

# Shannon Kiernan



## The right words are hard to find

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*Staff*

Shannon Kiernan made a difference in the lives of many children, not just in teaching physics or physical science, but in showing compassion and bringing humor to life. She changed and affected so many lives, something most people never get the chance to do. In her two years at Winnacunnet she showed us what it meant to be a passionate teacher and a good person.

In writing this, Beth and I struggled with finding the right words to describe her, because she had an indescribable energy. Her personality and smile lit up a room

and made any student feel welcome in her classroom. Students, friends and family all thought of her as an energetic young woman. Ms. Kiernan was able to touch our lives in the two years she spent here; it was a short time, but any time with Ms. Kiernan would have been memorable.

Many students have discovered Ms. Kiernan's remembrance Web site, [www.shannonkiernan.com](http://www.shannonkiernan.com), where students, friends, family and others have all been able to share their thoughts and memories. Along with several other Winnacunnet students, Beth and I shared our stories, and we would like to share some of the words that were posted on the Web site along with ours.



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*Ms. Kiernan like we never saw her, with straight hair.*

## Just one little interview

As a first year staff member of the school newspaper, sometimes you get assignments that aren't too exciting. My assignment was to interview the new science teacher, Ms. Kiernan. Going into the interview I only knew two things about her: she had bright red hair and was a HUGE Yankees fan. I was slightly nervous going to meet this new teacher, but I figured she would stand out in the teachers' room with her infamous red hair. I cracked open the door of the teachers' room...

Heyyyyy I'm Shannon, well Ms. Kiernan, but ohhhh I'm so excited I get to be in the paper!"

The energy that everyone talks about when they remember Ms. Kiernan is real. More real than any energy I had ever felt from a teacher and this was in the first 30 seconds of meeting her. Generally interviews take about 15 minutes, however we talked and talked for nearly an hour. At the end of the interview she gave me a huge hug and said she couldn't wait for the edition to come out.

It just took that one interview. From that point forward she always said hi to me in the halls or at the gym where she later joined. It seemed like after that one interview, we would always have some kind of

connection. The difference with Ms. Kiernan and many other teachers is that you felt like she truly cared about what was going on in your life, and that she was sharing genuine parts of hers. She became more than a teacher to every student she met, and that is why we will never forget her. I feel truly blessed to have met her and to have formed a bond. Now, if I have an assignment that at first glance seems boring, I will think twice and remember the one interview that changed me forever.

—Beth Bassett (12)

“Some people come into our lives and leave footprints on our hearts and we are never ever the same.”

—Unknown

“Laughter is the shortest distance between two people.”

—Victor Borge

“The stars that burn brightest, burn fastest.”

—Anonymous

## A strong, outgoing hero

Ms. Kiernan was what everyone should strive to be like in life outgoing, strong, independent, caring and so funny. At her celebration of life everyone talked about her energy, and that's truly what described her. She had the energy and humor to lift the mood of an entire room; I know this because she did it daily in our groggy second block class. I had stayed after with Ms. Kiernan dozens of times throughout the two trimesters that I knew her, and she always pushed me to be a better student and person. She taught me a lot about life, and if anything, I grew as a person and student.

I believe we are all placed on this earth for a reason and that we are destined to move and shake others' lives—and ultimately help others—and Ms. Kiernan did that for many people. Her wacky stories and insight on life made us all want to live with the passion that Shannon did. I wish I could have known her for a longer period of time; she changed my life, and I'll always carry a piece of her with me. The world is a different place because Shannon was important in the lives of children. She is a hero. This poem reminded me of her, so I wanted to leave this for others to read.

Thank you for being a part of my life Ms. Kiernan.

—Jessica Petruzzello (12)

*People come into your life for a reason, a season or a lifetime. When you figure out which it is, you know exactly what to do.*

*When someone is in your life for a REASON, it is usually to meet a need you have expressed outwardly, or inwardly. They have come to assist you through a difficulty, to provide you with guidance and support, to aid you physically, emotionally, or spiritually. They may seem like a godsend, and they are.*

*They are there for the reason you need them to be. Then, without any wrong doing on your part or at an inconvenient time, this person will say or do something to bring the relationship to an end.*

*Sometimes they die. Sometimes they walk away. Sometimes they act up or out and force you to take a stand. What we must realize is that our need has been met, our desire fulfilled; their work is done. The prayer you sent up has been answered and it is now time to move on.*

*When people come into your life for a SEASON, it is because your turn has come to share, grow, or learn. They may bring you an experience of peace, or make you laugh. They may teach you something you have never done. They usually give you an unbelievable amount of joy. Believe it! It is real! But, only for a season.*

*LIFETIME relationships teach you lifetime lessons; those things you must build upon in order to have a solid emotional foundation. Your job is to accept the lesson, love the person any way; and put what you have learned to use in all other relationships and areas of your life. It is said that love is blind, but friendship is clairvoyant.*

## Student Memories

*These students shared their memories of Ms. Kiernan.*

was put on the earth for a reason, to teach so many others about the quality and beauty of life. I know that she is looking down on us now; giving us smiles thought the sun rays. I am going to miss her, but also know that she is in a good place.

**GREG RIZZO (11)**

I have worked with her everyday this year and school is not the same since the accident. To her students she was more like a friend than a teacher. Ms. Kiernan will be missed but in a way it feels like she is still here with us everyday.

**JIMMY LOWELL (12)**

It is so tragic for the loss of such a loving, caring, warm-hearted person who always put everyone else's needs before her own. You will truly be missed and although our time together was short, you taught me lessons that I will hold with me for the rest of my life.

**JULIA NICHOLS (12)**

Kind, funny, loving, humorous, joyful, the list could go on. Ms. Kiernan was a teacher like no other, and anyone that ever had her knows what I mean. You could walk into her room sad and gloomy, no matter what you would leave with a smile on your face. It is truly amazing how someone could bring so much love and joy to one room, but she did it!

**ASHLEY MUTCH (12)**

Coming into physics class was always exciting because we all knew we had something to look forward to, seeing Ms. Kiernan and finding out what crazy thing she was going to have us do. We still wait for her to walk in the door everyday and we miss her a lot. She was a great teacher and a great person and taught us so much not only about physics but about life.

**CHRIS CORMIER (12)**

I went and saw them [GWAR] on a Saturday in October. The following Monday all I did in physics was tell Ms. Kiernan about the show and how awesome it was because I know she would like to hear about it and she would listen to anything I had to say. I told her about it and she did one of her classic faces and in seconds I was laughing because that's what she made people do, laugh.

**TARA MONROE (12)**

I believe that Ms. Kiernan