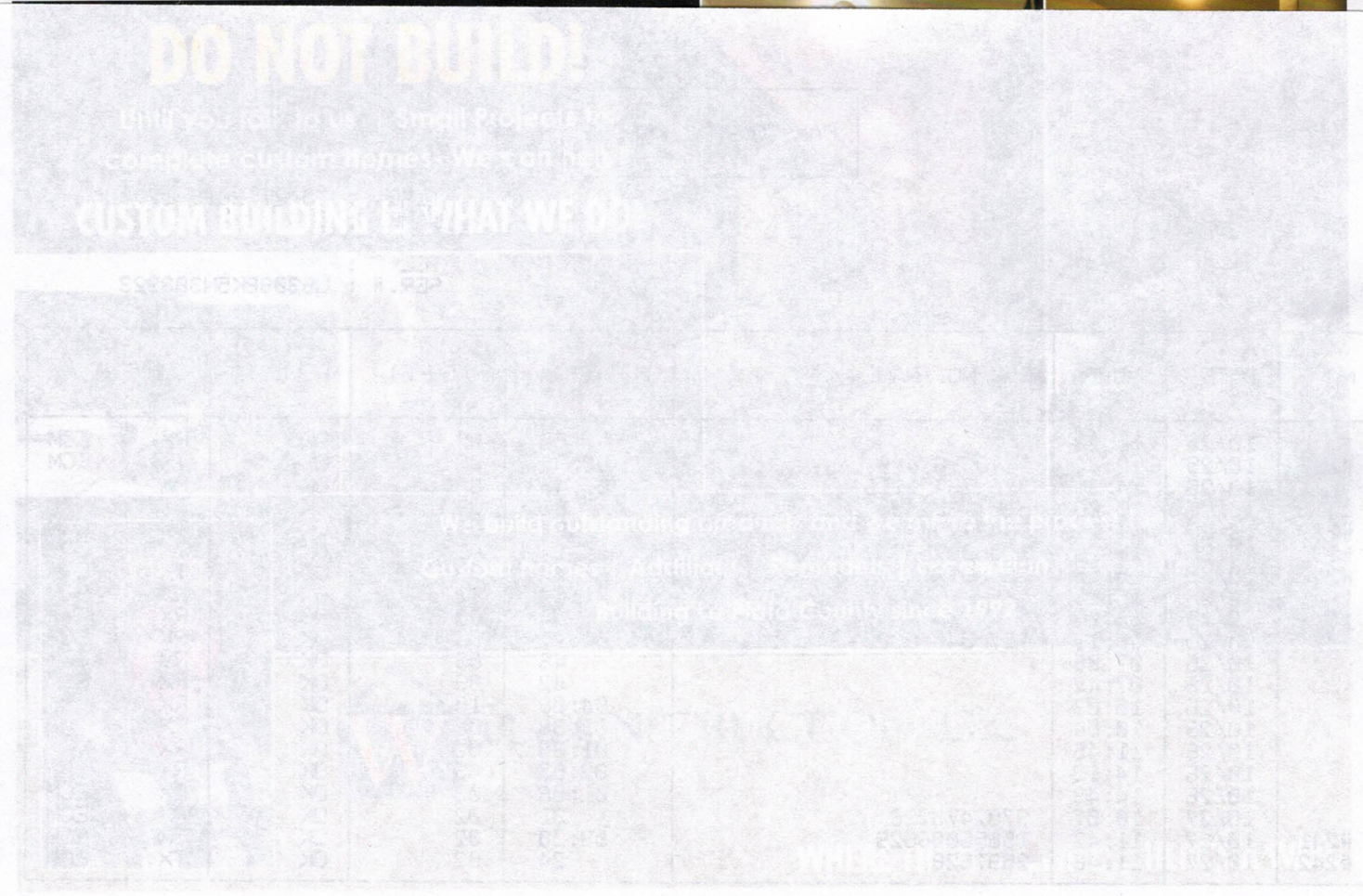
Angeles, CA in 2003 before moving to the Four Corners area. He met Karassa this same year as they both worked at the Farmington Community Health Center. Karassa Yeomans-Schaefer, born and raised on a cattle ranch in Mancos, CO, attended undergraduate school at Fort Lewis College in Durango, and graduated in 2002 with her Physician Assistant degree from Pacific University in Forest Grove, OR. In 2006 the couple made a move to Wisconsin where Dan worked as a locum tenens urgent care physician, soon joining the Department of Family Medicine at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health as a staff physician and student mentor. During this time Karassa worked in urgent care and family medicine facilities in Madison and Janesville, WI. She and Dan returned to Farmington in 2008 to be closer to family. Upon their return Dan became a physician owner at Farmington Family Practice and Karassa worked at the Bloomfield Health Center in Bloomfield, NM for two years before also joining the Farmington Family Practice in 2010.

With 27 collective years working as health care providers in traditional practices, weary with the direction of mainstream health care, in April of this year, Dan and Karassa opened the doors of Whole Health Family Medicine Clinic in Durango. They have formed an amazing team of family and friends with the same aspirations for patient care as their own. Jori White is Karassa's sister and is also the practice's office manager. Lacey Fails, along with her mother-in-law, Charlene-Valdez-Alakoski are the Certified Medical Assistants at the clinic. Charlene has worked alongside Karassa for eight years. Dan and Karassa feel fortunate to have, in their words, "such a talented and dedicated team."



Dr. Dan Schaefer and Karassa Yeomans-Schaefer, founders of Whole Health Family Medicine Clinic in Durango.

In order to be closer to the newly opened WHFMC, the Schaefers recently moved to the El Rancho Florida subdivision in Durango, they fell in love with the house, the quiet surroundings and community pond (also known as the beach). The neighborhood affords open spaces allowing for many outdoor adventures and ahhh, the simple life! Dan and Karassa are the proud parents of two precious sons, Wesley who is 4 and Wauker who is 2. This home and neighborhood are the perfect fit for this young family. The boys love the simple pleasures of picking up sticks and searching for pretty rocks. The neighborhood also provides ample opportunity for pot lucks and community activities with friendly



neighbors at “the beach” as well as amazing sunsets.

Dan, Karassa, Wesley and Wauker often visit Karassa’s family’s cattle ranch in Mancos where the boys enjoy the ranch activities like roping and riding horses, playing with their cousins and spending time with Nana and Papa. Dan and Karassa are often called to help with the ranching responsibilities and relish the time with family there. The foursome, along with their six year old border collie/boxer mix K.T., love to be outdoors and live an active lifestyle, including biking, hiking, swimming and disc golf, all the while maintaining a simplified outlook at home and at their clinic.

It’s truly amazing the types and contributions of our neighbors, isn’t it? Dr. Dan and Karassa Schaefer, along with their family and health care team, are striving to make our community less hectic and more simplistic. By offering this direct primary care clinic in our area they are providing meaningful patient-doctor relationships and helping people in our communities achieve overall health and wellness. They’ve thoroughly enjoyed developing the model for their clinic and tell us they “are incredibly fortunate to have the opportunity to partner with our growing patient base in preventing avoidable health problems, treating illness and

disease in a well-informed and holistic manner, and prioritizing wellness and healthy living in practical and realistic ways. We are deeply honored to have this opportunity and look forward to sharing it with you and your family.”

If you’d like more information on this local family business, please contact Whole Health Family Medicine Clinic at 970-259-1971 or visit their website: www.wholehealthfamilymedicine.com

Do you know a neighbor who has a story to share? Nominate your neighbor to be featured in one of our upcoming issues! Contact us at dwnorowski@bestversionmedia.com.

Top Left: The Schaefer family and staff of Whole Health Family Medicine Clinic in the warm and inviting entry of their newly opened facility. Bottom Left: Dr. Dan, Karassa, Wesley and Wauker Schaefer. Right: Wesley(4) and Wauker (2).

