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“Kindness is more than deeds. It is an attitude, an expression, a look, or a touch. It is anything that lifts another person.” – Plato

One of the most important ways that I touch people’s lives and make a difference is through small acts of kindness. Kindness is such an important way of making a difference. You can make someone’s day or even change someone’s life when you treat them with kindness. It can be so easy to do, but it can make such a huge difference. In my life, I try to be as selfless as I can, because one of my long-term goals is to make the world a better place. But I have to start small. I have to first show kindness and touch the people’s lives in my school, home and home community.

At school, I am always trying to lend a helping hand. I feel like I am very good at detecting when someone is feeling left out or is feeling down. I can tell if a classmates’ feelings have been hurt or they are upset in some way. My own difficulty with finding the right group to fit into the last few years and often feeling left out of group activities has made me more aware of the people around me. I make sure everyone is being included and sit with someone who is alone. I try to check on someone if they seem sad or worried. I also like to help my teachers, because they do so much for me; therefore, I want to give back to them by being kind and helpful. Offering to help them with anything or just paying attention and participating in class are ways that I make a difference and show that their time and effort are important to me. Lastly, I have found that just staying positive and having a constant smile on my face helps people when they need cheering up. This smile and positive attitude can make a big difference in someone’s day.

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Next, I am kind at home to my family also. The most important quality of a family is that they are there for each other in tough times. My great grandma, or “granny” as we called her was diagnosed with Alzheimer’s and this made me very scared. Would she remember me? What would she be like when we visited her and would she still be the same person that she always was? As we visited her over the months, her memory and problems got worse and worse. We would start a conversation with her and she would repeat things over and over again, like saying that she wanted to go back to the hills and she would sometimes scream and cry. This frightened my family and me so we would try to distract her with games, pictures and singing her all-time favorite song, “You Are My Sunshine.” Sometimes this would help and she would laugh and sing along with us and remember all the words to the song. It was hard to visit her like that, remembering the good ol’ days with boxed chicken noodle soup and fudge-sickles and Granny not sick at all, dancing and reading to us. But I knew I had to visit her because she was family and family sticks together. That is one of the ways that I make a difference in my family’s life. By sticking with them and always being there for them, in the good times and the bad.

Finally, I make a difference in the lives of some of the people in my home community. Once a month, my family takes communion to several different families who can’t get out of the house. At first, I didn’t want to go because I thought it was a hassle. Now I really look forward to going. I feel like they have taught me so much over the time that I have been doing this about what it means to give to others. When we visit a lady

named Hilda, she tells the most amazing stories. One of my favorites she has told us is about how she and her parents survived the Great Flood of 1932. They had to climb

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through her ceiling and were rescued on a boat. My family and I also visit a lady named Mary, who just lost her husband Lee. She is an incredibly strong person who took care of her husband who lost his leg to diabetes over 30 years ago. I love talking to her. She is a wonderful role model because she is so caring and always has a smile on her face. My family went to visit our homebound people over Christmas this year just because we felt like it was an important thing to do. We now feel like they are part of our family. Both Hilda and Mary look forward to our visits and it is easy to see how much they appreciate us. Being kind and giving of myself to people like Hilda and Mary is important to me because they don't have many people to visit them and it is a small thing that my family and I can do once a month that really brightens their day.

By writing this essay, and thinking back and reflecting on the things I have done in my own life to make a difference in the lives of others, I have learned a couple of things. During my 8th grade year, while trying to make the most out of the time that I have left with my friends and making important decisions about my future, it is easy to get caught up with my own life. It is still important to think about others during the times when you really feel like you only have time to think about yourself. Most likely, others are having a hard time too. Also, while thinking about the ways I have touched others, I have learned a valuable lesson about myself. The way that I am going to make a difference in the world (at least for now) is through small deeds. Deeds like smiling, or giving someone a hug, or visiting a lonely elderly person who just needs a little

company. By doing all of these things at school, home and in my home community through small acts of kindness, I am making a difference in people's lives all around me every day.