

## SPOTLIGHT ON: NURSE JOANN HARRIGAN

### Where did you grow up, and how did you decide you wanted to be a nurse/school nurse?

I was born and grew up in Bayonne. We still live there, although our dream would be to live down the shore.

I first decided that I wanted to be a nurse when I was in fifth grade. My grandmother was sick and I helped to take care of her and thought I should do this for a living. In 1988 there was a pretty significant nursing shortage. I was working crazy hours at Meadowlands Hospital. My brother who worked for the Newark Board of Education suggested I try school nursing, I thought I would be bored... I can honestly say I haven't been bored one day.

### How long have you worked at Clinton School?

Twenty-four years. My first day was November 1, 1988. That year I worked three days at Seth Boyden and two days at Clinton. In 1989 we went to full-time nurses in each building, and I got to choose between Clinton and Seth Boyden. I chose Clinton and am so happy I did.

### What do you like most about working at Clinton?

I would have to say it is the Clinton kids. I learn something new every day. Making them feel better and smile before they leave my office is my greatest joy. They trust me and I work very hard to keep that trust.

### Tell us about your family.

I am the youngest of five children and the only girl, which made for an interesting childhood. It was like having five fathers. The brave man that entered my life was my high school sweetheart Todd. We were married 25 years on September 12th. We are blessed with three awesome children who make us so proud. Todd, 20, is a sophomore at Saint Peter's University. Casey, 15, is a sophomore at Bayonne High School in an honors program that I could never survive, and Katie, 10, is in fifth grade and loves the stage.

### What do you like to do for fun? Do you have any hobbies?

I love spending time with my family. We love going to the beach and taking rides, I also love attending all of my children's sporting events. My son played baseball through high school and Casey plays basketball and softball for BHS. I can often be seen dashing out the door to get to the games on time or to Katie's play practice.

### What are some your "favorite things"?

This is very funny... my kids will often ask me "my favorites" and I never seem to have an answer. They always say they can't believe I don't have a favorite. So I will do my best. Food... Friday night is pizza night and I love when we make our own pizza— I love any activity that involves my kids. As for a TV show, we love to watch Survivor, The Amazing Race, X Factor, American Idol... we love the reality shows. My favorite show of all time though was ER. I like all kinds of music from the oldies to pop. For Casey and Katie I will say One Direction!



Joann Harrigan photo by Elizabeth Aaron

### What are the top five things you would like Clinton students to do to stay healthy?

I tell them all the time, we get one body so take care of it so it will last a very long time...

1. Exercise is so critically important to maintain good health.
2. Make healthy food choices. Healthy food does not have to be boring, find some fun tasty recipes online.
3. Rest. Getting enough sleep is crucial. Growing bodies need enough sleep to grow and have the energy to fight off germs.
4. Wash, wash, wash your hands. This is the cardinal rule of good health.
5. Have fun and don't get too stressed. Childhood is supposed to be filled with fun. Enjoy each new challenge and leave some time in your schedule to enjoy family time.

### If you could go anywhere in the world today, where would you go and why?

I would love to go back to Hawaii. Todd and I went there on our honeymoon and it was absolutely gorgeous. We would love to go back and see even more of the islands.

### If you could change one thing in the world tomorrow, what would it be?

I wish every child could have a family. No children should be without a family who loves them. Every child should grow up with happy memories from childhood. No children should cry themselves to sleep. No children should suffer with illness. Children are precious and it is our job to make their lives happy. Todd and I often say if we won millions we would build a beautiful house at the beach where all children waiting for adoption could live in a happy, loving home.

### If you could travel anywhere in the world...

I would really like to go to Egypt to see the pyramids and all of the beautiful artwork inside them.

— Elizabeth Aaron