

Grace Adams  
All Saints School

It is very important to me that I have a positive influence on everyone that I meet and leave them with a good impression of me. I have learned that there are many ways to make an impact in someone's life, some as simple as a friendly gesture, and I try to use these methods in my everyday life. Obvious ways to make big contributions to the happiness of others include volunteering at school and church and doing major service projects. While I enjoy participating in these projects, I have also found that I can bring joy to others through simple smiles, waves, and acts of kindness. I believe that sharing my happiness and enthusiasm for life is an important thing to do day-to-day.

In the spirit of Catholic service my school offers many opportunities for students to participate in school volunteer activities. I serve as a second grade tutor for two younger students who need help with math. We meet during recess on every Monday. Even though it can be hard to give up recess, especially on Mondays, I feel good about doing this because it has been bringing me closer to these younger students and makes me feel accomplished to see them learn and gain confidence. Another role that I have at school is as a peer mediator. The program required an application, and those who were chosen were given training in how to peacefully resolve conflicts. The goal of the program is to eliminate bullying. Every week the selected peer mediators go out to recess in shifts so that kids can approach us for our help with their disagreements or problems. It feels great to solve a problem and see the kids' faces after their problem is resolved. We also assist with various things throughout the school year like acting in skits to introduce special events, initiating collections for the poor, etc. I serve as an Extraordinary Minister of the Eucharist at Mass and help to prep the fish for our parish Fish Fry. These acts of service make me happy because I know that I am positively impacting someone with just a little bit of my time. The students I tutor enjoy working with an older student, and the kids at recess feel more comfortable approaching other kids with their issues, so they all gain something from my involvement.

I have also discovered that I can share my joy by doing big service projects like serving dinner at the Ronald McDonald House with the Girl Scout group. I remember one particular time that we really put a smile on a child's face. This little boy from England was staying at the RMH. He was a great kid with a big personality and a cute little accent. We played with this boy from when we were done making food until we left and truly made friends with him. He was really happy to play with us, because of course every kid loves to play! His mom was so appreciative, so it didn't only put a smile on the boy's face, but his mother sure had a grin and we definitely did too. I also have delivered Meals on Wheels with my friend and have worked serving the homeless at a soup kitchen. It is especially rewarding to see firsthand the impact that you are making on someone else.

As insignificant as it may seem, a smile, wave, or "hello" is an important thing to do, maybe even more important than anything else. I can think of many times that I have done this when the other person's face has lit up, maybe cheering them up when they

were having a bad day. Adults always enjoy seeing a friendly kid, especially a teen because teenagers are known to be grumpy and sleepy. Visiting my great-grandmother at her retirement center has made me realize how grateful the elderly are for the attention of young people, so I go as often as I can. Many times I have smiled, waved, and said “hello” to people, and I can see the transformation in their attitudes. This is one of many ways to brighten up someone’s day!

Holding the door, smiling, waving, or saying “hello” are simple ways to truly change someone’s mood, and I think it is great to do as often as you can. You can also participate in a service project or volunteering which can really impact someone’s life. I love to be involved in all forms of service and take pride in representing my family, my school, and Catholic teenagers. Hopefully others will discover what they can accomplish when they try to bring joy to those around them, and we will have a happier world.

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