

Piecing It All Together

ORTHOPEDIST DR. HEIDI JOST ENJOYS THE CHALLENGES OF HER WORK

WORDS JENN REIN | IMAGE MEGAN PETERSON



A sense of healthy curiosity can lead an individual far beyond her own expectations. At least, this was the case for Heidi Jost. One of the seven physicians who make up the practice at Teton Orthopaedics, Jost never imagined she would delve deep into an orthopedic surgical specialty. Drawn to the arts, her undergrad major in French literature is a reflection of her many passions, but her role as doctor is what continues to fuel her insatiable curiosity. “I love the mental puzzle of the work,” she explained. “I love taking care of people.”

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 – Dr. Heidi Jost

As an orthopedist who specializes in hand, upper extremity, foot, and ankle injuries, she couldn't be more suited for her professional role. Despite Jost's initial attraction to the arts in academia, growing up with an orthopedic surgeon for a father and a surgical nurse for a mother served as early exposure to the medical field.

Growing up, her family had a “we're going to get through this” attitude whenever life challenges emerged. This helped Jost when, at the age of 18, she sustained a crush injury to her foot and lower leg that deeply affected her mobility. The skin grafting she had to go through, in addition to two summers on crutches, has added a personal perspective that continues to aid in her bedside manner.

Occupying a predominantly male profession—only four percent of orthopedists are women—doesn't faze her. However, the value of her position is not lost on her. Jost's advocacy of women in science and her support of mentoring programs is a reflection on her own background, one in which she remembers her mom telling her that she could do whatever she wanted when she grew up.

Now, she is in a position to share her professional experience and mentoring skills through Teton County School District's “Summer Student Medical Intern Program.” This is a collaborative effort that involves numerous local healthcare organizations. The three-week program gives qualified high school students the opportunity to observe the real world of medicine in order to inform their own career decisions. “If you keep students in your life, you look at things in a whole different way,” Jost explained with a smile.

This orthopedist keeps her tool sharpened by the sheer variety of what she does. She sees numerous wrist and ankle fractures, reconstructs damaged feet, treats arthritis, and assists patients who have nerve damage. She is ready to tackle whatever might be next by following her ever-present curiosity. It has been a catalyst for her development as a professional, and it's a trait that has driven her to ignite a passion in others. ■

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