

## Taylor Brokamp St. Michael School

“Always give more than you take” is a lyric from the Rascal Flatts song, My Wish. This theme has been instilled in our family by my mom ever since I could remember. I truly believe there is nothing more satisfying than random acts of kindness. At a very young age I began living out this belief. As soon as I could write I began raising money for different charities by holding lemonade sales and selling crafts I had made. As a girl scout, I helped serve and prepare dinners at the Ronald McDonald House and visited many nursing homes. It made me feel good to put a smile on the faces of the sick, both young and old.

As I got older I was able to contribute to my parish and my school. Since the sixth grade I have been a server in mass. Even earlier than that, I began volunteering my time setting up and working our church’s annual spaghetti dinner and festival. It is so neat to be a part of events like these that bring people from all kinds of communities together for a weekend of fun. For the past few years, I have been an active member of our school’s student council. Student Council gives me the chance to interact with many different people. I am given the opportunity to represent concerns and ideas of the entire student body, and also organize charity events like this year’s coat drive. But my favorite role is being a student ambassador. With this job, I am given the privilege to give tours to prospective students and their families. I love meeting new faces and selling my school at the same time.

Each year my class and my family adopt less fortunate families during Christmas. Although I contribute to these causes, I wanted to do more. So, for the past two years I took one-hundred dollars of my own money and adopted a family on my own. I was excited to shop for the family knowing that some little girl or boy would get the pretty dress they wanted or the cool car they asked for. Helping youngsters is something that I really enjoy. Last year my brother’s football team didn’t have any cheerleaders. I got an idea while sitting at a practice that I could form a squad of little siblings to cheer on their brothers. By forming the squad it gave their parents a chance to watch their sons play and gave the little girls a chance to burn off their energy and shine. Because there weren’t any uniforms I purchased shirts with my own money and then decorated one for each girl. Every game the girls arrived an hour early to practice on their cheers and eventually formed a pyramid. That year their brothers won city championships and I loved seeing them thank their little sisters for cheering. Seeing the girls’ faces when they hugged their big brothers was priceless. This was a huge accomplishment for me. People thanked me, but I didn’t mind giving up my time to make a younger one have an exciting day. I also helped coach the younger kids on my summer league swim team. I taught them the basics and helped them improve their times. I loved watching them learn how to dive or get first in their best event. I don’t know who was happier for their accomplishments them or me.

My longest and biggest commitment to acts of kindness is my role of a big sister to my brother and sister. My mom tells me that ever since she could remember I have always been willing and eager to help out my siblings, whether that be changing a diaper or helping to write a speech. Recently, I had a chance to go out with my friends but I knew my sister was a little worried about having my brother babysit so I cancelled my plans and stayed at home with her instead. I love hanging out with the both of them. But we have our moments. However if there is ever fight, I am usually the one who gives in, because I always think it takes more energy to frown than to smile.

Each day I try to live by a quote I read from Mother Teresa, “Every time you smile at someone it is an action of love, a gift to the person, a beautiful thing. Your heart is one of the biggest muscles in your body, so don’t waste it, exercise it.