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Life is a trial, it is a test of who someone is, but more importantly how that person affects the lives of the people around them. Like Aubrey, we can never know for certain when it is our time to pass away. As a Catholic, I try to take advantage of every opportunity presented before and make the best out of everything. It is an important value of mine to keep my chin up and smile from ear to ear no matter my circumstances. For many people, a simple smile can do wonders to make someone's day just a little better.

As a Boy Scout of Troop 817, I tend to do a lot of service work in my community and I get many unique opportunities to help out. I love taking on new projects and challenges and looking back at what I've done, knowing that it made at least one person's life just a little better. Joining the scouting community was one of, if not *the* very best thing I have ever done. Scouting has shaped and molded the young man I am today, and I am grateful for not only having that opportunity but making the most out of it as well. The lessons and experiences that scouting has given me will be remembered for my entire life.

One of my most memorable service projects, now an annual event, is when our troop helped celebrate the life one of our scout youth leaders, Jacob Marek, who passed away unexpectedly at 15. At the time of his passing, Jacob was one of the most shining examples of what a scout really should be. At the Jacob Marek community outreach, we helped a few organizations, including the St. Joseph Orphanage in Cincinnati. I helped collect canned goods, toys, and necessities donated by those who attended. The scouts loaded up a truck with all the goods, so they could be distributed to those in need. It ended with a prayer service that reminded us of all the ways Jacob had touched our hearts, like Aubrey did, motivating me to touch the lives of others.

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Right now, I am working with my school, parish, and scout troop to co-run a Soles for Souls shoe drive. This is an opportunity to help so many people around the world to get some of the necessities that are needed in everyone's daily life by simply collecting shoes. We set up advertisements and collection bins around our church and school and advertised the project in our parish's electronic bulletin. This is the biggest project I have undertaken so far, and it's has proven to be a great test of leadership and patience for me.

At home, I think that my parents would agree that I am a huge help. It can be hard having two younger brothers, especially a four-year-old that thinks he's the boss of the house. Things can get a little crazy with my other brother's numerous sports activities. I like to stay home and watch my youngest brother so that my parents don't have to worry about him in a crowd of cheering fans. Another big thing I do around the house is taking care of my dog. He isn't properly trained yet, making this much more difficult. It can be a lot of work walking him and taking him outside, but my neighbors often comment to my parents how well I take care of him.

I love taking advantage of every opportunity I can to make a difference in the lives of those around me. Even if it demands a lot of effort, time, and commitment, the end goal is worth it. It means a lot to me that God has graced me with so many chances to help people out whether it be personally or indirectly. It's important to me to seize every opportunity to help others and prove myself in the test of life. In a world with so many problems, it's important to put your best foot forward and give it your hardest to leave it better than you found it.