

Madeline Siegel - Saint Aloysius Gonzaga - Mother of Mercy High School

I feel honored to apply for the Aubrey Rose Scholarship. Aubrey passed away right before I was born and for some reason, my grandma felt a strong connection to her---because of me. From the time I was little she told me about her and said Aubrey was an angel watching over me from heaven. I learned more about her life when her dad told us her story at the Fashion Show Auditions. It was then I realized one person really could make an impact.

I began thinking how I affect the people in my life. I know when I go over my great grandpas, he is really happy to see me - because I just sit and talk with him. Sometimes people ignore older people, but I've learned I can really make a difference in his day. I also visit Chris. Chris was a friend of my other great grandpa, he passed away 10 years ago, but I still visit her at Bayley Place. Her face lights up every time she sees me in the doorway, she is so happy to see me! I feel good because I know she doesn't get many visitors.

At my house, I do my own laundry and help with cleaning. I know my mom is really busy working more than full time and taking care of my brother and me. So I help her whenever I can. Also, I help my grandma by vacuuming and dusting. She is thankful because she has a bad back.

In school, I volunteer with the half-day kindergarten kids, and take them to their parents so the kindergarten teacher can stay with the rest of the kindergarten. I volunteered to decorate our classroom for Catholic Schools week and I hope it helps people realize what a great school we have and all the different ways they can get involved. I also cross guard; it helps to keep all the kids safe! At Christmas time, I volunteered to take the gifts our school collected to 3 families. They were so appreciative, they cried! I think I got more out of it than they did! It made me more thankful for what I have - and took for granted before. Since 4th grade I have served at mass and am looking forward to becoming a Eucharistic Minister in a few months. It helps me when I can take an active role in my faith and I feel I can be a role model to others by the choices I make. The last few years I helped put up and take down Christmas decorations at Church. I feel happy on Christmas to have had a part in getting the church ready to celebrate Jesus' birth. On Sundays, I help greet the people as they come to mass; I think that helps people to feel welcome here. I think making people feel "at home" is important and that is why I enjoy being a part of "Hospitality Ministry" at church. We are called to bake things for events at the parish when needed. Everybody loves cookies and brownies!

In past summers I've volunteered at Bible school, Tender Mercies, and at the festival. One of the places I made a difference this past summer is at Camp Stepping Stones. Camp Stepping Stones is a non-profit organization that helps mentally challenged kids have some fun and let loose. At Camp Stepping

Stones, there are groups with ten kids, and two counselors in charge of the group. There are different stations filled with activities for the kids. My favorite part of volunteering is seeing the kids smile. I have never seen so much joy in faces by doing the smallest things, like splashing in the water, going on a boat ride, even coloring and painting pictures! I think Stepping Stones affected me immensely because it made me feel happy to really connect with the kids, and see first hand how just spending time with someone can mean the world to them. I didn't do anything "big" with these kids, but they did feel special and important to me. I realized I don't have to do something spectacular to make a difference, I just have to share the love I have in my heart.

Thank you for considering me for the Aubrey Rose Scholarship.