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We need to honor God by doing our best to make the world a better place. Service to others and making a difference in people's lives is very important to me. As a member of the Ambassador Board and National Junior Honor Society at Our Lady of Victory I have been inspired to get involved with many school-wide service projects such as making sandwiches for the homeless, visiting the elderly at Bayley, participating in caring and sharing days, and volunteering to help at Santa Express. I have also served dinner and breakfast to mothers and children at safe houses Grace Place and Bethany House. The children there were grateful that I spent time with them after dinner and breakfast reading and playing games. But I was truly grateful to be able to touch their lives in a small way.

There is one ministry I hold dearest to my heart. And that is the St. Joseph Home, a home for the profoundly disabled. A cousin of mine who passed away in 1999 received wonderful respite care while at the home and I thought this would be a good way to give back to a place who gave her so much. In October for the past eight years my siblings and I, along with my grandmother collect "Wish List" items posted on the home's web-site from the neighbors in our neighborhood for a Make-A-Difference Day project. In the third and fifth grades I asked my teachers if I could include my classes in the collection and they agreed. We collected many items and I would deliver them and our street collection with my family to the home. The staff always appreciated our collection and we always felt good after delivering the items. For the past two years I have encouraged the entire school at Our Lady of Victory to get involved in the project.

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In those two years we have collected ten boxes of items and \$400 in cash donations for the home.

One day after school we went out to the St. Joseph Home to deliver the items and we were so lucky to meet some of the residents there! They were all so happy to see us and smiled at us. The staff at the home are the kindest and most caring people I know. Many of the children and residents there are in wheelchairs or cannot sit up or even breathe on their own. They are treated with love and respect by all who work there. This made me realize how important our collection is to the home and made me feel happy to help the residents there. One of the amazing children at the St. Joseph Home we got to meet was a boy named Andrew. He and my brother both love Star Wars and talked about it a lot while we were there. Around Thanksgiving last year, we decided to come back and have my brother dress in his Star Wars Halloween costume for Andrew. We also brought him a DVD of the movie *Inside Out* since he loves to watch movies in his room. Seeing Andrew's face light up when he saw us and my brother dressed as Kylo Ren made me feel amazing inside! For the past two years my siblings and I have made crafts on special holidays for the residents at the St. Joseph Home to hang on their beds or wheelchairs. They are so happy to get them and it made the long ride out and the time spent making crafts all worth it! We have been able to meet more residents and received a tour of the home visiting all the cottages. In early December I heard Andrew had said that all he wanted for Christmas this year were Christmas cards. In order to make Andrew's Christmas wish come true, my whole school participated in making home-made cards for him.

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About a week later we delivered the cards to his room at Saint Joseph's. When I saw all of the nice things my classmates wrote, I knew Andrew would love them. We didn't get to see his reaction, unfortunately because he was seeing the new Star Wars movie. We knew he was having fun and he would be in for a great surprise when he got back. I think making cards for Andrew really affected him in a good way. I think it made him very happy because he got his Christmas wish. It made me feel so good inside to know that Andrew got what he wanted for Christmas. I do believe it made a difference in his life to know there were people who cared about his wish, but more importantly, truly cared about him. Service has made a big impact on my life and has made me realize how in giving of yourself for others you receive so much more in return.