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BUSINESS, NEWS

Kentlands Psychotherapy Celebrates a Decade

 by [Ellyn Wexler](#) • February 15, 2017 • [0 Comments](#)

Dr. Elizabeth Carr is staying put. "I will never move again," declared the founder of Kentlands Psychotherapy, which has inhabited four different spaces in the 10 years since Carr first put up her shingle on Kentlands' Main Street. The practice's current offices—on the second floor of the building Carr bought in 2012—provide an airy, light-filled and cozy work-home for Carr and her staff of four therapists, an administrator, a couple of high school interns and perhaps most importantly, Riley, a delightful therapy dog-in-training.

Carr, her husband Russ Carr M.D., a senior psychiatrist at Walter Reed National Military Medical Center, and their 12-year-old son, Nate, live in the Kentlands as well.



Photo | Mac Kennedy

Dr. Elizabeth Carr, founder of Kentlands Psychotherapy, relaxes with an unofficial member of her team, Riley.



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After adopting 10-month-old Riley as their family pet, they found that the pup had severe separation anxiety. So Carr, with permission from her patients, began bringing Riley to work, and “the vast majority” of them, especially children and teens, have welcomed his attention and affection, she said.

Reston, Virginia, where Carr grew up in the 1970s, she said, “was kind of a hippie town, very community oriented, where all the kids played outside together” amid the cluster of townhouses where they lived. This community aspect was what attracted her to Kentlands for both her business and personal lives.

Intent on spending her college years “where people were into school and learning rather than sports and drinking,” Carr chose The Evergreen State College in Olympia, Washington. “It was the perfect place for me,” she said. While working on a bachelor of arts degree in liberal arts, she also served as a peer counselor, giving her a first taste of what would become her profession. “I loved it, but I knew I was too young for it then,” she recalled.

Post-graduation, Carr returned to live with her parents, first doing data collection for a twin study at Virginia Commonwealth University’s Human Genetics Department, then going off to teach English in Tokyo for a year—which, she said, constituted an “adventure” prior to resuming her studies. She proceeded to earn a master of science in counseling psychology at Avila University in Kansas City, Missouri, and a doctorate in clinical psychology, with a minor in health psychology, at the Illinois School of Professional Psychology at Argosy University in Chicago.

Carr’s next career decision was a result of comparing her unpaid diagnostic externship at Great Lakes Naval Hospital (“home of the U.S. Navy’s only boot camp,” she noted) to her low-paying job doing psychological evaluations at Northwestern Memorial Hospital. She was convinced that a career with the Navy was “more appealing than spending time on the phone arguing with patients’ insurance companies.”

Thus, Carr proceeded to apply for a “very competitive internship as an officer,” she said, noting that “the physical requirements for qualifying as an officer are the

same as any other officer in the Navy.” She was chosen, but given her third-choice assignment at the Naval Medical Center Portsmouth in Norfolk, Virginia. There, as a clinical psychology intern, she opted for what she said is the hardest year-long rotation first: the locked-in inpatient psychiatric ward—where she met her future husband. “It totally worked out for us,” Carr said, despite hurdles like dating long-distance when he was assigned to ship out of New Jersey and she to Jacksonville, Florida, and initially being separated geographically after they married.

Subsequently, both applied to be stationed in Italy, where they spent three years working (she as a department head at the U.S. Naval Hospital in Naples), traveling extensively and starting their family. Back in the U.S., Carr “reluctantly resigned my commission (in 2006), knowing I would have been sent to Iraq on an aircraft carrier” instead of living with her one-year-old and her husband. Shortly thereafter, she started her private practice, which centers on “seeing individual adults and couples ... providing psychotherapy, couples counseling and bariatric surgery suitability screenings.”

For now, Dr. Carr is content with her place on Inspiration Lane. “It’s big enough but cozy; it has a private side door, and it fits nicely into the community,” she said, noting that 70 percent of the practice’s patients live in the immediate vicinity. The location is convenient for neighborhood teens who can walk over, for couples who follow their appointment with a meal together and for parents who go off to do their grocery shopping during a child’s session.

And she is pleased to do her job, which she defines as providing “a supportive ear, compassionate feedback and (asking) questions that bring you to ideas for action.”

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