

Victoria Childers - St. Gabriel Consolidated School- Roger Bacon High School

I believe that I have contributed many things to the people and communities around me, and that I have changed the lives of many people through my service at church, home, Girl Scouts, and school.

At our parish, St. Matthias, my family and I decorate the church by creating and placing flower arrangements for the altars in the main church and the chapel. Sometimes it may take long hours of hard work, especially around the Easter and Christmas seasons, but it's worth the effort once we see the beauty and happiness it radiates among the parish. We also serve, distribute, and lector every week. From the grandparents, aunts and uncles, to the grandchildren, we all find some way of helping the church. My family believes that we are serving God and others when we do these things and in turn makes us a stronger family as we all take care of each other.

For the past year, my family and I have been caring for my grandpa who has Alzheimer's. It has been very rough aiding him. We have sacrificed a great deal so that my grandpa can live with us. A lot of times I can't join my friends in going to the mall or the movies because I have to take care of him. It can be very annoying not having the freedom to be able to go out when I want or simply go to dinner like most normal families, but in the long run what we are doing is for the best. After everything is said and done, it will be a relief knowing that I did the right thing. My Faith and love for God show me that helping others is a great way to share God's love with others.

My Girl Scout troop and I enjoy helping others and tend to show it through the work we do. In the past, we have volunteered at places such as the Ronald McDonald House and served meals to the families living there. We also count and collect box tops for our school. For the last several years, we have made it a tradition to sing Christmas carols to the senior citizens living in the nursing homes. In the Alzheimer's unit, you could just see their faces light up as we sang to them. Some would join in and remember the words to the songs we sang. It's wonderful seeing the faces of the people we touch by just doing a small act of kindness for them. It made the people feel that there was someone who cared about them, that they weren't being abandoned in the nursing homes by their families. It felt like we were able to change their lives that helped brighten their day.

Through my years at St. Gabriel Consolidated School, I have learned many things about how I can change the lives of others by doing even the simplest tasks. One day last year, my grade volunteered at Matthew 25 Ministries, where we sorted supplies that were being sent to third world countries and disaster victims. The jobs we were given were not difficult, just time consuming. It was very humbling to see all of the luxuries that we take for granted and that inspired me to look into a deeper meaning of life. I then realized that our lives aren't just measured in years, they're measured in the lives of the people we touch around us.