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Happiness – true happiness in life is bringing joy to others. Bettering someone else's outlook on life is, or should be, one of our utmost important efforts in our daily lives. True joy is found in giving joy to others. In her short life, it seems that Aubrey Rose was able to figure out this most important life lesson.

I feel that I have made a positive impact in my life on the people around me. Everyday, I strive to change peoples' lives for the better. Examples of this can be found in every aspect of my life. I share my musical talent with lonely senior citizens in the Musical Gift Tour. I share my skills on guitar with my fellow Parishioners by playing at Mass every week. I help to calm my teachers, friends, and relatives by helping them solve their computer problems. These, though, are only some of the things that I do to brighten the lives of others.

My cousin, Matthew, was diagnosed with Down syndrome at birth. He is now 16 years old and lives his life to the fullest. I feel that I have helped him through his life and brightened many of his days.

Matthew and I like to play our guitars together. Sometimes I record what we play and give the recordings to him. This makes him so happy, which is why I continue to do it. Because of my influence, Matthew has purchased a guitar of his own that he now likes to play for his own enjoyment. I love to hang out with Matthew and brighten his day just as he brightens mine.

Many schools now use video systems to get their announcements out to the staff, teachers, and student body. My elementary and Jr. High School did not have the technology to do this in the past. Feeling that our school could benefit from this technology, I took it upon myself to use my technological skills and find a way to implement a video system.

Earlier this school year, I did a lot of research on the topic of video based announcements. After much planning, I found a way to make it work with the equipment that we already had at my school. After consulting with the principal, I put my plan into action. On the week of November 29; I filmed, edited, and compiled a set of video

announcements. I then uploaded it onto a secure internet site that I had previously built. That Friday, the video announcements were broadcast school wide. It was a huge success.

The idea may seem small to the average person – making the transition from audio to video based school announcements. But the effect was tremendous. As I went from classroom to classroom to make sure that everything was working correctly, I could literally see students' faces brighten at the video. I could see smiles begin to form on students whose previous thought was about the long day, or possibly the upcoming test. Throughout that day and the following days, I received many comments on how people loved the video. All I could think was, 'Wow, if my video had that great of a positive effect in one day, imagine how much of an effect it will have over the rest of the year.' As Mother Teresa once said, "I alone cannot change the world, but I can cast a stone across the waters to create many ripples."

I alone do many things everyday to make a positive impact on the people around me. If you are curious, just ask anyone who knows me. I always do everything that I can to brighten others' days. God has given me many talents. For this I am very grateful. I give of my talents to others because it is one of the small things that I can do to thank God for the talents that he has given me. In the wise words of John Templeton, "Happiness comes from giving, not getting ... To get joy, we must first give it."