

SPOTLIGHT

Joyce Berger

As usual, I tried to do too much in one day. That was why Joyce Berger had to phone me from the restaurant as she waited for me to meet her for the interview for this article. Alas, I was still at the office, but hot footed it over to Luigino's to visit with a very patient Berger. Joyce, a mother of two and grandmother of seven, proceeded to share the story of her interesting life.

Joyce's first husband (now deceased) was a high school biology teacher where they lived in New Jersey. In the summers, he would teach at a summer day camp and Joyce managed the camp's office. In addition to being a very rewarding job, their children got to attend the camp!



After Joyce's first love had passed away, she became reacquainted with a teenage pal, Mel Berger, who was a recent widower. Although Mel was in Maryland and Joyce in New Jersey, they supported each other through their respective grieving processes. They each had to be strong for their children; Mel has three. Over time, they fell in love and married. In deciding where to live, they determined they should begin their lives together in a new place. That time was 22 years ago and that place turned out to be Carrington Park in Heathrow, where they built their home.

After they moved to Lake Mary, Joyce and Mel opened a balloon decorating business! They created stunning arches, center pieces, and columns for proms, corporate events, weddings, Quinceañera, and Bar/Bat Mitzvahs. This business allowed them to work from home and use their natural creativity. They even attended "Balloon University!"

Now, Mel and Joyce visit and Skype with their children and grandchildren who are spaced around the country in New Jersey, Tampa, Phoenix, and Connecticut. Joyce's daughter in NJ is a Mary Kay Cosmetics Director, and Joyce clearly benefits as her makeup is flawless. And, they are lucky to have Joyce's other daughter and her two children living with them. They delight in seeing their granddaughter (15) and grandson (13) every day!

Joyce and Mel are proof that "Love Conquers All!" Joyce took care of Mel when he had a serious illness a number of years ago. For the last few years, Joyce has faced her own serious health issues, and Mel has taken great care of her. And, her positive attitude and easy laughter help her cope day to day.

Joyce joined HWC in 1993 and has been very active, serving as Telephone Committee chair in 2010 and now as Focus Committee Chair. Both of these positions are Board positions and she additionally participates with the Charitable Endeavors and Ways and Means committees. Joyce also enjoys HWC's many opportunities to socialize and she has made many friends.

When Joyce and Mel moved to Lake Mary, they promptly joined Congregation Bet Chaim and have been very busy supporting the congregation. Joyce is eagerly preparing for her grandson's Bar Mitzvah and is making all the centerpieces. So, her creativity is still at work and her carpet sprinkled with glitter. Joyce is an amazingly resilient person and does not need glitter for her sparkly personality to shine through. HWC, her synagogue, and her family are all very lucky to have Joyce among us.

BY LEE GRANGER