

I know that sometimes it can be difficult to try to help those around us and make a difference in our world. Many try to give in any way that they can to make the world a better place. It doesn't matter how big or how small these acts are because a simple smile could make someone's day. I am a firm believer that anyone can change the world in any way that they can or are able to. There is no, "I can't." We are all capable of doing something amazing.

The biggest way that I affect those around me is through Girl Scouts. I have been a Girl Scout since first grade and I am proud to say that service is my favorite thing to do through the organization. I love doing service because I love to see the smiles that I bring to people's faces. Through Girl Scouts, I have decided to earn the Marian Medal which, through the journey, helps me to become a better disciple of Jesus and learn more about Mary, his first disciple. This medal takes eighteen months to complete and I have been working on this project since sixth grade year. Through Marian, I do services that benefit the less fortunate. For example, my group collected and donated baby supplies to Pregnancy Center West, which is an organization that helps disadvantaged expectant mothers take care of their babies.

Another way that I have helped others around me is by doing my parish's Giving Tree. The Giving Tree is an act of service in which parishioners wrap and give toys and gifts through our parish to organizations that help struggling families. These gifts are given to young children and adults on Christmas Day so that they have a gift to open. I really love the Giving Tree because I am giving those children a present of their own that they can open for themselves. Each gift that is given to a child or adult represents that someone cares and loves them. After our group sorted the presents in our church, we packed them up on a truck to be sent to St. Leo's. We followed the truck and unloaded the presents into a big room filled with chairs with numbers representing each needy family. I was amazed to see how many chairs there were. We really do take for granted how many people need our help in our community today and it is our duty to help them as disciples of Jesus. I am happy that I could bring a smile to others faces.

A year ago, a student in my grade committed suicide. It not only impacted my grade, but the whole school. As an act of random kindness, my Marian group decided to put Post-It notes with positive sayings on them in the hallways and bathrooms. We called this "Posting Positivity". The end result was wonderful. I couldn't help but to think how we could have impacted those around us and helped them to think how important life really is.

My family has always been a family that tries to reach out to others and help them. A few days after Christmas, we went to Matthew 25 Ministries to donate two hours of our time to serving others by sorting books. I also did a service camp in my sixth grade year. We helped clean up a neglected cemetery, we helped serve meals at Our Daily Bread, we spent time with the elderly at St. Paul's Home, and we cared for the vegetable plants at the Giving Fields. The Giving Fields is a volunteer-run organization that grows and donates fruits and vegetables to local soup kitchens. I have also set up crosses for the Cemetery of the Innocent outside of my parish. The Cemetery of the Innocent is an act of love that our Parish does to help prevent abortions. Each cross represents an unborn baby that lost its life to abortion. This act

shows how many babies have lost their lives to abortion and helps people realize that life is beautiful, no matter how young or old you are.

I am an active member of my parish and strong in my faith. This includes singing in the choir at church and being a Eucharistic Minister. I love being a Eucharistic Minister because you can share Jesus' Body and Blood with others in your community. It makes me feel happy that I can share my faith with others in a good way.

Service has helped me to realize how I much I help others in my community. When I am doing service, I always think of the people that I am helping first. With service, I realize that I am capable of helping others in my community in many ways. I know what I am capable of doing and I hope to continue to share the act of love with people in my community and people throughout the world.