

Grace Sunderman - Sacred Heart of Jesus School- McAuley High School
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Jane Goodall once stated, "What you do can make a difference and you have to decide what kind of difference you want to make." Making a difference in people lives is what Jesus calls me to do. I have been positively affecting people throughout my life with a variety of acts of service. Since I was young, my parents have been telling my sisters and me how important it is to help others who need it the most. Now I try to do just that in my daily life. I find ways to help others through participating in many groups that try to make a difference in peoples' lives. By being a part of these organizations, I can meet the needs of a variety of people and make a true impact on others on a regular basis. As a member of a group, I can positively affect more lives than if I tried to on my own.

One organization that I participate in that helps other people is Girl Scouts. My Girl Scout troop is currently leading a drive to collect shoes for people in Africa. Many diseases can be transmitted through the foot. A simple item like a shoe can make such a difference in a person's life. A difference that is so huge that I can never really imagine since my life is so blessed.

Another organization that makes a difference in people's lives is my church's Youth Group. Currently my youth group is collecting money to buy an alpaca for a family in another country. The alpaca gives them milk for cheese and other food. Also it gives them wool which will change their lives. Last week my group made over 260 peanut butter and jelly sandwiches for the local homeless shelter so a person in need can take a sandwich with him or her when he or she leaves in the morning. This winter, my Youth Group hosted a Christmas dinner to needy children. We raised money and

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went Christmas shopping for each of the 50 children. To see the joy on each child's face as he or she received a wrapped present was priceless. I know my work made a huge impression on these children. I volunteer with my Youth Group in many activities that help people. This is just one of my favorite activities.

My school has a volunteer group called "Helping Hands." The past two years, my group has hosted an event called "Mom and Me Valentine Tea." All the money raised is donated to Cincinnati Children's Hospital. I have organized games, created booths that making cookies, crafts or finger nail painting. I love seeing the little girls so excited to work with me!

The most work I have done to affect people's lives is through volunteering in group organizations. I am learning how to take the initiative and to be a leader through these volunteer activities. I plan on using my skills that I am learning to continue to help others as I grow older.

Affecting other people can be done in large ways such as the ones I mentioned. I also know that I can affect other people's lives in little ways. I am kind and friendly to all of my classmates. A simple smile or a kind compliment can be all a person needs to feel accepted or liked. These are things that also really matter to a person. I feel that being aware of the people around me and trying my best to help in any way is what Jesus wants me to do. "Do unto others as you would have done to you," is how I try to live my life. If I am successful with this, I know I am positively affecting others.