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There are many ways I think I embody “compassion” in my community. Compassion means “to suffer together”. It is a feeling that arises when you are “confronted with another’s suffering and feel motivated to relieve that suffering.” Compassion is being kind, merciful, patient, and nurturing. We must have the heart of Jesus’ heart and assist the lost, hurt, wounded, poor and needy. We are called to “take action to help our neighbors in need.” I think it is important to commit my life in helping the sick and poor.

There have been many ways that I have acted compassionately and responded to the needs of the sick and poor. Feeding the homeless is something that is important to me. When I was two years old, my parents began bringing me to the homeless shelter to feed the homeless. My family gets together at my grandmother’s church and we help wrap over a thousand presents and host a Christmas party for the homeless each year.

In recent years, my Girl Scout troop has also made meals and served the homeless. After serving dinner, we played Bingo with the women and handed out gifts and prizes. One lady told me that having our troop there was her favorite day at the shelter. It made me feel good to comfort them.

One of my favorite service projects was raking leaves for the homebound through People Working Cooperatively. One of the homeowners came outside to talk to me while we were raking leaves and told me that she had just lost her husband to cancer. She appreciated our help and said her yard never looked so good. That day we raked the leaves at 5 different homes in Westwood and collected over 30 bags of leaves.

Another project I found rewarding was organizing clothes through Matthew 25 ministries. For this project, I helped sort donated clothes to send to other countries that were experiencing natural disasters. The staff were impressed with our hard work. Helping other countries is also helping our neighbors in need.

For the past several years, I have visited nursing homes and sang Christmas carols to the residents. It made me feel delighted to have them smile and sing along. I was sorrowful to think that we may be the only visitors the residents received during the holidays. We collected small gifts to pass out to those who did not have family to visit during the holidays.

I have participated in over 70 hours of service projects with my family and my Girl Scout troop over the past few years. I learned something from each project and the experience made me think how a simple task could make someone’s life easier. I also felt fortunate that I could share my gifts and talents to alleviate their suffering.

Finally, another way I plan to act with compassion for the sick and poor is through working in the medical field after college. Working in the medical field will allow me to care for the patient and their family. Working in the medical field will allow me to make an impact on families whose loved one is experiencing a medical emergency or life-threatening illness such as Aubrey Rose. I hope to continue to follow the example of my family by devoting my life to helping the sick and poor. By “taking action to help our neighbors in need”, I will be living out my call to relieve the suffering of others.