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In my lifetime I have helped and brought smiles to many people. I began doing this the second I came into the world. Aubrey Rose was six weeks premature, as was I. When I was born, no one was sure I was going to make it. I weighed 4 pounds, 5 ounces. We lived in Illinois while the rest of my family lived in Cincinnati. My mom did not get to see me for awhile. In fact, most of my aunts, uncles, and grandparents saw me before she ever did. A week after I was born, I was released and allowed to go home. Because no one thought I was going to make it, when I was released everyone was overjoyed. I got to come home the day before Thanksgiving. I too was a mini-miracle.

I have also collected pop tabs for an organization called the Ronald McDonald House. I went around my neighborhood asking for pop tabs off cans. A week or two later my family and a couple others went to the House to serve dinner to the families of the sick kids'. I got the chance to drop the pop tabs off in person. They have huge trash cans full of thousands, maybe millions, of pop tabs. After I did this I helped with dinner. To see the kids suffering with their health is hard but totally worth it when you go around talking to them with the goal of making them smile. It is cool to talk to the siblings of the children in the hospital and hearing their story of why they are there. I really feel connected with them and the pain they might be going through. Sometimes their stories are really sad but the hope and the strength they have to get through it is amazing. I would love to do this again.

One day, my friend and I were talking to my dad. He helps grant wishes for the Make-a-Wish Foundation. My dad was telling us about a Make-a-Wish boy and his family. My friend and I wanted to help raise money to help this boy. We thought of many different ideas but the idea that stood out the most was having a lemonade stand. It was the perfect day-sunny, humid, and hot. My sister also wanted to help. We got started right away. We made colorful signs, lemonade, and even some cookies. We got the wagon and headed out. It was a long, hot day but whenever we thought about giving up the boy and his family went through our heads and we kept at it. In the end we made twenty dollars. It wasn't a lot but it still felt good to know we helped. My family and I even had the chance to meet him and his family for dinner.

Every year I help out at the parish festival. I help work and run booths. The eighth graders are required to help park cars to keep the parking lot in order. We are also expected to clean up the Monday after the festival. We clean up the trash and take down the booths. The students are volunteering their time to help the festival committee clean. Even though I will be going to a different school next year, I will continue to help at the St. Susanna festival.

I love putting smiles on others faces. I know I will continue doing service for others. It makes me feel so good about what I am doing. This is an experience no one should miss.