Unsung heroes are in our school nurses
They’re more than putting band aids on bumps and scrapes.

Cutline: Career Investigation teacher Kenda Felker, center, credits Stone Middle School nurse assistant, Shirley Sanders, and nurse, Jennifer Elrod, for saving her life.

Paris, Texas, October 2, 2019 – “School nurses are the unsung heroes,” said Kenda Felker, a teacher at Stone Middle School. “They saved my life.”

In mid-August on her way to school, Kenda, who has multiple sclerosis, noticed a rash and some bruising on her arms. She also noticed while brushing her teeth that morning her gums were bleeding more than normal and there was a blood blister on the inside of her mouth. Although she said she felt fine, she decided to go to the nurse’s office with her concerns.
Right away the nurse assistant, Shirley Sanders, recognized Kenda's rash as what her own husband had a few years back and knew Kenda needed medical assistance quick. The nurse, Jennifer Elrod, came in about that time and after hearing more of her symptoms she, too, urged Kenda to go to the emergency room or contact her doctor immediately. The rash the nurses were seeing on Kenda was called petechiae. It is a result of bleeding under the skin and also the cause of her bruising. By the time she left the nurse's office, Kenda had begun to have a headache.

Kenda made a call to her doctor in Paris who saw her immediately, ordered blood tests to confirm her suspicions and called her specialist in Dallas. The specialist told Kenda to get to Dallas as fast as she could but to be careful. When she got there her platelets were below one. Normal ranges from 150,000 to 450,000. Her condition was called thrombocytopenia and required a blood transfusion. Because of MS, Kenda had to have steroids before receiving the blood transfusion, and it was the reason why she needed the care in Dallas. The nurses and doctors said she was close to having a brain bleed, and feared it could happen at any time. In that case, she most likely would not survive.

Through tears of recounting her story, Kenda repeated over and over that Jennifer and Shirley are unsung heroes and had saved her life. The two nurses had been calm, yet persistent that she seek medical attention, which kept Kenda calm. Not checking her blood levels regularly with an experimental drug she was taking for MS was most likely the cause of Kenda's drop in platelets.

To show their gratitude and appreciation, Kenda and her husband took Jennifer and Shirley a heartfelt card and cake when they returned to Paris. Kenda said that the school nurses are usually putting bandages on kids' scrapes, bumps, bruises or giving meds to students, but that day they saved a teacher's life. Humbly, the two nurses just saw it as their job.

XXX