

In my sophomore year, I joined my school's Tri-M club, which visits nursing homes once a season and performs music. The residents ask us all sorts of questions about our lives, school, and dreams. Each time we left, I couldn't stop thinking about them. I liked listening to their stories and comparing them to my own life. These conversations gave me a whole new perspective on the world.

Recently, I Googled how I could help nursing home residents feel more connected to their community. I found Sending Sunshine, a club that writes cards that are sent all over the world. This was interesting, but I wanted to help nursing home residents in my hometown. I wanted to bridge the gap between high school students and the nursing home residents who live across the street.

In my junior year, I learned I could open and run my own chapter of Sending Sunshine at my school. Eventually, I got all of my friends to handwrite cards to our local seniors. I handed out these cards at our next performance, and the seniors accepted them with tearful smiles. I love being able to support those who are unsupported and knowing that I made someone smile. This experience has deepened my respect for the elderly and taught me how to encourage young people to make our community better. What I've learned from these experiences will allow me to bridge differences and collaborate across perspectives. I have truly appreciated the opportunity I had to become more involved in my community and aid in the issue of elderly loneliness.

Not only have I tried to promote civic involvement to address loneliness in the local nursing homes, but I have also volunteered more of my own time to help within the community hospital. Over the past three years, I have spent multiple hours volunteering in multiple departments. I started volunteering in the Emergency Department. I learned a lot about how the hospital addresses issues. I saw how it is a safe space for people of many different walks of life. Homeless people would come in for the opportunity to get out of the heat and to get a cold drink. While some members of the Amish community would come, their wishes were completely respected. I appreciated the openness and kindness of the staff as they did their best to support everybody. After I had some time in the Emergency Department, I moved to the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit. While there, I helped support people in some of their weakest moments. I helped people move from their beds to the bathroom, bring them drinks and food, and help them regain their strength. After the Post-Anesthesia Care Unit, I moved to the Family Maternity Unit and Neonatal Intensive Care Unit. My dream one day is to become a neonatologist, so I was hoping to be placed in the NICU one day. While there, I witnessed how caring the neonatologists are. Everything they did was executed with gentleness and care. This encouraged my dream. I want to provide care to the helpless and address issues within my local community. I desire to make an impact and help to change somebody's life for the better.

In the future, I want to be the type of doctor who helps everybody, no matter their circumstances. I want to think about their thoughts and feelings instead of just caring for their physical condition. But most importantly, I want to work with others to identify and address other issues.