

## **Abby Turnpaugh - St. Pius X - Notre Dame Academy**

In my life, I have aspired to touch the lives of as many people as possible by using my God-given gifts to serve my community. Being raised in the faith and attending a Catholic school, I have realized the importance of serving others. Throughout my entire life, I have been engaging in many service activities to benefit my community.

One organization that I enjoy serving is the Rose Garden Mission in Covington, Kentucky. I have been volunteering at the mission since I was ten years old and have partaken in various activities throughout the years. It touches my heart to see all the donations from food corporations and medical professionals, which help expand the benefits the mission provides. One of my favorite things to do at the Rose Garden Mission is to make baby baskets with all the essentials for newborns. I love decorating the baskets with different themes and using my gift of creativity. Talking with the Sisters and seeing what it takes to run the mission has helped my faith formation immensely. The Rose Garden Mission has shown me that helping others can take many people, but last March I learned that I can benefit my community, from just my hands and my sewing machine.

In March 2020, we went into lockdown. The COVID-19 pandemic brought about much confusion and concern. Masks were tough to find, and the demand was extremely high. I had recently started to use my sewing machine again trying to find something to occupy my time. My skills were very limited, but I realized that I could sew masks for my family. I started out making one for my parents, brother, and grandparents. I thought that was the extent of my mask-making, but I could not have been more wrong.

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A social media post informed me that St. Elizabeth was in dire need of personal protection equipment (PPE). I began sewing masks every day to help our frontline workers. I enjoyed seeing my masks benefit healthcare workers, so I started documenting my “100 Mask Challenge” on my YouTube channel. My mother shared my video on Facebook, and it spread through the community. The orders came pouring in., and my days began to consist of making masks for three or four hours a day. Parents of my friends were contacting my mom for mask orders, and it was quite an experience trying to keep up with the demand. I reached out to my school to see if any of the faculty members needed masks, and I made some for my principal and vice-principal. I learned time management skills I never thought I had, and it was gratifying to see my work benefit so many people. As I was winding down on the orders, I received my biggest one yet. A friend’s mother was a patron to a nursing home, and the home was in desperate need of PPE. I began using every scrap of fabric and time I had to fulfill this order. I even used extra bed sheets for masks. It took a lot of work and once I finally finished, I had amassed 42 masks for the nursing home and 100 in total. This last order ended my mask-making stint, and I learned so much from the experience. Helping my community is something I always strive to do, and throughout my years at St. Pius X School, I have found many ways to help my parish.

Throughout my nine years at St. Pius X school, I have participated in many service activities to benefit my school and parish community. At school, I have been involved in student council, and I have been an older buddy at vacation bible school since fifth grade. In my parish, I have been an altar server and lector.

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I always help decorate the Church for Christmas, and this year, I helped convert the Parish Activity Center to a place to host Christmas Eve Mass. Serving my school and parish community has been an excellent way for me to meet new people who have the same passion to use his or her gifts to benefit others.

I am so grateful for all the service opportunities that I have received, and I will continue to participate in as many as possible. Serving my community is something that I will strive to do for the rest of my life and will always enjoy. I have learned so many important life skills from service, which I will continue to use. I want to be a light for others so that they see God through my actions. I will do this by serving my community and those in it.