

Teachers connect beyond the classroom through paired kidney donation (VIDEO)

VIDEO	AUDIO
Anchor intro	For patients waiting for a kidney transplant, finding a compatible donor can take time. A kidney paired donation program can make transplantation possible, even when a donor isn't a match. That's what reunited two former high school classmates, now teachers, and gave one of them a new kidney and a new lease on life.
SHANNON WILLIAMS PAIRED KIDNEY RECIPIENT Leesburg, Florida	"I kind of always knew I needed a new kidney."
	Shannon Williams spent 15 years living with polycystic kidney disease. When dialysis became a reality in 2025, she knew she couldn't wait long for a transplant.
SHANNON WILLIAMS PAIRED KIDNEY RECIPIENT Leesburg, Florida	"I've got to find my own match, so I started looking."
	Then, a social media post reached an old friend.
KELLY HARRINGTON PAIRED KIDNEY DONOR Leesburg, Florida	"She and I both teach in the same school district."
SHANNON WILLIAMS PAIRED KIDNEY RECIPIENT Leesburg, Florida	"I went to school with Kelly back in high school. We twirled together."
KELLY HARRINGTON PAIRED KIDNEY DONOR Leesburg, Florida	"I didn't know that she had been sick initially."
SHANNON WILLIAMS PAIRED KIDNEY RECIPIENT Leesburg, Florida	"She was like, 'Hey, I want to see if I'm a match for you.' Went through everything, and she was a match, except for the antibodies."
	Although Kelly couldn't donate directly to Shannon, a kidney paired exchange program offered another path.
SHENNEN MAO, M.D. TRANSPLANT SURGERY Mayo Clinic	"Someone may not be appropriate to donate to a particular recipient, but they are a fantastic donor to someone. And so the kidney goes into a (national matching) pool. Once a match is found, the kidney is donated to an intended recipient, and our recipient gets a kidney back."

KELLY HARRINGTON PAIRED KIDNEY DONOR Leesburg, Florida	"When I realized that I could still help Shannon, I could potentially save her life, give her a longer life, give her a healthier life, and help somebody else, it was like a bonus."
	Then, in January 2026 ...
KELLY HARRINGTON PAIRED KIDNEY DONOR Leesburg, Florida	"They called and said they had a match. I just don't recall ever crying so hard in my life."
	Shannon and Kelly drove two hours from their homes in Central Florida to Jacksonville, where the surgeries took place at Mayo Clinic. While one of Kelly's kidneys went to someone else in need ...
SHENNEN MAO, M.D. TRANSPLANT SURGERY Mayo Clinic	"Shannon received a living donor kidney back through the kidney paired exchange program. It worked right away on the operating room table."
	Not long after surgery, Shannon and Kelly were reunited.
SHANNON WILLIAMS PAIRED KIDNEY RECIPIENT Leesburg, Florida	"We were like two doors down from each other, so we got to walk the halls together."
KELLY HARRINGTON PAIRED KIDNEY DONOR Leesburg, Florida	"All of the staff members were just helping us and just supporting us."
SHENNEN MAO, M.D. TRANSPLANT SURGEON Mayo Clinic	"The ability and the impact that we can make on our patients is what drives me, both as a transplant surgeon and also as a scientist, to think about the solutions for the future, so that we can help more patients like Shannon."
	Before the end of the school year, Shannon and Kelly returned to their classrooms.
SHANNON WILLIAMS PAIRED KIDNEY RECIPIENT Leesburg, Florida	"To know that she literally saved my life, and I will always be grateful to her. I always tell her she's my angel, and she's like, 'Nope, I'm not your angel. I did it because I love you and I could do it. I could help.'"
	For the Mayo Clinic News Network, I'm Alex Osiadacz.