

June 1, 2010

Tamaqua Lions Club
Community Service

After traveling to Franklin, West Virginia the past three summers with my church youth group to participate with Habitat for Humanity, the perspective I gained was immeasurable. After my exposure to Franklin, I am much more tolerant of other people's circumstances, better or worse than my own. My personal situation of having two loving parents, three supportive siblings, and a beautiful house is very different from what I saw in West Virginia. At such a young age, I feel blessed to have experienced the lessons and hard work of Habitat.

When I return back to Sugarloaf each August from my trip, I often wonder what a different place our community would be if all teenagers engaged in this type of service activity. However, this is an unrealistic expectation and I think it is more realistic to want for each of us to simply become more involved in our local communities. After each of my trips I learned that the smallest deeds do make a difference. I smile, not always because I am having the best day, but because I know that people can feed off of that happiness. I try to keep this lesson in the back of my mind while I am involved in smaller service activities close to home, like serving at a church breakfast or stacking chairs for a school function. I realize that although my actions may not be appreciated at the moment, they will eventually be of benefit to someone.

I think if young adults were simply pushed to participate in various service programs, they would want to continue because of the perspective they would gain and be able to use in their daily lives. One possible way to compel students to participate is to hold assemblies in the local schools, describing the many options of service available

right in our own community and also bigger projects available throughout the country. Just like anything in high school, the more people who do something, the cooler it is. Service could potentially become a popular activity and truly make our community a better place to live. I am grateful my service activities have enabled me to help those in need, both locally and in West Virginia, and I credit my volunteering in giving me the necessary perspective to live a life I am proud of.