

Taylor Reilly

Our Lady of Lourdes

This New Year's Day, my Uncle Don lost a long fight with cancer. It's been such a hard week that sometimes, as a teenager, I feel like I can't possibly make a difference. I've learned that no matter how hard I work, or how much I pray, bad things will still happen.

But that doesn't mean that the good things we do are for nothing. When Uncle Don was diagnosed with Cancer three years ago, it was a very hard time for my family. I wanted to do something to show him that I cared and to support him, so I donated 10 inches of my hair to Locks of Love, an organization that uses the hair to make wigs for patients that will lose their hair from chemotherapy. It was hard for me to cut my hair, having grown it out for so long. But every time I looked in the mirror I was reminded that I had given a gift, had shown that I cared, even in a small way.

I've been more active in my community since then, trying to do little things to make a difference. Our Lady of Lourdes' sister parish is St. Michael in lower Price Hill. I was involved with three different activities with this parish to help their community. The first was collecting gently used coats in all sizes to help the less fortunate families keep warm this winter. The second was collecting non-perishable foods in the beginning of November for their food pantry. We delivered boxes and boxes of food that helped make Thanksgiving baskets for the area families, hopefully making their holidays a bit brighter.

The last project, which I enjoyed the most, was helping the school children shop for their parents during their Christmas Shop. This experience made me realize that I'm very fortunate, that many of these children won't have much of a Christmas. It was amazing to see how much they enjoyed being able to give, and that even the ability to give is really something special.

I am also involved with the Special Olympics at school. Once a week, we have a group of children come and we assist them with different physical activities like basketball. This is so rewarding to me to see how happy they are when they make a basket. They are always smiling and giving out hugs!

I first heard of Aubrey Rose when I took part in was the first Aubrey Rose Hollenkamp Foundation Fashion Show. I thought it was going to be a lot of fun being able to model with my Kit doll. I remember going out to pick out an outfit for the show and getting my picture taken with my doll. I was a little nervous the day of the show but got over it after watching (the other girls walk the runway. My mom also drew a portrait of Aubrey and gave it to her parents for the auction. I didn't even know Aubrey, but at the age of 10, I knew that the show would help raise money for the foundation and that I could help.

Now that I'm getting older, I've seen that organizations, like the Aubrey Rose Foundation, and like the Special Olympics, are bright spots in a world that has its dark side. Next year, when I attend Mother of Mercy High School, I plan to get involved in Student Council and any other clubs or organizations where I can make a difference in my community, and spread some of that light.