



# wti CONNECT 360°

## A TRUE HERO



From left to right: Aron "Speedy" Gonzalez, his wife, Shannon Neal, and her husband.

March 10, 2020 started out like any other day. Shannon and her husband were going to go get her oil changed, and they didn't have the filter that she needed, so they were traveling down the street to get one. That's when they approached the tail end of a tragic accident. A truck pulled out in front of the motorcycle, and the motorcycle collided with the truck. Chaos unleashed as the individuals around her panicked. There was a man on the ground, not moving. As one individual on scene called 911, Shannon stayed collected and assessed the situation. Her training kicked in. She knew he wasn't getting air so she needed to clear his airway. Her and her husband cut the man's neck gaiter (neck protection) off and rolled him on his side to clear his airway. The man was not breathing and Shannon couldn't get a pulse, so she immediately started chest compressions as her husband was stabilizing his neck. She continued CPR until the fire department showed up and took over. When they loaded the man into the ambulance, he had a pulse again, but it was still unknown whether or not he would make it.

Shannon left the scene, worried about the man and whether or not he would live. Once she got home, she and her husband searched, waited, and prayed for "motorcycle man." This is what her and her family referred to him as since they never knew his name. They never could find any information on whether or not he had survived.

A happy ending finally arrived. Over two years later, a fireman reached out to Shannon and asked her if she would like to meet the man that she had saved in that nearly deadly crash. Shannon,

and "motorcycle man" reunited at the fire station, and she learned his name, Aron "Speedy" Gonzalez. It was the best hug she ever had. While at the fire station, the fire department presented her with a Citizen's Award.

Emergency services had told Shannon, that Aron had less than a 10 percent chance of surviving and without her stepping in, he wouldn't have made it. Aron got back to riding his motorcycle just four months after the accident and both of their families remain in contact and plan to have family get-togethers. Aron told Shannon that he doesn't know how he will ever be able to repay her. She replied to him, "Just pay it forward."

"God put me specifically in that place, in that time for a reason," Shannon said, "that's part of the reason I got into medical. It's not just about us individually, it's about what we can do for somebody else."

Shannon is a mother of four who wanted to be in a position where she could help people. She enrolled at WTI in December of 2018. During her education, she learned not only from her instructors, but from her peers as well. Shannon enjoyed being involved while she was a student, and she loved the hands-on learning, whether it be dissecting a cow heart or helping her peers while being a WTI Ambassador. She graduated in November of 2019.

"I really liked the hands-on learning," Shannon said, "I loved doing the dissecting, I loved getting to practice on my peers. My instructors were very good. All around, I had really good individual help to make sure I was getting things down. Which was really awesome."

After graduating, Shannon started working for Morton Comprehensive Health, a FQHC. Later, she was offered a position at Utica Park Clinic. She accepted the position. While she was at Utica Park, she picked up extra shifts to help the hospital when they were short staffed during the COVID-19 pandemic.

**"We were not made to blend into the wallpaper, we were made to stand out and do some good in the world." - Shannon Neal**

While she has seen success in her chosen field, her biggest success in our eyes is the fact that she used her training to make the biggest difference an individual can make. She saved a life!

[VIEW THE NEWS STORY](#)

### DATES & EVENTS

8/18 - Classes End

8/22 - Classes Start

9/5 - Labor Day (CLOSED)

9/11 - Patriot Day



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# AN INSTRUCTOR'S EXPERIENCE



Stepping out of the medical field full-time into a teaching position was a huge change to make 10 years into my career, or so I originally thought. After being a lead tech in a community pharmacy for so many years and getting so involved in loving my community, the fear of not being able to integrate that level of care into a classroom weighed heavily on my heart. Work ethic is huge in my farming family and if I can't throw myself into my work wholeheartedly then I feel that I am cheating the people that I am there to serve. I quickly learned that patients and students are both in the category of human being. Humans with a drive to better themselves. Students and patients are alike in the terms that they need to be heard, seen and given the tools to succeed that maybe had not been given in their formative years.

The main tools I brought into this classroom with me were empathy and a passion to serve my community. I work very hard to instill the same empathy and drive into my students day to day. As instructors, we have so much more power than we know with how we listen to, speak to, and show support to our students.

I'm not saying it's a full-time tea party, but we most definitely bond over some interesting conversations and stories, as well as venting about some problems that could only be described as "first world."

My heart has been full since about week three of teaching here when I started to see light bulbs go off for students who had been conditioned to believe they would always do poorly academically prior to attending WTI. Students that were showing little interest in class-time activities started showing up excited and prepared to learn. Making deeper connections with my students helped them open up to me about food, childcare, housing, transportation issues, and a myriad of other problems that were holding them back so that we could get them in touch with the resources they need.

I am not a one-woman show, by any means. The culture of love and support here at WTI has made it so easy for a community first, health professional like myself to thrive. We are here, as a team, showing the community love by lifting up and supporting our students.

**Jessyka Hawkins-Ferrell** - *Wichita Instructor*

# CLASSROOM INSPIRATION



I've learned in a short amount of time that *WTI* is a school with some special qualities that makes it unique. Larger schools may have instructors that see hundreds or thousands of students regularly so there's not much personal interaction. *WTI* is so much different. We get to know each one of our students and strive to make sure each person gets the attention and care they need to maximize their chance for success. Some of the more rewarding experiences teaching at *WTI* are the relationships you build with your students, the work you do together, and the feeling you get as a team when your hard work finally pays off.

I've already had several of these experiences. The students come to class every day. They do their work. They come in and study with me personally. We cover practice questions and find material to cover the topics we are weak in. We train and prepare together like a coach and athlete. Then when the day finally comes, we do that last minute prep

work. We get pumped up. We hold our own personal pep rallies. We play some inspirational music and walk down the hall toward the exam room, I watch them pump their fist in the air and run out of the exam room with a huge smile because they are now a certified professional. Our hard work as a team paid off. There's not a rush in the world that can replace that feeling and it happens here at *WTI* all the time.

**Nicholas Smith** - *Tulsa Instructor*

My name is Stevi Smith. I have taught Medical Office Basics at the Joplin campus since February 2019. I have worked in the medical field for over 20 years from the emergency room to the doctor's office. Although, working in the front line is rewarding, it doesn't hold a candle to the rewards of teaching.

I've had many students, past and present, who have similar life challenging issues, but wanted to make a positive difference in their lives. Coming to *WTI*, my focus is to build up their self-esteem and confidence in a relaxing learning environment. The reward to my position is to see the growth in both their knowledge and belief in themselves. I am certain that all my students are a success and have blossomed into well developed medical professionals.



**Stevi Smith** - *Joplin Instructor*



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## INSIDER INFO



**Don Barnes** - Joplin Instructor

### How long have you worked at WTI and what is your role?

I have been employed with WTI since 2011. I started as a Teaching Assistant, and after that I worked full-time in the HVAC field and occasionally substituted at WTI. I came back to WTI as a full-time Instructor in 2019.

### What's your favorite thing about working at WTI?

The students! Since I am a former graduate I have been in their shoes and seeing them absorb what I'm teaching truly inspires me. I still work in the field, and when I get feedback from employers about my students or former students, it makes my day!

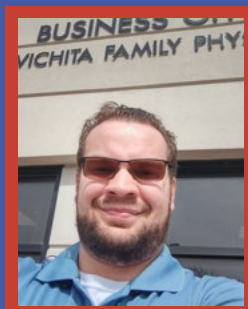
### What advice would you give to WTI students?

You will learn something new everyday. There will be tough days out there, there is with any job, but if we make it through the tough days, that only makes the good days so much better.

### Who are you outside of WTI and what are some of your hobbies or interests outside of work?

I am your true definition of a water rat!! From May to September, every chance of a free weekend you can find me camping and floating. I enjoy taking multiple day float trips also! On special occasions, I enjoy going to the lake.

## GRADUATE SUCCESS



Chris is hard-working, inventive and stays focused on tasks. He's also good at being a dedicated team member on projects. Prior to attending WTI, Chris worked in aerospace. When he got laid off, he decided to pursue an education at WTI to become an Insurance Billing and Coding Specialist. He knew it would allow him to put himself in a comfortable position and achieve higher goals. He most admires his mother. She led a life similar to his but faced more challenges than him and bettered herself. His favorite quote is, "Improvise, adapt, overcome," said by the amazing Clint Eastwood.

Since the very beginning, his experiences with WTI staff were excellent. All of the faculty and staff were friendly and understanding with each of the students' needs.

One of the challenges that Chris faced while attending WTI, was that human anatomy was never his strong suit. He had a difficult time remembering the names of various bones and organs, which part goes where, and what they each connect to. However, with the help of his teachers, he was able to overcome this obstacle. "Each of the instructors was well versed in their field of expertise. This made it easy to achieve my goal of becoming a Certified Professional Coder," he said.

Near the end of his educational journey, Career Services helped him secure a job that was close to where he lives. He currently works at West Wichita Family Physicians as a Medical Coder. He enjoys his career and has no intentions of working anywhere else in the foreseeable future. Chris's definition of success is completing the goals that you have set out for yourself and using the lessons learned along the way to help better yourself. "Stick to the program as best as you can," he says, "always ask questions and never give up. If it doesn't make sense at first, it will eventually."

## NATIONAL HVAC TECHNICIAN APPRECIATION DAY

If our heater quits working during the icy winters or if our air conditioner fails during the scalding summers, we become the HVAC Technician's #1 fans. They tolerate the crazy weather that we prefer not to endure so that we can be comfortable. June 22 was National HVAC Tech Day. To show them appreciation, WTI added a little light to their day. A multipurpose LED work light. We know that these technicians' futures will be bright.





# FEEL GOOD FOCUS



I have taken a more non-traditional route to becoming an educator. After graduating from high school, I decided that continuing my education in college was not what I wanted to do at that time. So, I decided to enlist in the United States Army for a 4-year stint... or so I thought it be only 4 years.

The Military turned out to be an education in the history of the world we live in. I learned about history by serving on the DMZ in South Korea and watching the Berlin Wall come down while serving in the Berlin Brigade. This was all great and I would not trade those times for anything. The real learning experience, though, was learning how to work with other people from all walks of life. I was taught that teamwork and caring about others, more than myself, was the way to succeed in the military and in life.

After leaving the Army I found I needed a career. I had an interest in plumbing, heating, and air conditioning because I had worked with my father and brother doing odd repairs growing up. I studied at North Central Kansas Technical College where I received my associates degree. My choice turned out to be an excellent one! The work was hard but the gratitude of the people I was saving from the cold as I repaired their furnace, or from the heat as I repaired their A/C, made the hard work worth it. Day after day, I was making a difference in peoples' lives, repairing refrigeration equipment that kept the food they ate fresh and safe to eat. It is quite fulfilling to go to bed each night knowing what I was doing mattered.

Leap forward 20-plus years and I decided that others would benefit

from my years of experience, so I decided to teach my trade. I put my resume on the internet and WTI reached out to offer me a position. I started with WTI in August 2010, and it is with WTI, I found my calling. I found out quickly, however, that I was not only teaching, but I was also learning as well. I was teaching the students and they were teaching me. I learned of their hopes, dreams, goals and all the things they wanted from life. They helped me to look out across the classroom and see "souls," that were ready to make a difference in someone else's life. Do I have a "dream job"? I think so. Watching students learn, grow, and become great technicians has been a blessing and I thank God every day that I am allowed to be an instructor and administrator.

Now, to the present and future students of WTI, my final thoughts are this, and they are by no means original. Ask yourself, when I am gone, do I want two dates to define me? (I am speaking of the day you were born and the date that you die). Or do I want to be known for that "dash" in-between? Did I help others, did I make a difference in peoples' lives? After I'm gone, will I leave a hole or just fill one? I believe you have already taken steps to answering these questions, the day you walked into WTI. No matter what career you choose, they all are geared to helping others. You will be making a difference in peoples' lives.

Life can be hard. School can be hard. DO NOT QUIT! Then one day, the job that you are training for will come. You will go to work, and at the end of the day of work you will sleep soundly knowing, I made a difference.

- Rod Fronk

## WTI TEAM MEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

### JULY

Becky Loos 16 Years  
Keith Nordmann 2 Years

### AUGUST

Rod Fronk 12 Years  
Kendall Gunlock 12 Years  
Ronda Adams 7 Years  
Madison Perkins 4 Years  
Erik Smith 1 Year

### SEPTEMBER

David Hull 28 Years  
Jeff Ranney 20 Years  
Rob Winn 20 Years  
Deb Perdue 17 Years  
Jerry Lemons 14 Years  
Alpha Sixkiller 12 Years  
Suzanne Young 10 Years  
Toni Parsons 10 Years  
Scott Lester 8 Years  
Holli Hatton 5 Years

Kimberly Carter 4 Years  
Robert Wyss 4 Years

## WELCOME TO THE WTI TEAM

Please help us welcome our new staff members; Jordan Ferrell, Luke Witt, Schnell Johnson, Taylor Tanguya and Colson Mark at the Wichita campus; and Jonathon Myers at the Tulsa campus!

# GOAL ACHIEVED!

March 2022 **Graduates** Employed  
in their Field as of Date of Publication



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