



## Mary Jo sports muscle for massage

Mary Jo Jeffrey admits it. She has trouble keeping her hands to herself.

"I enjoy people and have a hard time not touching them," laughs this veteran Physical Therapist. "I love what I do and cannot imagine being in medicine and not being hands-on with my patients."

Throughout her years in PT, Mary Jo has seen the awesome power of touch in healing. That, and a keen business mind, have brought her to her latest endeavor — Massage Therapy.

Mary Jo will graduate this month with a degree in Massage Therapy from the Inland Massage Institute. With the full support of Lincoln Hospital administration, she will begin offering massage here by September.

"It goes with the hands-on thing," she smiles. "There is so much that massage can do for a person and the spa atmosphere is one many hospitals are going to."

Did we mention that business mind? "I'm always looking at expanding our Physical Therapy offerings and this seemed to fit right in as it makes sense from both the business and health perspectives. Doctors are realizing how beneficial massage is to healing and prevention. It's a natural direction to go."

Mary Jo says she's been approached by both patients and employees about adding the program. Instead of hiring a massage therapist, this avid student went back to school herself and built up the strength and stamina it takes to knead muscles for up to an hour at a time.

But don't expect *just* the traditional deep muscle massage. That wouldn't be exciting enough for Mary Jo. "I want to do hot stone massage, Reflexology (feet), pregnancy massage and pain reduction massage (for cancer patients) just to name a few," she says, noting she's hoping to get a chair so she can do quick chair massages for employees on break.

In fact, her business plan includes trying to get massage included in the Lincoln Hospital employee health benefits plan. "It would prevent injury and sickness, reduce stress and time off. It's a win-win," she says.

A native of Missoula, Montana, Mary Jo earned her PT degree at Children's Hospital in Los Angeles — one of only two programs in the nation where PT is taught in a hospital.

"It was exciting," she admits of the diverse patient load. Diversity, says Mary Jo, is very important.

"I'm such a generalist," she admits of her PT skills, which include literally hundreds of hours of continuing education courses. She could have a title behind her name by now, but that's not what Mary Jo is after. She's after experience and the more, the better.

"A lot of Physical Therapists are turning into specialists, but I enjoy being able to help almost any patient whether it's a sports injury, a burn patient, acute care or long term care."

That's why she fits in so well here at Lincoln Hospital. "I had lots of other job opportunities — really good offers," she recalls. "I didn't want to drive to Davenport, but when I came to interview and saw what a good fit this is with my skills and personality, I took it." At first, she was a department of one. Now she has another therapist, an assistant and an aide.

"The hospital allows me to do anything I want — teach, do sports physicals, massage... It's so supportive here. It's like being in private practice, but the hospital does the business side so I can be hands-on."

