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My Father told me a quote once that says, "No one can change everyone, but everyone can change someone." This quote really caught my attention. My parents and the wonderful people at St. Martin of Tours instilled in me a strong Christian faith and the belief that God calls us all to use our talents to help other people. I learned that I can make a difference in the world now even as a young eighth grader. I can spread happiness by how I interact with people in my every day life and I can seek out service opportunities to help the community and specific people in need.

My family is very involved in service projects. I cherish a picture of me and my Mother that appeared in the Cincinnati Enquirer of us serving Christmas dinner to homeless men and women at the Drop Inn Center when I four years old. I have attended this Christmas party and served the homeless every year since. It is most enjoyable to see the people's faces and smiles just because of us coming down and spending time with them.

I have learned that if you want the world to be a happy place then you need to stand up and work to achieve that. I have learned that I can impact the world around me by volunteering. I like there to be events where people can come together and socialize and have fun. For these reasons I have volunteered my time at our Church's festival, Children's Halloween Event, Easter Egg Hunt, Ice Cream Social, etc. I love that through a little hard work I can brighten other people's lives.

I am most proud of a service project that my fellow Leadership Council members at St. Martin of Tours School and I initiated this past Fall. We learned about a charity called Operation Christmas Child which is through an organization called Samaritan's Purse. With this charity people fill shoeboxes with toys, school supplies, hygiene items and candy. These shoeboxes are shipped around the world to children living in extreme poverty. The children who receive the boxes also receive books in their own language teaching them about Jesus. We felt that we could certainly fill a couple boxes, but we decided as a group to make a bigger impact. We decided to step up and present this project to our entire school and parish. I had to step outside of my comfort zone and get up in front of the congregation and speak at mass. In the end, we were amazed at the amount of participation and the amount of boxes turned in. We collected over 350 filled shoeboxes. I know we touched and changed the lives of the children who received the boxes, but I also saw that we inspired the people in our community. I learned that I can change the world through good deeds, but that I can also change the world by leading others to also do good deeds.

I am excited to move into a new phase of my life as I will go into high school next year. I look forward to the new opportunities that high school will provide for service. I chose LaSalle High School as the school I will attend. A big aspect that sold us on La Salle was when we went to their Open House and we learned about the many service projects that they do locally, outside of Ohio and even outside of the country.

I will continue to strive to change our world for the better. I certainly recognize that I cannot change everyone, but I am going to do my best to change as many people for the better as I can.