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Sunshine Prosthetics & Orthotics

By DEBORAH CONN

Balancing Act

New Jersey practitioner strives for work/life balance while running her own facility

BROOKE ARTESI, CPO, LPO, describes the launch of her facility, Sunshine Prosthetics & Orthotics, as “a love story.” After graduating with a bachelor’s degree in biology and obtaining her postgraduate credentials through the Newington Certificate Program in O&P, Artesi worked as a technician and then a practitioner for other facilities. Now, she says, owning her own practice is a dream come true.

Artesi had definite ideas about the feelings she wanted her facility to elicit. Starting with the name and echoing through the design of the physical space, she wanted a cheery, inspirational atmosphere. The office includes a waiting room, two patient rooms, a fabrication room, conference room, and Artesi’s office.

Artesi is the sole clinician, with support from two administrative employees, a technician, an intern in the process of applying to O&P schools, and a marketing/social media expert. While Sunshine P&O has recently expanded its fabrication facilities, “my business model is that I don’t get paid to be in the back room,” she says. “We have scanners and digital equipment and send almost everything to central fabrication.”



FACILITY:

Sunshine
Prosthetics &
Orthotics

OWNER:

Brooke Artesi, CPO,
LPO

LOCATION:

Wayne, New Jersey

HISTORY:

2 years



Brooke Artesi, CPO, LPO,
hiking with her son



photo credit: Vickie Siculiano

Brooke Artesi, CPO, LPO, with a prosthetic patient

The practice sees children, adults, and seniors and provides orthotic and prosthetic services to nearly every type of patient, from those who need wound care and offloading of diabetic feet to a patient who was fitted with a prosthesis for a hemipelvectomy. Artesi fits many technologically advanced products, such as the Touch Bionics iLimb and functional electric stimulation devices for patients with movement disorders. “We also do Bioness rehabilitation devices and Walkaide for foot drop,” she notes.

Sunshine offers designer fairings, or prosthetic covers, from

the Alleles Design Studio and UNYQ for lower-limb amputees. Patients can choose from ready-to-wear versions or create their own patterns and designs. “Fairings are walking art,” says Artesi. “They allow patients to express themselves and have a final say in the finished product.”

Artesi is herself an amputee, having lost her leg below the knee in a traumatic accident 20 years ago. She is an active athlete and leverages the attention she receives when competing in races to market her practice. She is a great believer in networking and used word of mouth almost exclusively to launch her practice.

PHOTOS: Sunshine Prosthetics & Orthotics

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Photo credit: Vickie Sculiano

Although Sunshine P&O faces little competition in the immediate northern New Jersey area, the facility uses its website and social media to attract and educate patients. The website features testimonials; FAQs about prosthetics, orthotics, and diabetic care; and an "Inspirations Blog," with monthly messages from Artesi on such recent topics as the Athletes With Disabilities Network, the story of an elite amputee athlete, and information about participating in an area hiking event. A Facebook page includes daily posts on topics ranging from recent news stories about O&P advances to the facility's products and services. "I get great hits from Facebook," says Artesi. "It's been an effective marketing tool."

For Artesi, the most challenging aspects of being a small business owner are both personal and professional. She has a two-year-old son and tries to balance being a mother—and an avid hiker and runner—with managing her own company. From a business standpoint, navigating insurance contracts has been the most difficult test. She credits yoga with helping her find balance, in both senses of the word.

Looking ahead, Artesi is open to the idea of hiring another clinician. "Most of our business is orthotics, so even adding a part-time orthotist would be a big help," she says. At some point, she might consider expanding with another facility, but, she says, "I don't want to get too big."

For now, Artesi is perfectly happy with her cheerful office, interesting mix of patients, and the opportunity to do what she loves best. **CP**

Deborah Conn is a contributing writer to O&P Almanac. Reach her at deborahconn@verizon.net.

PHOTOS: Sunshine Prosthetics & Orthotics



Photo credit: Vickie Sculiano

Brooke Artesi, CPO, LPO, works with a patient on the parallel bars

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