

# NORTHWEST NEIGHBORS

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## Local woman named Social Worker of the Year

Janet Bannon, a social worker at Overlook Nursing Home, says that her job is a labor of love

By **DANI ELLE BRISSETTE**

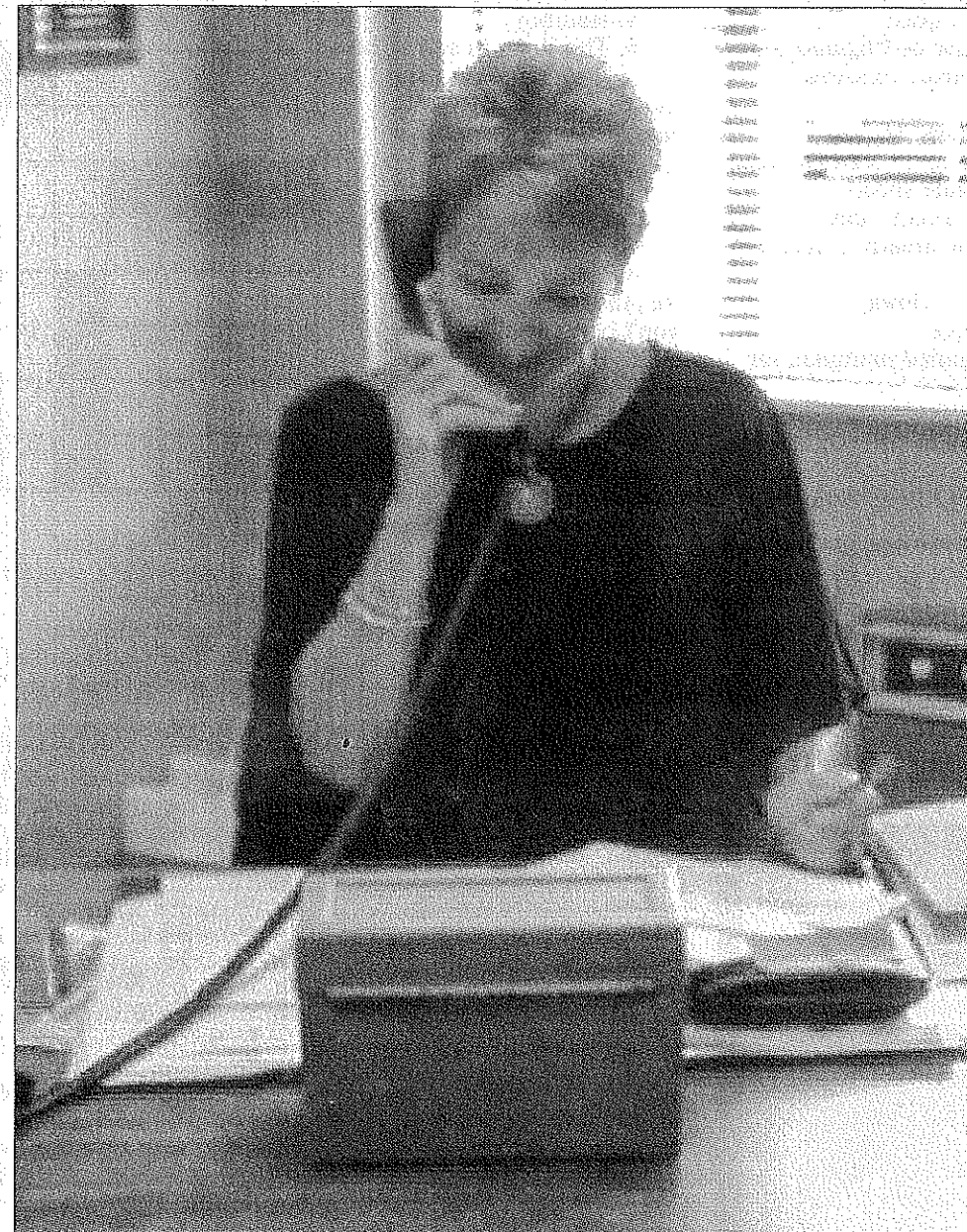
PASCOAG — When Janet Bannon was named 2006 Healthcare Social Worker of the Year, her initial reaction was surprise.

"I was shocked. I won an award just for doing what I do," Bannon says, going on to explain that she is simply passionate about her job and doesn't feel that an award was necessary. "That's just what I do. That's what my job is and I love to do it."

Bannon's modesty is probably one of the reasons so many people nominated her for the award. While some people just do the job they are hired to do, others go above and beyond their duties which is why Bannon's supervisor at Overlook Nursing Home, Charles Kenoian, nominated her for the Social Worker of the Year. Kenoian, along with two social workers, sent letters to Rhode Island Healthcare, the organization that administers the award, outlining the reasons why Bannon should be selected for the honor.

"When I won, they sent me the letters," says Bannon, expressing her gratitude for the people who nominated her and indicating that she is still shocked at being the winner.

Although her work in human services won her the recognition that many colleagues felt she deserved, Bannon's original career plans did not include social



Submitted photo  
Janet Bannon takes a phone call at her desk at Overlook Nursing Home in Burrillville.

work.

"I was in the nursing program. I loved nursing and I still do," Bannon says.

After enrolling in CCRI's nursing program, Bannon began to doubt her choice. Being a mother of two children at the time, she felt that the late nights and holiday hours would weigh too heavily on her family. On a whim, Bannon searched through the course listings that CCRI had to offer and her eye immediately went to Human Services.

"I had a ten year plan [to finish college]," Bannon explains, since working full-time and taking care of her family were her main priorities. "I finished in eight [years]. I pretty much went to school whenever I could fit it in."

Working at Overlook as a social service assistant for four years, Bannon spent whatever time she could in school while her husband maintained her household and cared for their children. After receiving her degree from CCRI, she transferred to Rhode Island College where she received her Bachelor of Science in Social Work in 1995.

"My husband became the mom through my last year of school," says Bannon. "Thank God he was there or I wouldn't have been able to finish it."

Her degree earned her a promotion to Overlook's director of social services and admissions director.

It wasn't long before Kenoian suggested that Bannon take administration classes, which she is currently in the process of completing.

Despite the fact that social work may not have been Bannon's first choice, she is extremely pleased that she chose it. Bannon says that every aspect of her job fits her personality and her passions so well that she couldn't imagine ever doing anything else.

"I'm not going anywhere," Bannon says, "I love my job."