

## **Natalie Hardig – St. Pius X – Notre Dame Academy**

### **Caring for the Community**

When I was 8 years old, my friend and I participated in the American Girl Fashion Show, which benefits the Aubrey Rose Foundation. At that time, I was too young to understand who Aubrey was and what her story was all about. Now that I am older, I have a better understanding what Aubrey went through as a young child. I can't imagine going through something like that at my age and she did it with a huge smile.

My parents have always set a good example in helping others. Ever since my three older cousins were diagnosed with Type 1 diabetes, over 15+ years ago, my parents have been involved with the Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation, or JDRF, which is an organization that raises money to find a cure for juvenile diabetes. As a family, we were in many walks and fundraising events raising money for JDRF. They were always willing to help do what they could for JDRF especially since it was so close to our family. It has been a big part of my life since a young child.

When I was younger, whenever we got new toys for birthdays and Christmas, my mom would tell me that we had to give some of our older toys to Goodwill. At that time, I was not very happy but my mom explained that we were giving them to other kids that did not have very much. We often did the same with clothes that did not fit and other things around the house. I would help my mom box things up and take them to Goodwill. This in addition to participating in the giving tree at Christmas time helped my sister and I understand that there were others who were not as lucky as we were and that it was good to help others.

My dad is on the board at Diocesan Catholic Children's Home, which has made the Children's Home a big part of our family's life. I have helped at all the festivals and other children's home event. My parents explained to my older sister and I how we were helping kids that did not have a home and parents like my sister and I did. These children also experienced things that most kids do

not. I hate hearing what those kids go through each day, but by helping at the Children's Home, I like to think we are helping make their lives a little bit better. I love helping and want to help even more in the future.

When I was little I never understood that there were people who had little to nothing. I had no idea that there were also people who were going through terrible illness. I have learned that by just doing the little things you can change someone's life dramatically. My reward in the end is seeing all the smiles and you get to know that you had something to do with it!