

## **Claire Ellerhorst – St. Catharine of Siena – Mother of Mercy High School**

Through the years my parents have given up their time to help others. Following in their footsteps I have tried to do as much as I can to help out and volunteer in my community and school life. I help out by participating in service projects at school, helping my disabled family members, and giving up my time to help out at my dad's concert series, which benefits Catholic Education.

At St. Catharine's we do many service projects that the whole school can participate in. Every year we do one called Operation Rice Bowl. We are given little cardboard bowls that we fill with loose change to give to families all around the world who are less fortunate. I am also a member of Student Council. I help set up for fun nights and make sure all the kids are having fun. In addition to student council I was in girl scouts not to long ago. We have gone to nursing homes and visited the residents there. We also make blankets for our wounded troops so they can keep warm on their way to the hospital. Our church festival is an important fundraiser for our parish. I volunteer my time as an Italian dancer and work the children's games

I have a very special cousin in my life. Her name is Audrey. She was born with a genetic disorder called Trisomy 18. She cannot walk or talk and is confined to a wheelchair. I love to spend time with her, playing with her and her toys and making her laugh and smile. She may not understand everything I say and do, but I know in my heart that the time we spend together is special to both of us.

Seven years ago my Father started the Greater Cincinnati Performing Arts Society. It is a non-profit organization, which benefits Catholic School Education. Over the years I have helped my dad with many aspects of the organization. I help run concessions and help him get everything set up and taken down before and after the concert starts.

These people and opportunities have inspired me to become closer to my faith and to God. I hope that all the people I have worked with and helped have been affected in a positive way because working with them and helping them, has made me a better person. Realizing that the smiles on these people's faces are from you is something I will carry with me throughout my life.