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The quote, "We must become the change we want to see in the world", by Mahatma Gandhi, explains how I strive to live in my daily life. When we know that there is something that needs attention in our world, we cannot just wait until it is fixed. Instead, we must work for that change in the way we interact with others and live our lives. I try to make a difference through acts of service and also through the way I carry myself and act in my daily life. I strive to be kind and accepting to everyone and to be caring and dedicated to whatever I am doing. I want to be an example of Christ and live out what He has taught me. I know that in life, I will be faced with many challenges, but by staying grounded in faith I know that I will become a better person and build lasting relationships.

When I was one month old, I was diagnosed with a rare blood disorder called Severe Congenital Neutropenia which causes my body to not produce enough white blood cells for my immune system to function properly. This has caused me to be more prone to infections throughout my life, but overall, I am grateful for what Neutropenia has done for me. It has helped me to see the good that can come out of every situation in life and to be grateful for what I have. My Neutropenia has also inspired me to use my gifts and talents that I have been given to hopefully make a difference in my communities.

I have been a patient at Cincinnati Children's Hospital for my entire life and I am now able to give back to the Children's community. A few years ago, I joined a program called the Champions program at the hospital which gives patients like me an opportunity to be a voice for other patients and their families as well as for the Children's community. This program has given me the chance to give speeches to members of the different hospital leadership teams about my experiences in hopes of influencing the community to continue to work for what is right. I am also a member of the Patient Advisory Council which provides patient perspective and insight to the hospital. My goal in being involved with the Children's community is to help spread hope to patients and their families and to help stand for those who cannot stand alone.

My family and I are active members of the Neutropenia community as well. For the past six years we have held fundraisers for the Ella Jewell Foundation, the only non-profit organization that raises money to support Neutropenia research and peer support. In total, we have raised over \$50,000 to support a cause that means so much to us. At these events, I have been able to raise awareness for this very rare disease and have had the privilege of meeting other kids with Neutropenia. Additionally, every other year we participate in a national Neutropenia conference. These conferences have given me a chance to meet other kids like me, who have now become good friends and an inspiration for me to continue to be a voice in the Neutropenia world. They have also given me a chance to share my story with the top Neutropenia researchers, families, and younger kids in hopes of making a positive impact on their lives.

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I have been involved in several areas of service within my church and school communities. Last year I volunteered to help with a program called Catechesis of the Good Shepherd which is a program that helps to teach children about their faith and how to live it out in their daily lives. I spent two hours every Sunday during the school year helping out with this program. I am extremely grateful to have had this opportunity, as this program helped me to see the beauty in life and how one's faith can really affect who they are. This meant a lot to me because I had the opportunity to hopefully help the kids develop strong morals and values at such a young age. I have also been an altar server since the sixth grade and truly enjoy giving back to the community in this way. By doing so, I have been an advocate of my faith, led by example and followed what God is calling me to do. In addition, I am a Missions Officer for my school's student council which has given me the ability to lead my peers in acts of service. The Hope Squad is another area of service at school that I have been involved with this year in which we work to provide hope and compassion to those who may be in need.

Ever since I was little, my family has taught me that giving to others is one of the most important things in life. Every year, my brothers and I save a part of our allowance for the whole year, and at the end of the year our family chooses a cause that we want to donate our savings towards. For example, this past year we donated presents to an orphanage, gave toys to a hospital, and were able to continue sponsorship of a student in Honduras that we have been sponsoring for the past few years. The money that we use to sponsor this student pays for his schooling as well as for some protection that he may need. It is humbling to have the opportunity to be a big part of another person's life that I've never met before. Doing this is important to my family and I because we know that there are people less fortunate than we are and it helps us to remember that life should really be about serving others in need.

There are many things that make me who I am and how I live my life, but all that I do and all that I work for in life revolves around one simple teaching that I learned from my former Principal: God is first, others are second, and I am third.