

Making a Difference

Hello, my name is Matthew Nichols. I attended Little Flower School from the first through sixth grades and have attended Our Lady of Grace Catholic School for the past two years due to a consolidation of four parish schools.

Just like Aubrey Rose, I also was a premature baby and my lungs were not fully developed. I spent the first sixteen days of my life at Cincinnati Children's Hospital in the Newborn Intensive Care Unit. However, unlike Aubrey Rose, I was able to recover from my lung problems and now I only have mild asthma. I guess what they say is true. God has plans for each of us.

I believe that everyone should follow Jesus' teachings by being kind, thoughtful and respecting each other. I try everyday to treat everyone the same way I would like to be treated because I have been treated badly at times and I know how it hurts. I have received The Spirit of Little Flower Award and Our Lady of Grace Award, six of the seven years I have been going to a catholic school. These awards are given to the student who shows acts of kindness and thoughtfulness, and respects their classmates and school staff.

I think that helping and serving my family, friends and community is very important. For the past two years, I have helped a friend from McAuley host Easter and Christmas parties at Archbishop Leibold Home for the Elderly. We wrapped and distributed gifts to the residents and assisted the residents with bingo and serving them refreshments. It's really neat to see the smiles on their faces when they win a game of bingo. Last year my friend and I volunteered at the Miamitown Christmas Walk. We lit all the luminaries (about 300) that lined the main street of Miamitown and transported food from the town hall to the firehouse for the public to purchase. It was hard work, but I really enjoyed it. I have volunteered for the past two years at Our Lady of Grace Living Nativity Stations. The first year I was a character in one of the scenes and this year I helped with traffic flow. The community drives through and looks at six different scenes of the birth of Christ. This is Our Lady of Grace's Christmas gift to the community. Last summer, I helped clean and scrub the tombstones in the cemetery at the St. Clare Convent in Hartwell. This was a very hot and tiring job, but the tombstones looked great after the job was finished and the nuns really appreciated the good deed.

I help my family, friends and neighbors quite a bit. I make a lot of trips at home going up and down the stairs getting things for my parents (which they really appreciate), I walk my neighbor's dog and during the winter I shovel the snow for my neighbors. Sometimes I get paid and sometimes I don't. This probably sounds funny, but I really don't mind if I don't get paid, because I REALLY like shoveling the snow and being out in it.

At my Parish, I help with the Children's Liturgy during Sunday mass as a teacher's aide. When the four parish schools consolidated, the school building was rented to another school, so the Little Flower Drama Club props and scenery had to be moved from the school/old convent to the parish center. I was one of the volunteers to help with this move. It was very hard work carrying boxes/props/scenery from the second floor of the school/convent to the parish center. I didn't mind though because I knew I was helping our Drama Club. I volunteer every year at our church festival and chicken dinner. I am a gift presenter and have started ushering at Sunday mass. Whenever our Director of Religious Education needs the help of a student, she calls me. Sometimes she needs me to

pass out pamphlets, books, or programs at the church door or setting up tables or chairs for a reception. I am always happy to help her because I know I am not only helping her but also serving our parish community and God.

I know the things I have done might seem like little things, but I hope that they have made an impact on some people's daily lives just as Aubrey Rose did in her short life. I enjoy volunteering and helping and I will continue as long as I am able, to make a difference in others lives.

Matthew Nichols