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MAGAZINE

## GARY & PERRY OPIN Orthodontists, Milford

Opin Wide Orthodontics is about a lot more than braces: Perry, 74 (with a DDS from New York University and MS in Orthodontics from Boston University), and his son Gary, 42 (DMD Tufts University, MS in Orthodontics from UConn), devote a significant portion of their practice to collaborating with the doctors at the Yale Craniofacial Center. "We currently see about 200 kids with craniofacial abnormalities, most commonly cleft palate," Perry says. "Some of them began treatment at birth, and we'll work with them until they're 17, making them whole. These kids are in real bad need." Their needs encompass much more than dentistry. "We've had a couple of patients who have become part of our family," says Gary. "We'll celebrate different holidays and special occasions with them, help them with school problems. One girl with major facial disfigurement, brought over from the Philippines, doesn't have anyone in this country, so she asked us to go to her junior high graduation. We did, and it was special for us as well."

Crucial to the team's success after 14 years is its canine partner: Cooper, Gary's Crestpoo, who is a nationally certified medical therapy dog. Apparently, he came up with his own foolproof technique to calm frightened young patients—jump into their laps and fall asleep. "Our vet claims he's unique, that dogs won't normally do this with strangers," says Perry. "Kids with craniofacial problems all have had multiple surgeries, and develop what I call 'white-coat syndrome': They see any doctor and they assume they're going to be lied to, cut up, miserable. Cooper jumps into their laps and it's like we gave them Valium. Hey, we may or may not be any good, but the dog's awesome."



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