

Mollie Young
All Saints School

On Sunday, March 18, 2007, the day after St. Patrick's Day, at 3:00 in the morning, my 24 year old cousin, Ashley Mauter, was in a horrible house fire on the University of Virginia campus. Everyone got out safely, except Ashley and her soon-to-be fiancé, Brett. Brett died a few days later, but Ashley survived. She suffered third degree burns over half her body and was in a coma for several weeks. She stayed in the hospital for three months and then in rehabilitation for another four more months. The medical expenses were horrendous, so I decided I wanted to do something to help raise money.

At the time, Ashley was working as a part-time manager at a restaurant, planning to attend nursing school. When we heard that she didn't have any health insurance with her job, many friends and family had big fund-raisers for her. I knew I wanted to do something myself, but couldn't think of what an 11 year-old could do to raise much money. Then I remembered that two years before I had a lemonade stand and raised over \$100 for victims of a hurricane that struck New Orleans, called Hurricane Katrina. The lemonade stand I did for Ashley was a little different from the one I did for the Hurricane Katrina victims because I made flyers that had her picture and what happened to her. I learned that people are a lot more giving when you're not just putting money in your own pocket, but are doing it for someone else. I raised \$294 from a simple lemonade stand.

I wasn't there the day Ashley opened my card with the check in it, but she told me that just my efforts to help raise money for her meant more than the actual money itself. It's been three years since the fire and Ashley has had a miracle recovery. She now lives in California and is an active member of "The Phoenix Society for Burn Survivors", an organization of burn victims that help other victims deal with their injuries, especially children. It made me realize that doing things to help even just one person can have an impact on so many others, but it really had even bigger impact on me.