

AUBREY ROSE FOUNDATION SCHOLARSHIP

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Immaculate Heart of Mary**

One little smile can do a lot. In fact, a smile is one of the most powerful ways of making someone feel better. A smile can cheer someone up, or it can tell someone you care about them. I know how little things, such as a smile, a kind word, or the simple gift of one's time, can make a difference.

A smile can sometimes mean the most to a friend in need. I remember the time my best friend's grandpa had bypass surgery, and she didn't know if he was going to live. I wanted to help her and imagined what it would be like if I was in her position. I knew that all I could do for her was try to be cheerful for her sake and keep smiling. She knew I cared about her even if I didn't say anything.

A couple days later her grandpa died. She went through a really hard time and didn't really want to hang out. When she felt better, she told me how much I had helped her get through her Grandpa's death. She told me that I had a gift. I could make anyone feel better with my smile and my words. That day, she also called me a people person and told me I could do great things with my life.

I enjoy volunteering and always try to take advantage of opportunities to help others. As a Girl Scout for several years, I have helped my troop in several projects. We participated in the Earth Day celebration at Sawyer Point last year by putting on educational puppet shows for children. Two years ago, some of us decided to earn the Marian Medal for Girl Scouts. Our Marian group has made baby blankets for a pregnancy center we visited and also donated new swimsuits for a program that helps less fortunate girls our own age. I also shopped for items for our adopt-a-soldier program. Our troop sent a care package overseas to a soldier. I contributed some snacks and toiletries. I also sent him a Christmas card. I am pretty sure my original art work was worth a smile.

One of my favorite things to do is help younger children. As a volunteer for IHM's vacation Bible school, I helped with the children in the kindergarten class. We had a lot of fun doing crafts, telling stories, and learning songs. I made a lot of little friends over the week and got a lot of hugs and smiles.

Currently, I am serving as an assistant to my sister's first grade Daisy troop. As an older scout, I get to be an example to the girls and help the parents in anyway I can. I work well with the girls who have a lot of energy. We play games and of course have the mandatory snack.

Some of the best smiles are those you never get to see. Twice in the last couple of years, I have been growing my hair out and donating it to an organization called "Locks of Love." The organization makes wigs for children who have lost their hair due to an illness or medical condition. I thought it was a good way of helping another child.

It takes a year and a half to grow the eleven inches of hair required to donate, but it was definitely worth it. I know how hard it can be for kids who are different. I was diagnosed with hearing loss when I was younger and have had to wear hearing aides since I was five. Once and awhile I would get questions from other kids at school and was a little embarrassed. The experience taught me the importance of accepting others. I know what it's like to face challenges and be different. It has helped me discover one of the things I am best at - having a positive

attitude and making others feel better about themselves. Hopefully, my donation can help another child feel better about themselves.

This year I lead or was part of several service projects in my school. As student council co-president, I helped collect and box the food our school collected for our Thanksgiving food drive for the SEM food pantry. The food we helped collect hopefully made Thanksgiving dinner a little better for other families. We also held a bake sale so we can fund other service projects and activities for the student body. I love to bake and was glad to contribute cookies. I know I made my parents smile when I actually cleaned up too.

One of my favorite projects was one my friend and I came up with. Before Christmas, we made our own ornaments and bracelets and sold them at our parish's Saint Nicholas Festival. We worked very hard designing and preparing our items so we could sell them and then donated all our profits to the American Cancer Society. Earlier in the year, we also worked together in the Run to Remember at Beech Acres.

I also take time to share my faith and be an active and positive part of my church. I have been an alter server for three years and became an altar captain last spring. One of my duties is to guide younger servers during the mass and of course help the priests with the celebration of the mass. Neighbors always comment how much they like to see me smile while I serve. I also serve at funerals. Not everyone does, but it is at such moments, in a quiet way, I get to be part of the church family to help friends, family and the parish say goodbye to a loved one.

I try to bring my positive attitude to all aspects of my life. Though I am far from the best athlete on any of my teams, I try to be the best teammate I can. I always try to encourage the rest of team when I am on or off the court. My coaches always appreciate my attitude.

Ever since that day with my best friend, I find myself doing a lot of community service. I have tried to help others and make their lives a little better in many different ways. I will never forget that moment with her when I realized I could make a difference and change someone's life.

Aubrey would be my age this year. I admire the will she had to live and her legacy - a little girl's smile - spreading hope, love, and life beyond her own.