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I have always been known for my joy. People sometimes tell me that I am the most joyful person they have ever known. I can't help myself, I am just happy and I love to share that happiness with everyone around me. Sometimes I do this by talking, like I did when I gave a speech at Royalmont Academy's Fall Banquet when I was in the first grade. I bravely went up to the microphone in front of 300 adults and told them how much I loved school and my teacher, Mrs. O'Connell. I could see them all smiling back at me as they applauded loudly. I knew I made them feel my joy with my words.

More recently, I have had parts in a couple of musicals. I believe through this activity I have impacted not just the audience but also my fellow actors. As one of the older students, I was given the responsibility of mentoring the younger kids. I helped them learn the songs and dances, kept them quiet and occupied during down time and most importantly, led by my example. I always tried my best to be positive and happy around them. I think they learned a lot from me and I know they love me because I always get hugs and high-fives whenever I see them now.

I believe I have also made positive impacts on those around me by my actions and work ethic. An example of this would be this past fall's cross country season. I ran for my old school, Royalmont Academy since St. Nicholas does not offer cross country. It was our first season running and our team was small. I was the only eighth grader. It was a lot of hard work and sometimes it was so hot outside but I felt like I needed to be a good example since I was the oldest. I worked hard and pushed on, always encouraging my teammates to do the same. At the end of the season, my coaches gave me the Joy Award. They said I had the most positive attitude and that made me a great role model for my younger teammates.

I have had many opportunities to volunteer at my parish, my school and my youth group. I sing in the teen choir at church. What a great way to share in the Mass through the joyful praise of song! I think music makes the Mass enjoyable and without it the people would not be as happy. My mom has always told me that Jesus loves to hear the children singing. I think the parishioners do too.

Sometimes I don't realize what my actions mean to others. In my youth group, we do many things where we don't get to see the end result. We can only guess what the outcomes are. Every Halloween for example, we go trick-or-treating for canned goods. We then sort and donate our "loot" to an area food pantry. I know that my efforts with this help someone or a family out. This past fall, we also made knot blankets for children in the hospital. I did not deliver the blankets but I imagine the warmth, softness and soothing colors brought comfort to those children just as the canned food brought comfort to those families.

By giving up my recess to volunteer at the ice cream stand at school I am easing the burden of the kitchen staff and parent lunchroom volunteers. Without my work and that of my fellow stand workers, one of the adults would have to man the ice cream stand or worse yet, the stand would have to close. The students at St. Nicholas Academy do love their ice cream so I am happy to help out in order for the stand to continue.

Finally, I would like to mention the significant impact my words and actions have at home. Every day when I wake up I choose to be either a joyful, respectful daughter and sister or a grumpy one. I have learned that the joyful girl is easier to get along with and has better days at school. When I am happy and my words reflect that happiness and my actions are with joy and purpose, my family is happier. They have more joy! I like that.

I believe that I have positively impacted many people with my joy. As I mentioned before I love to share my joy and happiness. I try to do it every day with my words, actions and choices. You know the kind of funny thing about it is that I know my days are so much brighter and I have more joy when I have said something or done something that makes someone else feel happy.