

Ella Keenan – Saint Gabriel – Mount Notre Dame

One definition of impact is ‘the effect or influence of one person’. Throughout my life, I have affected many people. I have volunteered at many places and helped numerous people. I am very proud of how I have come across many obstacles in my life, but I still always put others before myself. At school especially, I do my best to be a positive role model for my peers. If someone needs my help or I volunteer to help someone, I always enjoy being useful. Whether the task is big or small, I always rise to the occasion and get it done purposefully. The people or groups that I help include those at school, home, and church.

At school, I love to volunteer for a few specific things. Every morning before school starts, I help out my former kindergarten teacher in her classroom. Whether she needs me to sort papers, create booklets, or watch the kindergarteners while she quickly ducks out of the classroom to do something, I am always there to help. Every day after school ends and before everyone leaves the building, I help out my homeroom teacher. Without being asked, I gather schoolwork for my classmates that were absent from school from that day. After I gather that, I deliver it to wherever it needs to go to get home to that person, whether it gets sent home with their sibling or goes somewhere else. We have Mass at my school, and whenever it is my homeroom’s turn to pick people to volunteer at church, whether the volunteers read, greet people at the doors, or bring up the gifts, I always volunteer. Usually, I volunteer to read at Mass, but if they need me for something else, I am happy to help out. When I was younger, I was part of the Girl Scouts of America, which I participated in through my school. We completed many service projects, including making toiletry kits for people at homeless shelters. Through all of this volunteering, I have created a positive impact on my school community, and I have stepped up to be a responsible leader at my school.

My parish is Saint Maximilian Kolbe Parish. I volunteer for multiple things to help out my parish community. At the beginning of the Christmas season for the past two years, I have helped to decorate the entire church, including all the final touches. Also during this time, my church hosts a food and toy drive for different families who are in need. I partake in this by helping to pick out food with my parents to give to a family. Also, for the past two years I have helped load donated food into trucks to be delivered to a few different charities. St. Max hosts a group called Family Promise, which is an organization that includes multiple churches in the Butler County area that take turns housing a group of homeless families at the churches. My family and I enjoy helping to set up and tear down the rooms that these families sleep in. I also bring food for them to eat, and I love to play with the little kids that are a part of this group.

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Another thing I do to help out at my parish is volunteering at Vacation Bible School in the summer. I lead different groups of kids in multiple activities throughout the day, such as story time, arts and crafts, and music time. Since my mother works in the office at St. Max, I go in to work with her sometimes to help her and her co-workers out with different tasks around the church. I try to leave a positive impact on my parish and its community.

On December 6, 2019, I was diagnosed with Celiac Disease. This changed my entire life. For many months, I was having a really hard time adjusting to the circumstances. On top of that, I was also diagnosed with Irritable Bowel Syndrome (I.B.S.). To this day, I still struggle with these two things. I overcame these obstacles by trying to focus on others. Instead of spending time worrying about these medical issues, I always do whatever I can to help out others. Whenever I do this, it makes me feel so happy inside, because I know that, even if it was small, I still made a difference in someone's day. In addition to my medical issues, one of my closest friends was diagnosed with Crohn's Disease around the same time I was diagnosed with Celiac Disease. We both went through a rough patch for a while. Instead of focusing on my diagnosis, I felt much better when I helped out my friend. When he was in the hospital, I would send him a text at least once every few days to check up on him and make sure he was doing well. Also, I went to visit him at the hospital one time and played a card game with him. I had our classmates create cards for me to bring to him in the hospital a couple of times. Instead of worrying about myself and my diagnoses, I focused most of my attention to him to make sure he was doing well. Throughout my journey with Celiac Disease, I have realized that there are many others my age who are going through the same thing as me. That is why I decided that I would create a blog to educate and support others. I feel that since I have Celiac, I have this opportunity to make others feel better about their situation, similar to mine.

Throughout my entire life, not just since I was diagnosed with Celiac Disease or I.B.S, I have always put others before myself. I feel proud of myself whenever I am able to help someone, even if it was just a small gesture. With each of these acts, I have left a positive impact on this world. I feel that it is part of my job as a citizen to help out my community. It is my job to make sure that I do anything and everything I can to leave a positive impact on this planet, and on other people in my life. No matter what obstacles I have, and will come across in my life, I will always help out wherever, whenever, and whomever I can to leave a positive impact.

