

I have affected many people in my life in a positive way. I serve at both weekday and weekend Masses as well as weddings and funerals. I participate in service projects in my school. We do multiple service projects during the school year including the Rake n' Run, Christmas stockings, and the Thanksgiving Meal. I have also participated in the Aubrey Rose American Girl Fashion Show and raised money for the Aubrey Rose Foundation. It makes me feel good to know that I am helping someone by giving them a little money or cleaning their yard or just doing whatever I can to help.

When I serve Mass, I find it easier to pay attention. This helps me understand the Mass a lot better and allows me to participate in a more important way at Mass; I have something to do and I'm closer to what is happening. I can help the priest serve the sacrament. Serving Weddings are a lot of fun, it is so touching to watch the bride and groom exchange vows and make a commitment to each other. It always makes me very happy. However, when I serve funerals, I feel so sad because the lectors tend to cry while they are reading and can't finish. It is so sad to watch the families of the deceased have a hard time saying their final goodbye to their loved one. I am glad that I can be there to help them get through their difficult time. While serving weekday Masses, I have to leave school and go to church. It makes me feel good to know I am helping in the Mass and the school will allow it, even though I have to make up the school work that I miss.

Helping out with the service projects we do at school really makes me feel like I am making a difference in someone's life. I like the participating in the Rake n' Run because our grade is actually doing something to help the elderly. Last year a man who lives near our school wrote a very nice thank you note to us. I enjoy the Christmas stockings because everything we collect goes to the military; because my brother is in the U.S. Army, it feels like we can almost close the gap between us. He has written to us that his team really loves it when we send care packages to him because he always shares with them; many of them have never received a care package of their own, so we are helping them to know that they are cared about and that we appreciate what they are doing for our country. I like donating to the Thanksgiving Meal because it feels like someone, somewhere is feeling blessed to have people in my school who will give them what they need and they are not completely alone in the world.

While I was participating in the Aubrey Rose Foundation American Girl Fashion Show, I couldn't stop thinking about the little boy, Sean, I was helping and I just knew we would raise the money he needed to come to Cincinnati to have his surgery. My sister and I asked all of our family members to donate money for this wonderful cause. We also asked our friends at school for donations. At our birthday parties we asked people not to bring us gifts, but to please bring a donation for the Aubrey Rose Foundation instead. When we asked a local artist for a donation, she gave each of us a picture for the raffle. We don't have our own income, but we did everything we could to raise money for this great cause. We were so happy when we found out that Sean could come to the United States for heart surgery and that the procedure was a success; little Sean was soon on his way to recovery! I only wish I could have seen his smiling face in person.

In the future, I would like to participate more with the Aubrey Rose Foundation by doing whatever I can to help. I want to affect people in a positive way. I want to help people and be the best person I can be. I don't know yet what I want to be when I grow up, but I am thinking of becoming a dentist; I would then be able to take mission trips to provide dental care to children in orphanages all around the world.