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Saint Therese has always been my favorite saint. She once wrote, “What matters in life is not great deeds but great love.” This means that it doesn’t matter how big or small the deed is but how much love and commitment you put into it. If this is true, maybe all of the smaller deeds I have done over the past few years will amount to something great – making a difference in people’s lives.

For the past two summers, I have been helping as a teacher’s aide at the Saint Ignatius Vacation Bible School. I worked with kindergarten and first-grade teachers and students and often stayed to continue helping after the other aides had left. I taught about Jesus, put together craft kits for the students, and helped look after the children in my classes. Hopefully, my efforts made less work for the teachers and more fun for the children! I cannot wait until next summer to help again!

Over the past two years, I have been volunteering at the Monfort Heights branch of the public library. While I was there, I would set up for storytime, sort books, and help with the craft at the end of the children’s programs. While the summer reading program was going on, I would man the program table and help the children who came in. I would also help to reshelve the video tapes, audio books, magazines, and DVD’s as they were returned. I wanted my work to not only help the librarians but to help the library’s patrons. I love visiting the library, but I love volunteering at the library even more!

Another way that I have hopefully affected the lives of those around me is by helping at the Saint Ignatius School Library during the past two summers. Among other jobs, I offered my time to put barcodes and labels on new books. I also organized over 800 library cards to meet the homeroom assignments for the new school year. Even though some of my tasks were tedious, I enjoyed every moment because I realized that my work was helping someone else – this time, the students at my own school!

For the past five years, I have also been a volunteer for SPCA Cincinnati. I have socialized the cats and dogs that were afraid of people and groomed them. I have introduced dogs and cats to potential adopters. I was even featured on a “Zoom into Action” segment highlighting local volunteers on the PBS television show, Zoom. Because my mom and brother also volunteer for the SPCA, we have fostered several litters of orphaned kittens in our home until they were old enough to be adopted. Recently, I have also performed some additional volunteer work for the League for Animal Welfare in Batavia. I want to not only affect human lives but the lives of animals as well!

A large amount of my time has been spent at Saint Ignatius Church - literally. I am a mass server and have never missed my assigned masses. I have always been on time – even the ones at 7:00 on a Monday morning! I have also served at weddings and funerals. I have also been a member of the Saint Ignatius Bell and Chime Choir for the last four years and have played the guitar for the Saint Ignatius Junior High Music Group since the sixth grade. Both of these groups provide music for masses, and I have put much effort into both of them. This year, I am a member of the Saint Ignatius Liturgical Movement Group, a group that performs choreographed “dances” at mass. I love liturgical movement, and I hope to inspire everyone who sees it.

Of course, the easiest way I make a difference in others' lives is simply by smiling. I have been complimented many times on my "always smiling face". Maybe my smile will brighten someone else's day!

There is a saying, "From little things, big things grow." Saint Therese translated the "little way" she spoke of in terms of a commitment to the people we meet every day and the ordinary tasks of everyday life. Hopefully, my "little way" has grown and will continue to grow into something big - making an impact on the lives of others.