

Ava Stautberg - St. Bernard School - Seton High School

It is really easy to make someone smile on a day to day basis. All you have to do is complement someone on their outfit or even just their personality. From all of the wonderful things that I've heard, this is how Aubrey Rose was. She was courageous and always happy towards others. She is really an inspiration to so many people in their lives. I have done many things that I think she and her family would be proud of. I've made gift baskets for my neighbor when their relative died, I shop for Christmas gifts for the kids that don't have enough money, and I also go to fundraisers and organizations to help people in need.

When my neighbor's relative died, my family and I wanted to do something special for them. My mom and I went to Target and purchased nine baskets with goodies. We purchased tissues, candy, toys, cards, tinker toys for the younger kids, blankets, socks, and many more things. My family and I gathered all the baskets and carried them over to their house. Some of our other neighbors went in on it too. Everyone had something from homemade cookies to gift cards to restaurants. We all went up to their door and said SURPRISE! Their whole family was so genuinely grateful and happy for what we did for them. The parents were so shocked that people came together in this very hard time. Making someone feel happy makes me get butterflies in my stomach, and truly feel good about what I've done.

Every year my family and I get a wonderful family that we "adopt" for Christmas to get gifts for them. The families that sign up for the program don't have enough money for presents underneath the tree on Christmas day. My dad's work gives us gift cards to buy for each child. The children write out what they want for Christmas and we get it for them. The children can be from ages newborn to 16. After we get all the gifts put together we put their family's name on it, and get it shipped off to their home. Almost every year the parents write back and say how grateful they are for us doing this for their kids. They say that their Christmas would've never been the same without our help. I am so thankful for having a family that can afford Christmas, yet alone have one.

I also help out at fundraisers and organizations like the HEAL program. HEAL (Help Endure A Loss) is an organization that funds money towards families that have lost a child. They have games to play, 5K's to run, and most importantly the feeling of a whole big family. Just like the family of Aubrey Rose, all the people there can all relate to what's happened in their lives. They can come together and celebrate the life of their child that has passed away. When I'm there, I get the families gift bags ready to go to send off with them when they come in, or when they leave. My dad and I also give a little speech of how thankful we are for them coming and supporting all of one another in what has happened. When everyone has left, I clean up from the event and get things back in order again. It's awful that many parents have lost their child, but I believe that everything happens for a reason, and that everyone has a purpose on this earth even if you don't know what it is.

Little things in my life have helped me become who I am. Even if I don't realize it, being kind to others makes people have a ray of sunshine in their day. I know I'm not perfect, but if I just try, I know I will impact someone's life in a small way. Doing all of these things in my life has made me better, and even impacted me. I think that the people around me, like my friends and family, have made me make a difference in the

Ava Stautberg - St. Bernard School - Seton High School, page 2 of 2

world and how I've treated God's people. A quote that I try to live by is this: "The best and most beautiful things in this world cannot be seen or even heard, but must be felt with the heart." (Helen Keller).