

Madison Quandt - St. Therese - Holy Cross High School

One act of kindness can change a life. My parents tell me all the time that it is the small things that matter. So, when life gets challenging, it is these small things that keep you going; that keep others going. Sometimes all it takes is a smile, a kind act or just a kind word. That is what I try to do every day.

When I was six, I loved books and I wanted all my friends to bring me a book for my birthday party. Around that time, my parents took me to the zoo. On the way to the zoo they pointed out to me the Ronald McDonald House and Children's Hospital. They explained why little boys and girls were there. I wanted to help them, so I asked my mom to take all the books I got for my birthday and together we took them to the Ronald McDonald House and gave them to the kids to help them feel better. It made me feel good to help them and see a smile on their faces.

When I turned 9, I became a patient at Children's Hospital and was diagnosed with Type 1 Diabetes. My life changed that day and since then I have to wear a pump and do finger pricks in order to manage my blood sugar. Instead of feeling bad about myself, I heard about JDRF from the nurse and my family and I started a walk to fundraise to find a cure. I have since become a JDRF Youth Ambassador fundraising and making aware to others the need to find a cure for Type 1 Diabetes. Each year, I talk to my school's 3rd grade class about Type 1 and Type 2 Diabetes and what the differences are. My entire family helps me raise money and community awareness about Type 1 Diabetes so one day we will find a cure. I feel really good when I can help other kids become comfortable having Type 1 Diabetes and not feel scared. One day, I hope to be a doctor at Children's Hospital and help kids with Type 1.

This past summer I tragically lost a close friend. She was an inspiration to me. The way she was to others was the way I wanted to be. One thing she did was to make everyone smile at her school by standing outside the doors in the morning and give everyone a high five. It turned into "high-five Fridays". When summer ended and school started again at my school, most of us had heard the story about my friend and wanted to find a way to continue her legacy. Weeks into school, I was elected vice president of student council. I wanted to remember my friend, so we recreated "high-five Friday" at our school. Every Friday, Student Council wears shirts that say *#HighFiveFriday* and we encourage students to have a positive and fun day at school, completed with a high five.

Even through her spirit, we are all still inspired. I am inspired; and I hope to help people see that the small things really do matter. In my case, it was donating books to children, talking about the challenges I face with diabetes and passing on the spirit of a close friend. One act of kindness can change a life. I have been lucky enough to see many lives changed. It all started with a smile and a little hope.