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When I first sat down to write this essay, I struggled to answer the question of how I have made a difference in the world. I kept trying to think of grand gestures and big things that I did that were spectacular, and nothing seemed worthy enough to qualify me for this scholarship. I finally went to my mom and asked her if I have even made a difference in the world. With her help, I started to understand that you can make a difference in the small things you do every day and the way you interact with people. As I started to think about my life, I realized that I do make a difference to those around me through volunteer service, through how I treat people whenever I see them, and by sticking up for people when they are bullied.

Volunteering my time to help others is just one small way I have made a difference. Mohammed Ali once said, "Service to others is the rent you pay for your room here on earth." I am truly blessed with the life God has given me, and it is only fair that I pay Him back by helping others. Over the years, I have volunteered with many different organizations, and I am always ready to pitch in and help when asked. I work to make a difference at my school and church, St. Pius X, by volunteering as a server and lector. Even when I am not on the server schedule, I always go back to the sacristy before Mass to see if the priest needs any additional servers. Additionally, I am a leader at our Vacation Bible School every summer, work at our festival, and currently I help tutor younger students in math and science on Tuesday and Friday mornings. I have also volunteered with many charitable organizations to help those less fortunate in our community. Some of the events I have worked at are the Loop for Lana benefiting the Elena Brophy Memorial Fund, Kicking Homelessness benefiting Respite Care of Northern Kentucky, and the Buddy Walk benefiting the Down Syndrome Society of Greater Cincinnati. I have also volunteered with the Aubrey Rose Foundation and served dinners at the Ronald McDonald House, and I have helped my mom make meals and deliver them to the Welcome House in Covington, Kentucky. Perhaps my favorite volunteer service was when I refereed soccer games for the Special Olympics. The time and talent I donated in helping at these events was a small price to pay for the wonderful feeling I received in knowing that I helped others.

Another way I make a difference is how I treat people. I have always been told I was personable and never know a stranger. I love to talk to people and see how they are doing. My dad taught me to always shake a person's hand and look them in the eye when you speak, and I do. I listen to what they have to say and I genuinely care. I love people and I have never been afraid to engage people in conversation. It does not matter to me if they are young, old, healthy, sick, rich, poor, black, white, a stranger, an acquaintance, mentally handicapped, or physically handicapped. All I see is another human being created by God, and I want to get to know them and make them smile. When my family

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traveled to Africa a couple of years ago, seeing the animals was amazing but meeting the people was even better. Wherever we went, I made friends. I jumped rope with some kids in a township outside Johannesburg, I danced and played soccer with kids at a school in a rural village, and I talked to many tourists from all over the world who were staying at the same lodge as us. By the end of the week, whenever I would walk into the dining hall, more than half of the guests and workers knew me by name because I had taken the time to get to know them, and hopefully, I made a difference in their lives like they made in mine. Everywhere I go, and in everything I do, I am always engaging other people. There is a famous quote that says, "Making one person smile can change the world. Maybe not the whole world but their world." If that is true, I have made a difference in many people's lives, because I always try my hardest to bring joy to others and leave them smiling.

Since I love people so much, I particularly hate it when I see people being mistreated. I am far from perfect and I have made my mistakes, but there have also been several incidences where I was strong enough to stand up for kids in my class who were being bullied, and I am very proud of those times. One time I stood up for a friend in my class who was being teased for being small, and as a result, I got shoved into a locker. That was a small price to pay to protect my friend. When my mom offered me some money to reward me for my behavior, I refused to accept it and told her I was not going to let her pay me for doing something that I was supposed to do.

Writing this essay has helped me realize that making a difference does not always involve grand gestures. Mother Theresa said, "We can do no great things, only small things with great love." It can be the small things I do every day at home, at school, in my parish, and in my community to be the best son, brother, friend, student, and person that I can be. As long as I do them with great love and compassion, I will still be making a difference. Mother Theresa also said, "If you can't feed a hundred people, then feed just one. Never worry about numbers. Help one person at a time, and always start with the one nearest you." By volunteering my time for different service projects in the community, by treating everyone I meet with kindness and respect, and by sticking up for people when they are bullied, I have already made a difference in the world one person at a time. Thankfully, I am still only thirteen years old and hopefully have many years ahead of me to continue to help others and make a difference.