

Hailey Oldfield-St. Paul School-St. Henry

There is a variety of ways you can help better your community and the people that populate it. Whatever you do, doesn't have to change the world, it can be as simple as bringing in a dollar to school to donate to the organization they are helping or giving away your outgrown clothes to St. Vincent de Paul. You shouldn't assume that once you do a good deed in someone else's favor, you will receive something in return. For instance, at my school whenever you bring in a small sum of money to support an organization, you can usually be out-of-uniform that day. But some students forget that it isn't about the out-of-uniform pass, it's about the less fortunate people you are assisting.

Since I was little, my family and I have been participating in the JDRF Walk that is in Newport every September. When I was younger, I didn't quite understand the whole purpose of the Walk, in my head I just thought that you wear a brightly colored t-shirt and walk a few miles around the city and afterward you get free food and little goodie bags. But now that I'm older, I have recognized we walk to raise awareness of Type 1 Diabetes (T1D). The money that is then acquired from this Walk goes to research to find a cure for T1D.

Recently, I've really gotten into volunteer work. Last summer, my sister, Meghan, and I visited my grandmother who lives in Winchester, a small town just outside of Lexington. My grandmother is the type of person that is constantly giving of herself to help others. So whenever we go down to visit her, we spend at least spend one day doing some form of volunteer work. This particular time stood out. When we first arrived at my grandmother's house, she told her that we were going to rehab a school in downtown Lexington but she didn't go into much detail. As the car turned into the school's parking lot, I took account of the cracked pavement, overgrown grass, and the dilapidated exterior of the building. It had looked as if no one has occupied that school for years. When my grandmother, my sister, and I passed through the double doors, we were speechless. I observed the volunteers migrating from room to room, carrying buckets of soapy water, and working as hard as they could. We walked through the marked-up halls and I counted at least 35 volunteers. My grandmother, my sister, and I soon found the classroom we were scheduled to clean. After I witnessed some of the horrible conditions these young kids had to be in, I will never again take my school for granted again. I am grateful that I had been given the opportunity to change these students' lives even though it was only in a small way. I wish that I was there to see the kids' faces on the first day of school in August.

When I grow up, I want to be like my grandmother. I want to put others before myself, but I pray to God that He will give me the strength to do so.

My 8th grade class at St. Paul has done some volunteer work during this past school year. In November, we took a field trip to Matthew 25 Ministries, an organization near Cincinnati that helps less fortunate people in developing countries. When we were

there, we helped them prepare for their upcoming fundraiser, put together care packages that they were going to send to Africa, and organized some clothes that were donated to the organization. In the care packages, we put little bottles of shampoo, conditioner, and other various toiletries. I thought of we forget to appreciate the little things in life like soap and toothpaste. These less fortunate people in other parts of the world aren't able to take showers and brush their teeth on regular bases.

In December right before we went on Christmas break, a few teachers and students went after school to buy socks and slippers with the money that was so generously given to us from the priest at St. Paul Parish. We planned on giving these items to a local nursing home. The senior citizens at nursing homes, don't get visits from their loved ones frequently and some don't get visits at all! Later that week in art class, we wrapped all of the socks and slippers. And after we got out for Christmas break, some students, teachers, and even parents went to the nursing home and sang Christmas carols and delivered the gifts. Nothing could compare to the feeling got when I saw all of their smiling faces.

As I said before, you don't have to do monuments acts of kindness. It's the little that matter. You never know, maybe your old winter coat you donated to St. Vincent de Paul went to a homeless person on the street that was nearly frozen to death.