

Olivia Barclay - St. Paul School- St. Henry

The phrase “A little goes a long way” is often used in people’s daily lives. I always heard it when people were describing effort, baking, or painting. What I didn’t realize was that phrase helps me in my everyday life, whether I know it or not. For example, smiling at someone can fill an unhappy person with joy. It’s the simple things in life that can impact a person’s day. My daily goal is to make a person’s day brighter in some way. Whether it’s a small smile, holding the door for someone, or simply saying thank you, you can easily change a negative attitude to a positive one.

Each summer, I volunteer at my church’s Vacation Bible School Program. I usually signed up to be a group helper. My job was to lead a group of young children through stations and explain to them who Jesus was and the things He did. This is one of my favorite things to do because I love working with children. Their happiness and eagerness to learn brings me joy seeing them each night that week. The adults who work there always thank me for coming back to help every year. One group leader last year who I assisted called me the “child magnet” because every boy and girl wanted to talk to me, hold my hand, wanted my help instead of hers, and so forth. It warmed my heart to know that the children felt as fondly of me as I felt about them. Most teenagers who volunteer come only for service hours, but I have just as much fun helping as the children do learning and playing.

My family and I have become close with our neighbors. They have two young boys and a newborn baby. As a surprise for the parents, we gave them a gift card to one of their

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favorite restaurants for a stress-free evening without children. Since I am unexperienced with babies and their many needs, my parents cared for the newborn while I babysat their older boys. The parents thanked us many times for our unexpected gift and I felt good knowing that we were able to provide for them a fun and relaxing evening.

On Halloween, my friend and I gave up trick-or-treating this year to make the upcoming holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas happier and healthier for less fortunate families in Northern Kentucky and the Cincinnati area. My friend's neighbor has a tradition where she and other children drive around their large neighborhood and gather packaged food, canned goods, and warm clothing. All the proceeds go to the Hosea House. It's mission is to provide food and nourishment for the bodies and souls of men, women, and children. Being able to help out others instead of collecting surplus candy I didn't need was a good way to spend my evening. As we collected goods throughout the neighborhood, some people were kind enough to offer me candy. I didn't want to rudely reject, so I ate some and donated the rest to the soldiers overseas. They would definitely appreciate it more than I would.

Recently, my sister created a school supplies drive for the less fortunate schools in Nicaragua she visited over the summer. When I found out what she was doing, I decided to help in any small way I could. I donated a box of colored pencils that I had

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never used because I knew the children there would use them more than I would. We created posters together to hang around her school, and I gave her some money to pay for the shipping cost. Posters were given to my principal so my school could donate any spare supplies too. My sister and I share a paper route, so I helped her place notes in the newspapers asking for extra school supplies. The kind people throughout our small neighborhood gave many items like backpacks, post-it notes, unused notebooks, and boxes of crayons and pencils. In the end, I was able to help give much needed supplies to the school children in Nicaragua.

I am on a dance team and each year they have a Christmas party. This year, they had a guessing jar filled with Hershey's Kisses. With my bad luck, I put down the first number that came to mind. Surprisingly, I won about 250 little chocolate candies. Taking so many home felt greedy, so I got an idea that I knew the girls on my team would like. The next time I went to class, I gave out bags filled with Hershey's Kisses to all the girls on my team. I loved seeing their faces light up with shock. After all, Christmas is about giving to others and not expecting anything in return.

The small things you do can mean a lot to people. Little things like volunteering at Church, babysitting for free, collecting food and clothing, and giving out chocolate to a team can make a day better for people. I was able to help my parish, my neighbors, homeless people in the area, Nicaraguan children, and my dance team. Giving up your

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time, money, or goods to help someone else is important because the work you that you do can make someone's day easier. Whenever you hear the phrase, "A little goes a long way", remember to put others before yourself and do what you can to make a good impact in someone's day. Only a little deed can go a long way.