

**Alexa Ligons - Bethany School - Mount Notre Dame High School,**

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“Small things done with great love can change the world.” This is what we believe at my church, and this is how I try to live my life. I know at this age, I am somewhat limited in the types of things I can do, but I believe the things that I do can make a difference to people.

Ever since I was a small child, I loved helping people. I always wanted to go with my mom when she would volunteer. For me, volunteering and helping people is fun. I volunteer in my community whenever I can. At school, I try to help my friends, teachers and even the people I don't know well. Sometimes I believe it's more rewarding to help people you don't know, because it gives them a little insight to who you are and opens the door to making new friends. I know how it feels to be new at a school and for everyone to exclude you. I want to make sure everyone knows and gets the kindness that they deserve; that we all deserve.

When I go out to volunteer, I don't always go any place in particular, sometimes it is just walking out the door. Holding the door open for someone or picking up something that someone has dropped, those are little things, but they bring joy to the faces of people. You never know what kind of day a person is having, and even just a simple thing like saying hello or complimenting their outfit can change their whole outlook. I especially like working with the elderly because they always have a story to tell you. I have learned so much about history from their great stories. They light up like a Christmas tree when you start to talk with them. I think we all just need a kind word from time to time, and I try my best to do that as often as possible.

Volunteering makes people feel good, but that isn't why I help people. I help people because I like to see the change that happens right before your eyes as you're helping them. I like to see the difference a kid like me can make. And most of all, I want to see the people I've helped go out and help others as well. I want everyone to know kindness, and to know that there are good people in the world if you look in the right places. Everyone talks about how they want to change the world, but to change the world, we need to have people who are willing to persevere through the tough times. Before we can talk about changing anything, we must first change ourselves so that we are helpful, encouraging and uplifting.

Volunteering at the homeless shelter is difficult sometimes to see. But I just try to put myself in their shoes and give them all the love and encouragement I would want if it were me. We play games, laugh and do nails, just regular stuff. The smiles they give to you when you are there giving your time is worth more than gold. We must pass down our work ethic to the next generation, so maybe one day we will live the lives that God

intends us to live. Right now we are a long way from it, but we will only get closer by taking one step at a time.

All of the small things you do count. They make life worth living. Even though I can only do small things right now, I'm glad to be able to do my part with love and joy. I believe it doesn't matter how many hours you work or how much money you give, but how much heart you put into the things you do. I know it matters. One day we will look back on the small stuff and realize that it actually had a huge impact on everyone's lives, and that helped to change the world.