

## **Drew Brown - Our Lady of Victory - Elder High School**

I'm very excited to be attending Elder High School this fall. I love to do service projects to help others. At Our Lady of Victory School, teachers provide students with many opportunities to do service. One of the largest service projects provided at Our Lady of Victory is going to Ronald McDonald House to bake desserts for the residents. I volunteered to help bake in December of 2014. The kitchen that we used was next to the playroom. When we were finished making the cupcakes and cookies, a few kids came in and saw treats sitting on the counter, and they were very excited. It was very fulfilling to bring smiles to these children who have dealt with so many hardships in their lives. When the kids smiled, I was filled with joy to know that I could make them happy through what felt like such a small gesture compared to what they were going through. This service project helped me realize that small acts of kindness can change the way people feel. I learned that I need to take advantage of every opportunity to help people, and even the simplest acts can have a positive impact on others.

Another service project that I have been involved in was Bayley Nursing Home's Christmas Dance. The assistant principal at Our Lady of Victory was asked to choose twenty responsible eighth graders from our school that would be able to help provide a fun time for the residents. I was one of the ten boys chosen to participate. The dance was during the last day of school before Christmas break, and we would have to give up our homeroom Christmas party. I didn't mind skipping our homeroom party to be able to visit and party with the residents at Bayley. While we were there, we started conversations with the residents. We talked about their Christmas memories from when they were younger. They were always smiling when we talked to them. Some of them even cried tears of joy when they told us their stories. We also danced with them to older music. Some of them even knew the words and did karaoke. I had a lot of fun with them, and I learned that giving can bring so much joy to others and to me.

Making a difference doesn't always have to be through organized service projects. I serve others around me by doing random acts of kindness and having a happy and caring attitude. A joyful personality is a valuable characteristic. I try to cheer

people up at school or at home if they are having a rough day. Helping others has taught me life lessons and helped me grow stronger in my Catholic faith.