

# STUDENT SPOTLIGHT

## Jayne Cerasulo

Passionate. Persistent. Ambitious. Three words that describe Jayme Cerasulo, a student formally at Minnechaug Regional High School (Wilbraham, MA) and now Williston Northampton School (Easthampton, MA). In a very short time, Jayme has made a noteworthy impact at both schools through her compassion, leadership skills, and mental health advocacy, becoming the first-ever student to collaborate with KyleCares in establishing Active Minds chapters at two different schools!

For much of Jayme's life, sports have felt to her like her whole identity, consuming her life as she has traveled the country from one soccer or lacrosse tournament to another, and eventually onto the varsity squads at Minnechaug, where she played a significant role for both sports teams, even as a freshman. However, a torn ACL, LCL, meniscus and broken leg playing lacrosse during her freshman year presented Jayme with one of the most challenging stretches of her life. Her world came crashing down. Her efforts to pour her heart and soul into sports now seemed wasted, and as she sat on the bench and watched her friends and teammates playing soccer every day her sophomore year, Jayme for the first time in a long time felt as if she lacked a true purpose in her life. The year-long recovery from her knee injury had become challenging not only physically, but mentally taxing as well.

It was then that Jayme's attention became focused on making a change as a mental health advocate for student-athletes. She organized a mental health awareness soccer game at 'chaug, and after attending a MIAA student-athlete summit in October 2022 where Jayme and her sister were touched by the story of the KyleCares Foundation, they proactively took the lead in collaborating with KyleCares to start a student-led Active Minds chapter for their school. Her own personal experiences helped Jayme realize you never can assume how someone is doing or what they're going through – everyone has challenges they're dealing with.

"Everyone needs a hand sometimes", noted Jayme. "A lot of people are struggling with mental health, and I think people need to be able to feel like they can talk about this subject without being judged, and through the work of our school's chapter, people are more open to sharing with others, and hopefully confiding in them. I, myself, have become more open to talking about it with my friends, and have realized others around me have, too." Impactful events like the Green Bandana Project helped bring the school together for a common cause, and young adult speakers who shared their own mental health struggles really inspired many students to open honest conversations around mental health with their peers and teachers.



"Jayme was an integral part of creating the 'Chaug Active Minds Chapter during the 2022-2023 school year.

Jayme is an extraordinary person both on and off the playing field. Her leadership and advocacy towards mental health is admirable, and Jayme will be missed as she begins her first year at Williston. "

**-Steve Burndrett  
Minnechaug Regional High School  
Athletic Director**

Seeing the positive impact on her school's culture helped Jayme realize that even simple gestures can make a difference in other people's lives. "Every day I like to compliment two people and I always try to check in on people and ask how they are doing, hopefully helping people on days they really need it", she said.

The experience of starting the chapter helped Jayme regain her own identity, and a new sense of purpose in not just being an athlete, but in helping others. Before even stepping foot on campus for her first day of school at Williston, Jayme's wheels were already in motion on her 2nd chapter, as she educated her new school's leadership on the benefits of Active Minds,

and the work of KyleCares. "I think KyleCares is such a special organization. KyleCares has changed my life and the impact it is making for others is incredible" she shared.