

# Deborah Watts

As a junior at Boise High School, Deborah Watts was doing what most of her classmates were doing. She was studying, attending football games, prepping for the SAT and making plans for college. That was until the day she realized she was pregnant. At that point she was afraid all her goals and aspirations would be unreachable. Although becoming a mother at 16 had not been planned, it only solidified her drive to succeed, for herself and her child.

Deborah decided to transfer to Booth Memorial School during her pregnancy and finished her junior year there. Deborah married her high school sweetheart and they welcomed their son Chris into their family. Despite the challenging set of circumstances Deborah graduated a semester early and headed to college.

While at BSU she realized she wanted to be a teacher, and really wanted to work with at-risk kids. Remembering the teachers at Booth who had encouraged her to keep dreaming big, she decided she wanted to impact kids in that same way. She graduated from Boise State with Honors and became a teacher in the Boise School District. Things had come full circle; she was now a social studies teacher at Booth and Fort Boise Alternative school working with teen moms and at-risk student populations.

A few years into her teaching career, Deborah was counseled by her mentor Marian Pritchett to get a Master's Degree. Deborah went back to school nights and weekends and obtained her Master's in Educational Administration from The University of Idaho in just 18 months.

In 2002, Deborah's mentor, friend and colleague, Marion Pritchett passed away; Deborah was named as Head Teacher at Booth Memorial School. For three years, she led Booth School. Then a new challenge presented itself and Deborah decided to shift to elementary education. She was an Assistant Principal for two years and then four years ago she became the Principal of Longfellow Elementary where she is currently employed.

When you talk about awards and honors to Deb Watts, it really can't be summarized in plaques on the wall. Her achievements are shown in the numbers of futures that have been changed for the better because she has been part of the lives of so many young women. The only award certificate hanging in her office is as World's Best Mom award from her son Chris. Deb knows that raising healthy, functional boys to be great men is really going to be her most important accomplishment.

Just as her teacher Marion Pritchett made a difference in her life, she continues to believe that as an educator she can bring hope and encouragement to the children and adults that she has an opportunity to meet.

In April 2009, a longtime family dream of promoting Irish Heritage in Boise became a reality with the opening of Bad Irish pub. As a partner, Deb enjoys the entrepreneurial spirit that is welcomed in Boise.

Deb has been married 20 years to Don, and has two boys Chris (20) currently attending BSU, studying writing and Drake (3) who is still enjoying being a kid.