

Grace Miller – St. John the Baptist Harrison – McAuley High School

Serving others is very important to my family and my Mother always reminds us that “To those whom much is given, much is expected”. Over the past five years, I have volunteered at many places with my Girl Scout troop and my family, but as a young girl, it was often difficult to see how I was really making a difference in other’s lives.

Then I had an experience that touched my heart and showed me my passion for working with younger girls – being part of the Aubrey Rose Foundation. When I was in second grade, my brother Jacob received a scholarship from the Aubrey Rose Foundation. That year, I participated in the American Girl Doll Show as a model for the first time. The women and girls I met during the show made me feel special and beautiful, both inside and out. Their encouragement to conquer my fear of walking on the stage boosted my self-confidence and knowing I was raising money to help others in need made me feel very proud. I continued to be a model in the show for three years.

When I got too big to fit in the American Girl Doll clothes, I still wanted to find a way to be involved with the Aubrey Rose Foundation. For the past 3 years, I have volunteered to help the little girls at auditions, model fittings and backstage during the shows. While these little girls are excited about being in the show, they were often very scared to go on stage. By telling them about my experience modeling and helping them to get ready, they relax and begin to feel more confident in themselves. Seeing them smile as they walk on the stage makes me feel great and know that I was continuing what Aubrey Rose started in her three short years - putting a smile on other’s faces!

Since the American Girl Doll shows are only once a year, I wanted to find other ways to work with young girls to build their self-confidence and put smiles on their faces. Throughout elementary school, I have been blessed to have older girls who took an interest in me and were my “big sisters”. They were great role models, helping to pick me up when I was down and inspiring me to always do my best. In 6th grade, I decided it was time for me to do the same for the younger girls around me. Just like my “big sisters” took an interest in me, I have taken an interest in my “little sisters” at St. John the Baptist. By greeting them with smiles and hugs, playing with them on the playground when they are lonely and showing them how to behave in Mass on Friday’s, I am making a lasting impact on their lives.

Through my efforts in working with younger girls at the Aubrey Rose Fashion Show and daily at St. John’s, I am striving to show them that they can make a difference in other’s lives. It doesn’t matter if you are young or old, rich or poor.... putting a smile on someone’s face is the best way to make a difference in their lives and leave the world a better place.