

Henry Joecken - St. Antoninus - St. Xavier High School

Alex Trebek, one of my personal role models, once said, "A good education and a kind heart will serve you well throughout your entire life". While I do think having a good education is quite important to living a good life, having a kind heart will benefit me the most throughout all aspects in my life. A kind heart is essential to accomplishing anything in life because kindness affects people in many positive ways. Having a kind heart means that you do things you are not required to do in the spirit of helping others. I truly believe that I have affected people in a positive way through my kind heart.

One major way that I share my kind heart with the world is through my job as a broadcaster for the Saint Antoninus School news team. Every week I get to report on my school's different athletic teams. This helps others because it brings attention to the immense talents that the students at my school have that might otherwise get ignored. I also make my segment as uplifting as possible, adding compliments and encouragement, whether our team wins or loses.

Another notable example where I feel I had a kind heart was throughout my basketball career. In my time on my school's A-team, it was clear to me from the beginning that I would be a reserve player on the team and would get the minimum amount of playing time. I noticed that many of the players similar to me on opposing squads were obviously disgruntled about their amount of playing time. I empathized with these people, but I also knew that being a member of a team meant that you sometimes have to think for the team instead of yourself. I spent my time cheering on my teammates, staying invested in the game, and overall supporting my friends and teammates.

Another time I felt I had a kind heart was when I FaceTimed my grandma during the pandemic. I feel awful for all the seniors who had to go through that scary time virtually alone. They had no one come to visit, no socialization, and were at the highest risk. I made sure that my Grandma did not have to face the harsh realities of 2020 alone by FaceTiming her everyday. I could tell that the half hour that I spent conversing with her meant a great deal to her and brought us closer than ever before.

One last example of my kind heart is my frequent volunteering efforts. I try as hard as I can to volunteer as much as I can. I think volunteering is very important because I feel that it is my duty as a person who has been blessed with food, water, shelter, and clothes, to give some of it back to people without it. A few volunteer organizations that I have worked with are: Keep Cincinnati Beautiful, Matthew 25 Ministries, St. Francis Seraph Ministries, and the Great Parks Great Miami River Cleanup. With all of these volunteer jobs, I really think that I have made a few appreciated changes in a few families' lives.

I believe that I have a kind heart and that I have used it in many ways to benefit others. As a broadcaster I have spread the word about the amazing talents that people have at my school. As a basketball player, I have contributed to the team, sometimes only from the bench. As a grandson and friend, I have helped my Grandma through a very rough and scary time. Finally, as a volunteer, I have put money and time toward helping those who are less fortunate than I. I think through my kind heart I have affected my family, my classmates, and my community in a positive way.