

## Hope Cromer-St. Nicholas Academy-Mount Notre Dame

“I am only one, but still I am one. I cannot do everything, but I can do something, because I will not refuse to do the something I can do.”

This year my school started recognizing students that exemplify kindness. I thought this was great! I go to the award ceremonies every year and never am recognized because I'm not amazing academically. I work really hard, but I just don't earn the grades that get awards. I know that I am working to do my best and I'm ok with that. But it would be nice to finally be recognized for something I do well. I never imagined I'd be the first one in my class to receive this award! These awards are kept secret and given out after mass. What made this so special is that my mom finally got to see me receive an award. She is a teacher at my school and was there. She had no idea! The tears of happiness made this a moment we will never forget. This is the description that was read at the ceremony: Hope was chosen because she fits the definition of kindness-being friendly, generous, and considerate. She has befriended a new student in her class by offering help and support. She has offered to help others who were having trouble with their work and has stepped aside so others could go first. Hope is a role model for kindness and she doesn't even realize it. She is kind by her nature. Following her example will make us all better people this school year. I guess I never realized that what I was doing could make a difference in the lives of others. Being kind is such a simple thing to do. It doesn't cost you anything. And sometimes it can be contagious.

Making a difference can be as simple as just being kind, but you can also volunteer your time. I have been a server at my church since I was in the 4<sup>th</sup> grade. I was really nervous at first, but I got to do it with my brother, so that helped. I also became a distributor this year. Now I distribute at Mass on Saturdays and also at our school masses on Fridays. I have also volunteered at a few places. Last year I went to the Ronald McDonald house with some of the kids from my class/parish. Although I would have loved to interact with the kids, our job was to make snacks for the families. We had a great time working together knowing that the outcome would make someone's day a little brighter. At Mathew 25, I got to bag toiletries. At the time I didn't realize how important it was to give of my time. Learning how all of the donations were distributed to people in need was a real eye opener. I can't imagine needing a bag of bathroom items. That is something we just have at home. It would be awful to be in a situation where that was something you just didn't have. As I look back on this, I'm glad that I was able to help. Especially being a kid! One other place that I volunteered at was the Heartt Animal Refuge. This place ran on volunteers and donations only. I cleaned out litter boxes, put food and water in bowls, and cleaned the floors. People are not the only ones that need our help. Since I can't take the animals with me, I'm glad I could help them and spend a little time making them feel loved.

## Hope Cromer-St. Nicholas Academy-Mount Notre Dame, page 2 of 2

Eight years ago I was introduced to the American Girl Fashion Show. I was five years old. Now how can a five year old make a difference? By becoming a “model” and raising money for the Aubrey Rose Foundation of course! I had the best time walking the runway and meeting so many new people. One time I even meet Livvy Stubenrauch!! Learning about Aubrey’s story and everything her parents were doing to help others was amazing to me. I understood more as I got older and wanted to continue doing what I could as a kid to help out. One of the years I made bracelets and sold them to raise money. I was amazed at how many people wanted to help me help them! I continued to do this every year. In 2016 I was told that I would be doing my last show. This year I was older and was able to help out more. At one of the “auditions”, I was able to help the younger girls with their outfits. I walked them to their photo shoot and back to their parents. I also got to dress the dolls in different outfits. I finally felt like I was actually giving back. It took a lot of volunteers to pull these things off. I was honored that they asked me to help. Being a part of something so big made me feel like I, even though I was such a small part, was making a difference in the lives of the people around me.

I am looking forward to all of the opportunities that I will have to make a difference in high school. I know that it is going to be a huge adventure for me. I will continue to be kind. That’s how I will make a difference as I begin this new chapter in my life.