

Marisa Poff-Our Lady of the Visitation-Seton High School

“To make a difference in someone’s life, you don’t have to be brilliant, rich, beautiful or perfect. You just have to care enough to be there,” by Mandy Hale. This quote resonates with me. It grabbed my attention because it reminds me that I don’t have to be the popular kid to change someone’s life and that anyone can make a difference in our small circle of the world. Also, I feel it is important to be kind to others and not post about it. Kindness is a part of who each of us can be and our personality. Kindness does not expect praise or reward. Just like Mathew 6:4 wrote, “So that your giving may be in secret. Then your father, who sees that it is done in secret, will reward you.”

I felt it was important to me to help others outside of my home. In 2019 and early 2020, on Wednesday nights, my mom and I would go downtown and offer dinner and clothes to those that were sleeping on the streets. While I was scared to meet people that lived on the street, I knew it was important to offer a warm meal. It only made sense to me that if I can eat three meals a day, why can’t I offer those on the streets a warm meal for their day. They don’t know when their next meal would be. I was determined to go once a week and offer something. After weeks and months of offering a warm dinner, clothes and shoes, I started to realize that those sleeping on the street need someone to talk to. As I began my journey of serving warm meals, and once I came comfortable talking with them, I began praying with them. The power of prayer is real. As they prayed for their families to forgive them, or for a loved one to be released from the hospital, it became real for me. The people on the streets have real feelings and just want human interaction. While I was scared at first to approach and offer what I had, I quickly realized the thankful people I was meeting, just needed a welcoming smile. What a day can make with just a smile. I really miss serving and talking with those in need and I hope to get back to the streets soon after Covid restrictions are lifted.

I felt empty after I had to stop serving those downtown, so during the days of restrictions from Covid, I decided to make freshly baked, homemade, warm, giant chocolate chip cookies for anyone I knew that had a birthday. I would show up at their door and surprise them with the warm cookies. Again, I loved to see a smile on the faces of those that I was able to surprise. And who doesn’t love freshly baked chocolate chip cookies on their birthday? I love to bake so this was fun for me to bake and celebrate the birthdays of my friends and family.

While I am not able to do as much as I have wished this past year through the church, I have had the opportunity to be an eucharistic minister at school masses. In past years, I was able to participate in live masses by helping with the Sunday school program and serving at mass a few times a month. Lastly, it is important to me to pray the rosary five nights a week with my friends. We start the call laughing and learning about each other’s day. We eventually end with praying the rosary. It makes our friendship stronger and we love to pray the rosary together.

I am always thinking of new ways I can help the people in my community. As I enter high school next year, I am interested in creating an American Sign Language (ASL) club. I have been interested in ASL for about five years now and have recently been taking college classes at Cincinnati State to learn ASL. In this club, it is my intent to teach my other classmates ASL. My goal for this club is to be able to go meet deaf children and sign with them. We could have a "Lunch and Sign" day, which would benefit not only the children, but the high school students learn more about the deaf community. I would love to see the smiles on all the kids faces as they see teens working with them and interested in their world.

I go back to Mandy's quote often and try to impact and make a difference in someone's life as often as I can. I'm not that brilliant, rich, beautiful, or perfect girl but helping others and giving back to my family, friends, school and community puts the biggest smile on my face and makes for a great day!