

## Grace Durkin – Saint Catharine of Siena – Mercy McAuley High School, page1 of 2

Being an only girl and a middle child with two brothers, life can be pretty tough. But, I've quickly learned that there are more benefits than there are not. For example, having a little brother can be one of the best things in the world. Sure, he can be a little annoying, but I love my little brother, Thomas, to death. He is my crazy, stubborn, noisy, curious, dorky little brother and he looks up to me. Thomas told me himself that he idolizes me for guidance and help. I'm not going to lie. My brother and I do butt heads sometimes, often over the stupidest things, but all brothers and sisters fight every once in a while. And within the few minutes after the argument, both of them feel bad and apologize, and then everything's back to normal.

Not only do I make a difference to my little brother, but I make a huge difference to my older brother, Ryan, as well. Ever since I was little, Ryan has always been looking out for me like a big brother should. And in return, I look out for him the same way he looks out for me. When I was born, Ryan knew he had to be a little more responsible, so he grew up a tiny bit for my sake. Ryan enjoyed spending time with me; it brought him unending joy as he watched me grow. Even now, when we don't see each other very much, I remember those good times and I know that Ryan will always be there. He told me himself that he can't imagine a life without me. As Ryan's little sister, I've always had a special ability to make him smile with my quirky one-liners. To be honest, I hate seeing my big brother down because he makes everyone else laugh and smile and he deserves the same. I remember when Ryan broke up with his girlfriend; He was crying and there was no point in trying to crack a joke at a time like that. I remember sitting next to him, looking him in the eye, and saying "Ryan, there will be plenty of other girls out there who are better than she ever was." But, I don't just make him feel better. I challenge him with my own intelligence. Even as a little kid, I was always crazy smart. Ryan jokes that maybe it's because of me eating books when I was really really little. But even now, as I'm about to go into high school, I still continue to challenge my big brother.

I try at school to help others come out of their shell. Sadly, I have experienced some trials in my time of growing up. I attended another parochial school until sixth grade and was bullied by many of my classmates. As a result of the bullying I developed low self esteem, anxiety and poor thoughts about myself. I worked with a Therapist to overcome those feelings, build my self esteem and eventually forgive my tormentors. When I came to St Catharine I brought to my classmates a face and story to hear about the long term effects of bullying and also about the strength to overcome. In return my classmates gave me understanding, confidence and friendship. I have blossomed not only at school but in other areas within the parish. I belong to power of the pen, I am currently working on my Marian Award through the Girl scout Troop at St

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Catharine. I enjoy sewing club , where we make bibs and mitts for babies at Children's Hospital. I love giving in an anonymous way , it gives me great joy and heals my heart as I am able to help others. I made friends with another girl who was new to St Catharine's. I work hard to seek out those students who seem afraid to come out of their shell and try my best to make them comfortable and put them at ease. I know what it is like to be the invisible child in a class and I do not want anyone to have to experience that feeling.

I have affected many people in my life already, but out of all of them, my family is the most affected. And in high school, I'll strive to meet new people, make new friends, and affect others in more ways than one. I want to make people laugh or crack a smile because not only does it brighten my day, but it brightens their day as well. I realize that not every person I'll meet is going to laugh or smile, but the least I can do is try. I know that life's twists and turns are tough, but I am tougher. I will fight the negativity and spread positivity as I go. I will walk my way down the path of life with a smile on my face and pep in my step all the way to the end. And I won't fear a single thing.