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Share a smile with everyone because you never know what is going on in their lives. Since I was little, I was taught to be kind, understanding, and tolerant of others. This isn't always easy, but I try very hard to reach out to other people even when they don't make it easy on me.

Last year I attended a weekend event for Girl Scouts to earn a Journey Award. It was called aMAZE and the purpose was to teach us girls how to navigate the twists and turns of relationships. I met many different girls with unique looks and personalities including a Girl Scout who was blind. One of the activities the adult leader had us take part in was an obstacle course. She divided us into 2 groups and we had a race. Each team had a different hallway where their course was set up and the other group was not able to see what was going as each team raced against each other. My team finished way ahead of the other team. We were puzzled, because each team had an equal number of girls and by the yells and cheering, everyone was going all out to win. After the first race, the leader told us not to talk, but to switch halls and we were to race against each other again. Right away, when we saw the other course, we realized why we had won. This second course was jam-packed with "obstacles". Chairs, pumpkins, hay bales, and a crawl through tunnel all was set up to make it even harder to get through the course. We raced again and of course our team lost. After we settled down, the leader gathered us girls together and explained that each hall represented what happens in life. Some of us have an "easy path" and others have a "obstacle filled" life. Many times we do not know that person has such a hard life and maybe that is why they act the way they do.

In my 9 years of grade school, I have been a Girl Scout for eight of those years. As a part of a troop, I have taken part in many service projects for my school and community. I love to help others and it makes me feel good that I am doing something for someone else to make their life a little easier. One project was Operation Shoebox. This one made me happy for I knew that by helping to fill boxes with toys for children across the world, I would give them a smile. A second project was No Kid Hungry-Share Our Strength. My troop sponsored a Tag Day at my school to earn money so we could contribute to this organization to help end childhood hunger and also to raise awareness of this horrible problem. We also held bake sales to raise money to purchase items for the Kenton County Animal Shelter and funds for Bake Me Home. Bake Me Home is a nonprofit organization that two kids who are sisters started to help women and their children who had no home. They helped these families by giving them a Kroger gift card and ingredients and baking supplies such as a mixing bowl and spatula to make their first homemade batch of cookies once they were located in a new home. Through Girl Scouts, I have also worked with The Interfaith Hospitality Network. This organization helps women and their children who have lost their homes and are in need of shelter and ways to get back on their own feet. One year we helped these women and their children by volunteering our time. We ate a meal together, prayed together, then gave

the mothers a well deserved break by babysitting the children, playing games and toys that we brought with us, and helped them with their homework. These are just a few examples of the many service projects I have taken part of in my many years as a Girl Scout. I have had many other experiences with Take Action Projects and donating time and goods we bought with our earned troop money from Girl Scout Cookie Sales to help others.

Since fifth grade, I have witnessed life events. How you may ask? I am an alter server for my school and my parish. I love being a server! I take my responsibility as a server very seriously. I have served Baptisms, First Reconciliations, Holy Week masses, Anointing of the Sick masses, weddings, funerals, and Christmas Eve and Day masses. I also serve Sunday masses and school masses too. I have even served special masses with Bishop Foyes such as Confirmation and when he visited our church and grade school for our 100th Year Anniversary masses. These "moments" that I am a part of in my role as an alter server are filled with such emotion for me. I want to do the very best I can as a server to be reverent and respectful. When I am serving, I feel like I am not just an audience member sitting with the crowd of people, but I am making a difference for the families and I feel much more a part of the mass.

I am very busy also as a student athlete and for the past two years have also played as part of the girls high school soccer team. I also am a part of Student Council and 4H Leadership Club. The thing that keeps me the busiest of all, is my family life. Before this past year, I thought I did a pretty good job of helping out around the house and helping with my baby brother and my pets. But that was nothing compared to how I have had to step up now that my home life has been torn apart by cancer. My mom was diagnosed with Stage 3 Breast Cancer and has been going through treatment since January of last year. My life will never be the same again and I try so hard to make things easier on everyone! So that is why I try to share a smile with everyone, because you never know what they are going through. I know first - hand how it feels to get that smile when you need it most.