



NEW YORK STATE SENATOR

Pamela Helming

Senator Helming Presents Liberty Medal to Teacher Laura Rundell

PAMELA HELMING December 17, 2021

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Senator Helming presented local teacher Laura Rundell with the New York State Liberty Medal, the highest civilian honor bestowed by the New York State Senate.

On June 9, 2021, Ms. Rundell, then a health teacher at Seneca Falls Middle School, performed the Heimlich maneuver that ultimately saved the life of one of her students. Read more in [this article](#) from the Finger Lakes Times.

Senator Helming gave the following remarks in presenting Ms. Rundell with the Liberty Medal:

"I think we can all agree that teachers are truly special people, always going the extra mile for their students.

Laura Rundell is one of those teachers.

And even though she is a health teacher, I'm not sure she ever imagined she'd be called upon to save a life.

But on June 9th, that's exactly what she did.

Then-7th grader Allyson Fenton, a student, a valued member of this school community, was choking.

And in what I can only imagine to be a frightening situation, she was able to signal for help, making the universal sign for choking, doing exactly what Ms. Rundell taught her to do.

Ms. Rundell acted quickly and calmly, sending another student to get the nurse, while she performed the Heimlich maneuver that ultimately saved Allyson's life.

It's my understanding this was the first time Ms. Rundell had to perform the Heimlich in a real-world scenario. Her composure and deliberate actions certainly helped Allyson, and also assured the other students in the class that things were under control, and they were safe.

The Liberty Medal is the highest civilian honor awarded by the New York State Senate.

Tonight, it is my honor to present the New York State Senate Liberty Medal to Laura Rundell, for her decisive and life-saving actions on June 9th.

Stories like Laura and Allyson's make all of us think, What would we do?

Laura Rundell knew exactly what to do. Because she was trained. Because she's a teacher. And teachers will do anything for their students.

To Allyson and her family, I'm sure Ms. Rundell is also a hero. And I would agree.

Laura, it is my honor to present you with the New York State Senate Liberty Medal. We are grateful for your actions that day and for always going the extra mile for your students.

Congratulations."