

## RACHEL STRATTON:



My love for the kitchen started at a very young age. My grandmother owned and managed a general store; she let me help her make salads and breakfast sandwiches, serve coffee, and ring customers up, in between stocking coolers and shelves. My mother also worked in kitchens – for Pomptonian Food Service. I always wanted to follow in her footsteps! I started going with her to work on *Take Your Child to Work Day* when I was 10 years old. She let me cup ketchup and make bagel bags. Now I joke with my employees that I entered the kitchen on *Take Your Child to Work Day* with my mother and just never left!

I also used to help my mother and grandmother cook, but I was mainly the sous chef, peeling potatoes, mixing ingredients, cleaning the aftermath. Growing up, my mother hosted the family functions; I helped her prep and plate everything, and she taught me at a very young age that presentation is everything. I've always enjoyed being behind the scenes when it comes to cooking, making sure things are done properly and presented beautifully. I actually prefer baking to cooking because I appreciate the precision needed to prepare a delicious treat.

I've lived in Hunterdon County for more than 30 years, working in Hunterdon County schools with Pomptonian for over 20 years. I worked my way up from General Worker to Sous Chef, Assistant Manager, Assistant Food Service Director, and now Food Service Director to help people and impact the students' lives. I get such satisfaction from seeing how new items I've introduced are received. I love my job and have a passion for serving students and staff a healthy delicious meal each and every day.