



Panke family chooses Davenport as home



It was late July of 2001. The welcome mat was already on the front porch before the moving vans had a chance to roll back out of the driveway.

The Panke family, Rolf, Heather and infant daughter Kaysa, had, at last, arrived home.

"This is where we chose to settle down and raise our family," says Rolf of his decision to practice medicine at Lincoln Hospital.

"My dad was an M.D. in Kellogg, Idaho for 25 years. Ever since I knew I wanted to go into medicine, I knew I wanted to have a family practice and live in a smaller town. I saw how my dad connected with his patients. They were his friends and he was part of the community."

Dr. Panke's welcoming attitude is evident as he talks about his first experiences with his patients here in Lincoln County.

"The people have been friendly and warm. We feel at home here. As for my patients, they expect excellence because that's what they're used to. That's why I came here. Practicing medicine in a small town, where you know your patients, allows you — challenges you — to give better care."

And the challenges of rural medicine were just too exciting to pass up.

"Rural family doctors have more responsibility and encounter a larger variety of situations. I welcome the challenges of working in the ER and nursing home in addition to my family practice. I think it will enhance my skills and give my patients a better rounded doctor than if I practiced in a metropolitan area."

As for metropolitan medicine, Dr. Panke is no stranger to the city practice as he did his family practice residency at Tacoma Family Medicine.

Dr. Panke not only brings his advanced pediatrics experience to Lincoln County, but his knowledge of the muscular and skeletal systems as well.

After earning a degree in molecular biology from the University of Washington, Dr. Panke graduated from Kirksville College of Osteopathic Medicine in Kirksville, Missouri. He is not an M.D., but a D.O. —Doctor of Osteopathy -- like Lincoln Hospital surgeon Deanna Huntwork.

"As a D.O., I'm trained to have a better understanding of the musculoskeletal system. It makes up a large, integral part of the body and is very important in healing. I do everything an M.D. does, as well as perform manipulations," says Dr. Panke.

He says practice has been busy, and the staff at the Davenport Clinic and Lincoln Hospital have been friendly and professional. "The other doctors are a tremendous support and are well experienced. They have very good clinical knowledge, which I really appreciate."

Dr. Panke especially appreciates Dr. Paul McLain, who retired after 25 years serving his friends and neighbors here.

"The people here love Dr. McLain, and for good reason. One of my challenges has been to fill his shoes, which is difficult. I do have my own style and I'm glad people have allowed me to be me," smiles Dr. Panke.

"I like to take the time to listen, ask questions and explain things. If I do that, my patients will be more receptive to treatment options and will have a bigger role in their own health care. That's important."

The Pankes (now including son Kristoff and the world's coolest hunting dog, Riggs) are outdoor folks with a love of skiing, hunting, exercising and traveling.