

SECOND PLACE

Renee Dube, Leominster High School

All the Difference

Although it is many people overtime that help shape our lives, one person in particular can make all the difference. The woman that stands out the most to me, for making a difference in my life is Mrs. Henrie, my eighth grade English teacher. She taught her students with patience, understanding, and above all, encouragement.

The impact a teacher can make on a student's life is tremendous. Before going to Samoset Middle School, I was homeschooled until seventh grade. I had never felt the encouragement of a teacher before. I was always nervous when it came to my academics, but the encouragement Mrs. Henrie radiated towards me helped me find my true potential.

One of the most interesting things about Mrs. Henrie, is her ability to maintain a positive attitude in every situation. Whenever I was having a bad day she would look at me and tell me to smile. This happened quite often, though my pessimistic self would rather not continuously smile everyday, her persistence would always make me laugh. One of the most important things Mrs. Henrie did for me, was helping me find my confidence once again. I used to be very self conscious about anything that I had written. Whether it be personal writings, or for school, I did not want anyone to ever read anything I wrote. She told me it was ok to make mistakes, and gave me ideas on how to better my writing. Her encouragement and support tremendously aided in building my writing skills, as well as my confidence.

Furthermore, there is another prominent way that Mrs. Henrie has made a difference in my life. She helped me overcome some rather undesirable social issues. Simply put, I had enormous grievances about doing group work. The people stressed me out and group work was intolerable in almost all of my classes. However, Mrs. Henrie saw the potential in me and made me work in groups in a leadership position. I cannot express what a difference this made. I became more tolerable of people as well as becoming more comfortable when working with them, it even became enjoyable.

Mrs. Henrie did more for her students than just prepare them for the next grade. She prepared us for life beyond school as well. She taught us valuable lessons of tolerance, and acceptance. A good teacher does more than teach their students academics, they teach them how to lead good lives outside of school. Mrs. Henrie's example inspired me to want to become a teacher too. I want to make a difference in my

student's lives as she has made a difference in mine. I wish to inspire my future students to be better people as she inspired me.

Though Mrs. Henrie is not in our history books yet, she is just as important to me as Rosa Parks, Eleanor Roosevelt, and Irena Sendler. A woman can forever change the world even if the change is just in one person. I will forever remember Mrs. Henrie as the woman who taught me tolerance, confidence, and how to inspire others. In the future I will know that I have succeeded when I can make a difference in just one person's life. Just as I have said before, one person can make all the difference.