

**Aubrey Rose 2011 Scholarship Essay**  
**Submitted by Maria Torok**  
**St. Dominic School**

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My name is Maria Torok. I'm 14 years old and an 8th grader at St. Dominic School. When my religion teacher read Aubrey Rose Hollenkamp's story, I was very moved. I started to wonder how I've made a difference in anyone's life. At first I couldn't think of anything, but after talking with my mom, I realized that I've made choices and do actions that have made a difference in people's lives.

I've made an impact by taking time to volunteer with my mom and sister at The Bethany House. It's a shelter where women and children have a temporary home, while they find housing and a job. I have a great time serving dinners to the families several times during the year. It's fun to see how much the kids appreciate the meal, especially the desert! For Easter, I help the kids with an egg hunt in their backyard. The most fun is working a game booth at the annual street festival. All the kids at the house and in the neighborhood come and it's a blast! I donate my clothes to the house and my stuffed animals for prizes at the festival. I feel like putting even a little amount of effort into helping someone there can make a huge difference in their life. I know I love it when I see all the smiles on the kids' faces.

I try to make a difference by being dependable and helpful with my family. I take pride in all the chores I do around the house and make certain they are not just completed, but I always do the best job I can. I even do chores without being told, which gives my mom a huge smile on her face. I give my service and talents not just to my family but others, when possible. There is a family friend that runs a craft business, so anytime they need help preparing for a show or even making some of the crafts I jump at the chance to help them out, since I love art. They both are getting older and I think that without my help it would be harder for them to run the business and put extra stress on their life. They work with wood and they asked me recently to help them clean out the barn. When they first asked me, I didn't want to lift and move all the heavy wood, but then I thought to myself, they are depending on me. When the day was over I looked back and realized it was one of the best days and I felt proud that I made the choice to spend my Saturday with them.

My neighbors know that they can depend on me as well. When they go on vacation I watch their cats, water their plants, and get their mail or paper. This may seem like a small job, but I feel it's important that they trust me. I babysit for another neighbor's 3 year old boy, Jack. He is a handful most of the time, the typical boy who gets into tons of trouble. They are both newspaper reporters and have odd hours and sometimes they need me to babysit with short notice, so it's important that they can count on me. I also share a paper route with my neighbor. It has taught me that no matter what the weather it's essential for me to delivery their paper each week.

Doing service for my parish makes me feel like I have done something important for God and my community. I am a Eucharist Minister and Server. I was honored when my priest asked that I serve at the Westside Rosary Rally this past summer. I have also served at several funerals. One day when I had to serve a funeral, we were off school because of snow and Father was nervous that no one was going to be there. When my server partner and I showed up he was overjoyed. It wasn't fun getting up early on a snow day, but I realize it is part of my duty as a server.

Even though some of these actions are small, I feel in my heart that I have done good works of service and my community can depend on me, just like Jesus would want. You don't have to do large acts of service, but do what you can, each day, with all your heart. I would be honored to receive the Aubrey Rose Hollenkamp scholarship and would strive to continue to live my life with a smile on my face, as Aubrey did. Thank you!