



# Spotlight on RI School Nurses

Renee DiCenso *RN, BSN, M.Ed,*  
*CSNT*

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## **Background**

Renee started her nursing career in 1986 where she graduated from Boston College with her BSN. She initially worked at Yale New Haven Hospital, but married in 1987 and moved to Rhode Island where she worked at The Miriam Hospital for 10 years on an orthopedic and urology unit. She continued working as a hospital nurse until after her third son was born in 1995. She then started back to school where she earned her Certified School Nurse Teacher Certification and Masters in Health Education.

Renee started her school nursing career at St. Philip School while attending classes for her school nurse certification. In 2000 she started working as a Certified School Nurse Teacher in Woonsocket Public Schools, where she has had a 20 year career.

Renee loves working with elementary school-aged children and has worked in many elementary schools in the School District.

## **Spotlight**

In October of 2016, Renee was the recipient of the Golden Apple Award from The Rhode Island Department of Education and Hasbro. This prestigious award aims to recognize teacher excellence in the State of Rhode Island. Renee is a Certified School Nurse Teacher at Leo Savoie School in Woonsocket and was nominated by fellow teachers, Alison Kennedy and Diane Begin. They wrote that DiCenso "cares deeply for all the students, just as a mom cares for her children. It's as though she's on call 24/7."

Renee values staying healthy and teaches her students at every opportunity. For example: she has organized several health and wellness fairs. She partners with community organizations to provide valuable information about safety in the home and on the road, blood pressure screenings, nutrition information, and finds ways to have sponsors donate such items as bicycles to raffle off at the fairs. She also

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promotes exercise at her school by organizing a walking club during morning recess and has been a team leader for the BOKS program (Build our Kids Success) for the past two years - exercise before school program. She also teaches family life class to her 5th grade students each year. She values learning to strengthen her professional practice. She recently became a Certified Diabetes Outpatient Educator, so she could understand the needs of her students and families with diabetes. Renee has also volunteered at Camp Surefire, a summer camp for children with Type 1 Diabetes.

Her health office leads by example, welcoming nursing students from Rhode Island College to give them an authentic school nurse experience. In addition, Renee is a member of the Rhode Island Certified School Nurse Teachers Association Board since 2014 where she has served as chair for the Scholarship and Membership Committees.

In addition to all of the above, she organized an Adopt a family program with staff at her school to help families in crisis.

As you can see, Renee goes above and beyond for her students and school community and is a wonderful example of the important work school nurses are doing to better the lives of students.

Link to Golden Apple Award:

<https://turnto10.com/station/golden-apple/golden-apple-renee-dicenso>