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ST. IGNATIUS

I have impacted many people's lives in my lifetime. It all started when I was a little boy. During the week, my Grandma would babysit me. My Grandpa had a stroke and was paralyzed, he could not walk or talk. So I helped my Grandpa by getting him a drink, a puzzle, or even a board game for us to play. Each time he would nod his head and smile. When I was in second grade, my Grandma passed away and then my Grandpa came to live with us on the weekends. I loved helping my Grandpa and knew when he passed away I needed to continue helping those who needed it. I immediately started looking into doing service for people. My dad then told me that his Parish School of Religion class had a special needs student that needed someone to help her learn. The task of helping this student took a lot of patience but when she got an answer right, we would both smile. I have now been helping at the Parish School of Religion for three years. Every Sunday, when the students see me waiting for them in the classroom, they smile at me. This year, I am helping one autistic student. Like many autistic children, this student is very quite and doesn't share many of his thoughts. It is hard to make sure he actually understands the concept, but at his day school they were talking about religion and he raised his hand and told the class that he is a Catholic and he is going to receive two sacraments this year. His mother was very proud when she told me this. I need to make this time special for him and the other students because I am helping them prepare for the sacraments of Reconciliation and Eucharist. I hope I have an impact on these children that could change their lives because I see them receive the Eucharist and then I think that I have helped them along the way. Without my help, this special little boy would have had a much harder time preparing for the sacraments.

Another way I affected people's lives is working at Vacation Bible School. I work both morning and evening class sessions. I am in charge of providing the children snacks and drinks. Next year I am going to be an assistant to the teacher and in two more years, I will be old enough to teach the children in my own class. My favorite part of snack time is when they tell me thank you for the food then they tell me jokes and the students and I talk and get to know each other. Once a student told me his favorite part of Vacation Bible School was the snack time because he enjoyed talking to me. One of the best memories was when a little girl forgot her snack and was crying because she was hungry and then I told her everything was all

right and I had some pretzels for her. She then stopped frowning, smiled and said thank you. Then when she left she said goodbye and had a bright smile on her face. I knew then, just like Aubrey, I could be a life changer by just putting a smile on someone's face.

I am also a server at St. Ignatius. I have served at happy events and some sad events. One Sunday mass a lady told me that she enjoys mass when I am serving because it looks like I enjoy it and want to be there. One time I served a funeral of a relative of a lady I knew from the Parish and when she walked in the procession and she saw me at the alter it made her smile, knowing that I was there for her family. Another time I impacted a life was when I had the honor of serving Father Bolte's dad's funeral. St. Ignatius always gives the servers five dollars for funerals. I used this money to buy his dad a special Mass. Fr. Bolte told me how much this meant to him and his mom.

I have impacted many lives while being a Eucharistic Minister. The most common time I have impacted someone's life from distributing is when I bless the younger kids who can't receive the Eucharist and see them smile when they are done. Also giving the congregation the greatest Gift of all, Jesus' Body and Blood changes their lives.

The easiest way to impact many peoples lives is at the Drop Inn Center. I have been down there many times and I expect to be back many more times. The best part is after you pour them a drink or dish out some green beans or spaghetti and they smile and say thank you.

I know we are all called to help others and should not look to be rewarded, but seeing others smile puts the biggest smile on me.