Ray Cralle has the hands of a healer and the heart of a saint. His physical therapy practice in Delray Beach is 38 years-old and still going strong. He has letters of thanks and commendation on the walls, but that is only part of the measure of a man who has spent his life working with (and healing) people with neurological and sports injuries.

And now Cralle has a new mission. And it’s not to further his own agenda; it is merely to help those with traumatic brain injuries. “I see veterans returning from Iraq who can’t function normally. They have memory loss and suffer from depression and disorientation. We have found from scanning their brains that they have significant brain injury (with symptoms you can’t see). By using Hyperbaric Oxygen we can repair the brain and get the person feeling like themselves again.”

Say what? Oxygen therapy does that? If you are like most people you may never have heard of Hyperbaric Oxygen treatments and you can’t imagine someone whose brain is in pieces get well. But that’s not the extent of Cralle’s claim to fame. “I have a patient who had a stroke and was walking with a cane. After Hyperbaric Oxygen treatments he no longer needs the cane and his mental clarity and speech have improved.”

If you sit and listen to Cralle you will hear stories that will make your hair stand on end (and your heart glow). And when you see pictures of children that almost drowned (and were comatose) that are now able to sit up and use computers, it’s enough to make you a believer. And that is exactly what Cralle wants.

“The reason I want to talk about Hyperbaric Oxygen treatments is because people don’t know about it. I have been trying to make people understand that drug and alcohol addiction creates a brain injury often unrecognized, but it can be reversed by Hyperbaric Oxygen. When you deliver pressurized oxygen to the body you can repair wounds and brain injuries,” said the FAU undergraduate and University of Iowa physical therapy graduate.

Cralle is somewhat of a pioneer in this field, augmented by his work with one of the earliest proponents of Hyperbaric Oxygen, Dr. Richard A. Neubauer. Together they saw the genius of its healing power and the skepticism of its detractors. “Dick Neubauer was ahead of the curve in this field. In the early days he was considered somewhat of a quack, but later on science proved him to be right on target,” said Cralle. “There’s even a Chair in his name at a Midwestern University.”

But all that is behind him now. Cralle’s legendary treatments are so far reaching that some of his patients fly to Florida from around the world to be treated by the man of many healing operatives.

But if you knew Cralle’s history you would know that the healing arts is a family business. His mother Ruth was one of the first physical therapists in Florida and he spent his formative years watching the
fruits of her labor. “When I was a child I would ride around with my mother and see her help children with polio get out of iron lungs. People were so appreciative of what she did to help them,” said the former marine, whose father Alexander Edwin Cralle was a well known opera singer and radio personality.

If you are fortunate enough to spend time around this towering yet gentle man (who measures 6 feet- six inches tall) you will quickly learn that he is devoted to his craft in a spiritual yet scientific way. “See these MRI scans, they show a brain that is eaten away on the side. But after hyperbaric oxygen treatments the brain is smooth and round,” Cralle says evangelically.

It is that improvement that has sealed his faith and his fate to continue treating (and healing) people who are deemed incurable by the medical profession. Cralle has seen people in wheelchairs get up and walk and been instrumental in healing Lyme disease, diabetes, autism, cerebral palsy, carbon monoxide and toxin poisoning and Alzheimer’s.

And you won’t see a happier person doing what comes natural. “In 1992 I had 13 sports medicine centers from Port St. Lucie to the Keys and over 90 employees. I sold all but one of them because I got too busy with the business and too far away from patient care. Patient care is far more satisfying than dollars.”

You could say that again. Cralle’s healing power (that includes neuro-rehabilitation and sports rehab) extends to famous golfers; he treated Jack Nicklaus, Pete Dye, Bob Murphy and Beth Daniel as well as polo players, Tommy Lee Jones and Memo Gracida.

To make sure that his brand of healing reaches those who need it, Cralle started a non-profit organization called HopeSprings Inc. This non-profit fundraising arm of his practice raises money to support the special needs of children and adults for physical therapy, Hyperbaric Oxygen treatments and other medical conditions.

On the home front Cralle’s life is equally as purposeful. His bride of four years Marta just gave birth to their second child (Elizabeth Alexandrea), and they have a two-year-old girl named Victoria Ruth. He also has two adult children, Travis and Lisa. And at the end of the day, Cralle is not only proud of the work he has done (and happy to see his patients blossom) he is equally as content with the sweetness of his family life. “Family means everything to me and so does helping people.”

If you are interested in learning about or donating to HopeSprings call 561-276-9643 or email to: info@hopesprings.org. Visit www.CralePhysical-Therapy.net.