

## **Joshua Fieger – St. Antoninus – Elder High School**

In my life, God has given me many blessings. I have a safe home to live in with plenty of food to eat, a friendly personality, an excellent education, and a loving family. However, I am aware that many people have not had the same blessings so I put it upon myself to share my blessings with others.

For example, one way I help others and share my personality is through Tender Mercies. A few years ago, I asked my Grandma what she wanted for her birthday and she surprised me when she said she would like me to help her with a service project. We chose to spend Martin Luther King Day feeding the homeless and mentally challenged at Tender Mercies. We planned a menu and made signs for food donations and hung them in her church. We collected the food and prepared a meal and took it downtown to the Tender Mercies shelter. At first I was nervous because the people seemed so different from me. But once we started serving the food and I began talking to them, I grew more comfortable around them and conversation came easier. I walked around as they ate to refill drinks and offer them dessert, talking to them the entire time. I realized that I enjoyed the experience and now we go every year on Martin Luther King Day. While there, I spend much time talking to the people, we often talk about Cincinnati's history and sports. They have some interesting stories and they seem to enjoy having someone to talk to as much as eating the food we bring. Doing this makes me feel happy and I know it helps the community and those less fortunate than me.

I am lucky to go to such a great school so I volunteer my time to try to give back to my school community as well. I have done several activities like helping to setup for the festival and helped entertain kids of parents who were at a school meeting. I also have represented my school in the Math Counts competitions at UC and Taylor Middle School and am on the It's Academic Team and compete at LaSalle each year. This year my school started a Student Council. I was elected to the leadership role of Homeroom Representative for 8<sup>th</sup> grade and report information to lower grades as well. My Student Council hosts plenty of service projects like just this week I've taken part in the open houses at our school. I was a tour guide for the Child's Garden pre-school on Thursday and am going to be a tour guide on Sunday at the main school for all grades and ages. The members of Student Council have also had fundraisers for the school like selling "boo-grams" in the cafeteria around Halloween.

I am also in a youth service group for my parish called "Anchor". Last February, we had a service event called "Sweets and Service" where we made Valentine's Day cards with candy included to be sent to residents in a nursing home. This past October, we collected students' extra Halloween candy. We sorted the candy from the week's collection and made goodie bags for all students at St. Francis Seraph. We also made a Halloween banner and cards for the faculty. Last December, we baked and delivered several treats for the residents of Garden Park Nursing Home. I am hoping these treats helped to make their holidays less lonely since they might not have a loving family like mine.

I am glad I have had so many opportunities to serve others throughout the last few years. I am looking forward to having more chances when I am in high school at Elder next year. I am excited because I learned that they even have a service class that I plan to take where they go out and do community service during the day during class time. I am sure this is going to be one of my favorite classes!