

## **Joseph Ritter – Our Lady of Victory – St. Xavier High School, page 1 of 4**

I realize that I am very blessed and fortunate to have a loving family and to go to a school like Our Lady of Victory. In the past few years I have focused more on trying to pay my blessings forward. I have affected many people in my life in a positive way. This includes at school, in my community, and my home life. I have tried to use my talents to the best of my abilities to help others and leave a positive impact.

In my school I have helped many people in different ways. I recently finished tutoring a student in a younger grade who was struggling with reading. I often worked with him in the morning. I would get to school early and tutor him for about a half hour. I also stay after school for a couple hours on some days to help with our school's after school program. This program is for students whose parents work late and aren't able to pick them up right away. I spend this time helping students who don't understand their homework, talking to and playing with the younger students, and making sure everyone is included and safe.

I have also had many leadership roles in our school that put me in a position to make a positive impact on others. For the past couple years I have been a National Junior Honor Society member in our school. I was the Secretary for NJHS and I mainly helped people with service hours, and I also spoke at the NJHS induction ceremony. In the year COVID hit, I was a student council representative for my class, and I made a promise to them that we would complete a project to make a difference for others that year. Then COVID hit and we were doing school work virtually. Our options were

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limited, but my parents helped me find a business that was helping local students during the pandemic. Some students aren't as fortunate as we are at Victory, and they often rely on school meals to eat. A restaurant called O Pie O was taking donations to make boxed lunches for students who needed food. I encouraged my classmates to do extra chores or donate from their piggy banks. All of us working together donated hundreds of dollars in total.

This year I am a co-president of the Student Council. As a co-president, I help with our school's fundraisers and pep rallies. Our most recent pep rally was for our school's walk, and I also helped with Red Ribbon Week. The walk is our biggest fundraiser and helps buy computers and other extra items for our school. Red Ribbon Week is a time when students can bring in a dollar for a ribbon that states they are drug free, and the funds are donated to various causes. I know that these leadership roles I have done have helped many people at our school. I am often a lector for our school mass. I am always helpful to my classmates if they are confused or need advice on an assignment.

I have a positive impact on the people in my family and household as well. I help around the house without being asked, so my parents don't have to do as much. I try to make sure I am someone my brother can look up to. I think it is important that he has a good role model. I spend time with him and try to teach him new things. I enjoy spending time with my family. Every Saturday night I go to my grandparents' house to spend time with them. While I am there, I help them with housework and yard work

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when they need it. I take care of their cats, I help mow the lawn, and I help remove walnuts from the yard. I help with the tasks that my grandparents can't do alone anymore. My grandpa has always loved gardening, but he has had knee surgeries and other health issues, so he sometimes can't do all the yard work on his own. I help him with mulching, pulling weeds, and planting flowers and bushes.

I impact people in my community in many different ways. I try to go the extra mile to help people when I can. My brother and I often help our elderly neighbors with chores like shoveling their driveway when it snows and helping them maintain their giant flower garden. My grandma works at a nursing home with elderly people who have dementia and Alzheimer's. For the past few years, I have donated almost all of my Halloween candy for the residents to enjoy. I have also gone with my grandma just to sit and visit. She explained to me that the residents enjoy being around younger people and having visitors. I was surprised how much I enjoyed talking to them and making them smile, even though they may not remember that we talked soon after I left. This was also a way to spend time with my grandma doing something charitable.

I also volunteer for Ronald McDonald House. Before COVID, I spent many weekend evenings with my mom and our friends making snacks in the Ronald McDonald House kitchen for the families who were staying there. It made an impact on me to see that even something small like a homemade snack could help brighten someone's day, especially families who were going through a lot with their sick children. Since COVID, the rules have changed, and I am not old enough to volunteer in person

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anymore, so I have found other ways to help. When their pantry is low on snacks, I use my own money to send donations, and I decorate the bags they use at the snack station with jokes and pictures for the families to enjoy. Around my birthday this year, their website said they were low on snacks, so I asked people who came to my party to bring snack items to donate to Ronald McDonald House instead of gifts.

In all of these ways I have positively impacted my school, household, and community. I have chosen to attend St. Xavier High School, and their motto is “Men for Others.” I’m looking forward to continuing to grow as a man for others. I hope to take advantage of the many service opportunities I have seen in my visits to St. X. In the years to come I am going to continue to help many other people in different ways.