



Mary Sherlach

February 11, 1956 - December 14, 2012

In October, Superstorm Sandy was bearing down on Trumbull, Conn., but Mary Sherlach and her husband rushed across the street to their neighbors' house after seeing a downed tree.

She just wanted to make sure everyone was OK, said the neighbor, Kathy Lucas, 52.

Ms. Sherlach followed that instinct Friday at Sandy Hook elementary school, where she worked as the school psychologist, witnesses said. When she heard shots fired, Ms. Sherlach and school principal Dawn Hochsprung quickly left a meeting and headed toward the danger, a witness said.

She was one of 26 people who were killed at the school, not including the alleged gunman, who authorities said took his own life.

John Lucas, 51, said Ms. Sherlach would often sit on her front porch on a white, wicker loveseat. The neighbors said she had two adult daughters, and cared deeply about her family.

"A wonderful couple, just devoted to each other," Ms. Lucas said.

When the shots rang out, school psychologist Mary Sherlach, 56, threw

herself into the danger.

Janet Robinson, the superintendent of Newtown Public Schools, said Sherlach and the school's principal ran toward the shooter. They lost their lives, rushing toward him.

Even as Sherlach neared retirement, her job at Sandy Hook was one she loved. Those who knew her called her a wonderful neighbor, a beautiful person, a dedicated educator.

Her son-in-law, Eric Schwartz, told the South Jersey Times that Sherlach relished helping children overcome their problems. She had planned to leave work early on Friday, he said. In a news conference Saturday, he told reporters the loss was devastating, but that Sherlach was doing what she loved.

"Mary felt like she was doing God's work," he said, "working with the children."