

## ALLISON LOECHTENFELDT

### ST. JUDE

Hi! I am Allison Loechtenfeldt. I am an eighth grader at St. Jude Elementary School. I have attended St. Jude for all eight years and plan to go to Mercy High School next year. We have a class of just 58 kids, so I have become close to almost everyone in my grade. As we have grown, everyone has developed their own personalities and reputations. My teachers say I am a good student and hard worker, but what I am most proud of, is that my classmates think I am nice to everyone.

I have grown up in a household with my mom, dad, and younger brother, Christopher. He is mentally and physically handicapped. He cannot walk or talk, but he is my brother and I will always love him, no matter what. We have gone through very hard times with him as he has suffered through seizures and hospitalizations. These struggles have made me stronger and definitely more grateful for all that I have, and all that I can do. I have learned to trust in God and cherish every moment. I believe that these experiences have made me the person I am and I feel that I have a different view of the world than most people my age. I try love every person for who they are and I pray to God every night to help me to be the best version of myself. I believe that growing up with an angel has given me so much that I can pass on to someone else.

Ever since I was little I have helped care for Christopher. I have learned how to draw up and give him his medications, how to make his tube feeding, and how to put him to bed. Now that I am older, I can watch him by myself, take care of him without assistance, and volunteer at his school functions. Spending time alone with each other brings us closer, and it brings me joy to see that I can make him smile his ear to ear grin. I know my parents are grateful that I enjoy spending time with Christopher and can help with his care. Their smiles are full of love and appreciation when they see us laughing together, and they know I will always be here for him.

The saying 'giving is better than receiving' is so true for me, especially during the Christmas season. Spending my babysitting money to buy my whole family gifts has amazing rewards. Just seeing my cousins' faces light up makes it all worth it and it makes me all smiley, too. Also, the past two years I have given my birthday gifts to St. Joseph's Home, which is a home for children like my brother with special needs. Every other year I get 10" of my hair cut for Locks of Love. I discovered Locks of Love in the newspaper when I was in the fourth grade and told my mom this is what I

wanted to do. Locks of Love turns donated hair into wigs for children with medical hair loss. I feel wonderful helping those kids knowing that they can feel more natural and comfortable with pretty hair, just because I gave up a little part of me.

In school, I try my hardest in everything I do by earning good grades and helping others. I try very, very hard to be kind to everyone and help them. I cannot find a point in being mean to anyone, friends or family. You never know what is going to happen later in life. I feel better about myself when I do good things for other people even if they are small such as saying good morning to everyone in the hall and walking into school with a smile. What also makes me smiley and happy is helping others, especially my school friends. I help them if they don't understand something we did in class, they need a copy of something, or they just need someone to talk to. I truly enjoy helping others because I think that if I am kind to them, then they will feel as if they should do the same for someone else. I know that God has put me on this planet to put a positive influence on others and to help them and I try everyday to do the right thing.