

Elana Bruns – Blessed Sacrament School – Notre Dame High School

“Let us always meet each other with smile, for the smile is the beginning of love.” (Mother Teresa) When I first read Aubrey Rose’s story, one thing stuck out to me: Her smile. I had only read a few lines of Aubrey’s story, and she had already had an effect on me. This just goes to show how much impact the little things, whether it be a smile or a small act of kindness, can have on other people. As Jesus did, I can affect others in a positive way with my words, actions, and service.

To begin, I can affect others with my words. Our words – whether they build others up or put them down – have a huge impact on everyone around us. As a Catholic, I try to use my words to lift others up, especially if they are struggling or in need of a friend. Every opportunity I see, I try to use my love for public speaking as a chance to spread words of kindness to those who listen. I received the opportunity to write a persuasive speech about what it means to be pro-life to me this past year, and I was overjoyed to see the influence I could make on those who did not share my beliefs. Each day we have the ability to make a choice, and it’s up to us to decide – Will I do what is right, and speak with kindness? Like Jesus, I can use my words to be a role model to others.

Furthermore, I can affect others with my actions. In one of my classrooms at school, there is a poster on the wall that states, “Actions speak louder than words.” Each time I see this poster, it works as a reminder that I can truly make a difference to others through my actions. Like Aubrey Rose, I have learned that the simplest of actions can brighten a person’s day. By smiling at the classmate who looks like they are having a bad day, or holding the door open for the elderly lady in the grocery store, you can make a lasting effect on a person without even realizing it! As Mother Theresa said, “Be faithful in small things because it is in them that you’re strength lies.” The little actions we do in service to others mold us into the people we are proud to be today.

Ultimately, I can affect others with my volunteering. Personally, I believe volunteering is the most effective and rewarding way to impact others. I have had

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the opportunity to volunteer numerous times in my home, school, parish, and community. At home, I enjoy tutoring my sister in subjects that she struggles with. Her understanding a topic she could not grasp before is one of the most rewarding feelings that I could get. In school, I can also use my academic talents to help both my peers and the younger children at my school through programs such as Homework Buddies, where you can help students who need academic support to complete their assignments and study for tests. In my parish, Blessed Sacrament Church, I am able to both attend and participate in mass each week by serving as an altar server, something I appreciate thoroughly. Although, out of all the service I do, I would say the most gratifying experiences I get are from helping the community. For the past two years, my class has had the opportunity to volunteer at Matthew 25 Ministries, a local community service center that aids those in need with necessary supplies. I also regularly volunteer at St. Elizabeth's hospital in the Sports Medicine Facility to satisfy my love for both health and aiding others. The affect I have made on my family, friends, and community is more than enough gratitude, which keeps me continuing to do service each day.

All and all, I can affect others in a positive way with my words, actions, and service. The Aubrey Rose Foundation is a role model to me, in how it has turned a heartbreaking experience into an inspiring way to affect the lives of so many. Like Aubrey Rose did, I can influence others with my kind words and actions daily. God has blessed me with the opportunity to make a difference in the world, and I hope I can continue to affect others in my life. Thank you for inspiring me and countless others with the work and service you do.