

## **Jennifer Reckers-St. Susanna-Bishop Fenwick High School**

When I was little I was very blessed. At two years old I was diagnosed with Leukemia. My type of Leukemia was very curable thanks to many hours of research from the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society and many others. The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society was there for us through everything. I was blessed because we have Cincinnati Children's Hospital. My doctors and nurses took great care of me. Hoxworth gave me blood to live. Make a Wish gave me a trip to Disney World. It was something to look forward to during my 2 ½ years of treatments.

During this time, I started getting involved with many charities. I never felt like it was work. I was having too much fun. The Leukemia and Lymphoma Society refers to us survivors as Heroes. I prefer the term Ambassador instead. As an Ambassador for LLS, I have volunteered at the Golf Outings, Light the Night, was Girl of the Year, Team in Training for many marathons and currently leading a team for Race to Any Place in March.

Also, our school does Pennies for Pasta every year. For my five years off chemo, I asked Mom and Dad if we could have a skating party and invite all my friends and family. We raised about \$2000. All the money went to the Pennies Program. St. Susanna has continued with the skating party every year since. My friends and I have also gone around the community putting out collection boxes and collecting money outside Kroger stores. It made me feel great getting my friends involved in what I love to do.

There are other charities I have also volunteered for. I was a model in the American Girl Fashion Show for the Aubrey Rose Foundation. I ran a 5K in the Reggae Run for Make a Wish. I have done Relay for Life many times. I am on the Advisory Board for Children's Hospital. I helped design the new wing at the Liberty Children's Hospital.

It might seem that my parents make me do volunteering. I do volunteering willingly and I have found over the years I love it. I've never considered volunteering to be hard work. It is who I am. Many people were kind and giving to me when I was sick. Now it's my time to return the favor. I feel like I'm giving back to the community that gave so much to me.