

Former CFL'er Tackles Chiropractic Career

Integrated care offered at Satori clinic

By Mali Rolph

Dr. Sean Graham played for the B.C. Lions and the Winnipeg Blue Bombers before hanging up his football cleats and hanging out his chiropractor shingle.



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Dr. Sean Graham has talented hands. He used to use them to catch footballs in the Canadian Football League (CFL). Now he uses them as a chiropractor to heal patients. It's a jock-turned-chiropractor kind of story.

"I started playing football when I was about 10 after seeing it on TV," says the soft-spoken Graham. Now 31, he's been involved with the sport ever since.

The six-foot-three athlete was scouted while on the varsity team at the University of British Columbia (UBC). Drafted into the CFL as a slotback for the Winnipeg Blue Bombers, he played for that team from 1995 to 1998. Afterward, he went to the B.C. Lions.

He hung up his football cleats in 2001. Two years later, in February 2003, he opened an integrative chiropractic clinic in Steveston, B.C. Graham operates Satori Integrative Health Centre with his wife, Danielle Aldcorn, who is a clinical counsellor. In addition to their services, Satori also offers massage therapy, acupuncture and homeopathy, in keeping with Graham's belief that patients benefit from having a choice of health-care options.

"I think chiropractic can be supplemented with other treatments," Graham says, in support of an integrative approach. "It's good because there's a lot of information sharing. We (staff members) meet on a weekly basis to talk about our patients' care and management. You get to learn about other things from different practitioners."

TRIBUTE TO JAPANESE COMMUNITY

Satori is a Japanese word for enlightenment. Graham says they selected that name in tribute to the historic Japanese community in which the practice is nestled. During the Second World War, residents of Japanese descent had been forcibly removed from Steveston and transported to internment camps far away.

The Satori building itself is of historical interest. Constructed in 1891, it is the site of one of Canada's first telephone exchanges. Before the Grahams leased the property, it was being used as a union office for local fishermen.

After a few months of renovating and decorating, Satori was opened for business. Football had helped make it all happen.

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– the camaraderie, and team atmosphere, and everyone having one goal and one focus. But I don't miss training camps," he says with a chuckle.

fit because of that philosophy. "One thing about being a football player is that you have to stay healthy and avoid injury, and chiropractic preaches that," he says.

SPECIALIZATION IN SPORTS

Instead, Graham has turned his focus to providing chiropractic care. It's no secret that he especially likes working with athletes. About 70 per cent of the patients who file in are active in some kind of sport, most commonly football. He also spends half a day a week back at his alma mater, treating athletes who are involved in sports such as volleyball and track and field. "I really enjoy working with varsity athletes at UBC," he explains, "just because when I was there, no one was offering those (chiropractic) services and I would have appreciated it." His position is that of head chiropractor for the university's athletic department.

Graham still heads back to B.C. Place Stadium, but now in his role as a volunteer chiropractor. He often treats players the day before a game. In the summertime, he makes weekly visits to Lower Mainland hockey camps run by Peter Twist, former strength and conditioning coach for the Vancouver Canucks.

"It makes my job easier when patients are motivated to get their bodies functioning well, as opposed to just coming in when they are in pain," says Graham of working with athletes. "You don't need to convince them to do the exercises you prescribe ... they know their bodies really well."

So what's next for Graham? He is hoping to pursue a fellowship with the College of Chiropractic Sports Sciences (Canada) [CCSS(C)]. Eventually he'd like to work with athletes at the national and Olympic levels.

But, Graham has not turned a blind eye to amateur sports. Recently, he took up coaching a local high school football team that made it as far as the provincial semi-finals. While not the CFL, Graham says it's rewarding, and his way of giving back to the community. •



Staff members at Satori Integrative Health Centre meet weekly to consider patient care and management. From left to right: Clare-Wheeler, RMT; Catherine Riceman, DCH (homeopath); clinical directors Sean Graham, DC, and Danielle Aldcorn, MA, RCC (clinical counsellor).

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