# Anneli Hanna, MD

Anneli Hanna, MD, Board Certified Psychiatrist andSection Chief of Psychiatry at Eisenhower Medical Center

In a plot of land in Rancho Mirage that is shaped like and actually called “The Teardrop,” sit the private offices of Anneli Hanna, MD, Board Certified Psychiatrist and Section Chief of Psychiatry at Eisenhower Medical Center. “I’ve had opportunities to reflect on that coincidence,” says Dr. Hanna. “Here I am sitting on a piece of land shaped like a teardrop, doing work with people who shed many tears and helping them get out of their darkness and despair to create positive change in their lives.”

Hanna hails from Kerimaki, Finland, a small town about 25 miles from the Russian border. The oldest of six children, she became a caregiver early on, always looking after her brothers and sisters. When she was 10 years old, she had her tonsils out and found the experience of being in the hospital intriguing. “I was very impressed with the care and knowledge of my physician,” says Dr. Hanna. It was at that early age that she decided to become a doctor.

During her last years of medical school at the University of Helsinki, Dr. Hanna worked as a substituting doctor in small medical centers, including one in her own home town. She will never forget a family that came in when their father had drowned. Although she was still in school and a novice, it was Dr. Hanna’s responsibility to handle the crisis. “The role of comforting people in distress felt so right to me.”

In 1984, Dr. Hanna moved to the United States and completed her psychiatry studies at the University of California, Davis. She came to the desert in 1990. Today, she splits her time between her children, private practice, taking consultations and serving as Section Chief of Psychiatry at Eisenhower Medical Center. She is also a psychiatric consultant for the Betty Ford Center at Eisenhower. She has two other psychiatrists and ten psychotherapists working with her.

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While these responsibilities keep her busy, she does find time for her passion — interior design. This passion is more than apparent the moment you enter her offices. The spa-like surroundings with fountains and European décor were completely designed and conceived by Dr. Hanna. “It takes advantage of our beautiful location,” she says. “The large sliding doors and windows invite the beauty of the desert inside. It is a very open and light atmosphere and people really appreciate it.”

Dr. Hanna is reflective as she considers her patients, her own path and the office space known as the Teardrop. “I have often thought about a Finnish poem my mother taught me when I was ten,” she recalls. “Its translation means Crystal Bridge. This poem has brought me great comfort in my own difficult times, especially in caring for my severely handicapped son.” How fitting that the poem Dr. Hanna learned in earlier years would point to her own life’s dedication to helping heal the pain of others.

*Build a bridge, an arch of beauty and shine*
*Before too long you will see a long line*
*As people bring their own sorrows and pain*
*To exchange them for the gain*
*Of hope and peace*
*While walking across toward love and ease*

—Excerpt from *Crystal Bridge*, by Aale Tynni

“I find it so interesting to work with people at a time of extreme stress and difficulty in their lives,” says Dr. Hanna. “It is an honor that people trust me with their deepest secrets. I am also continually impressed by the intricacies of the mind-body connection. It is a challenge to understand the brain chemistry. I don’t think that the tears are shed in vain. I think that there is a purpose for pain in life. I have been told so many times, ‘Dr. Hanna, thank you for saving my life.’ There is just no greater reward.”

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