



**2022 Recipient ~ Charles "Charlie" Reilly
Fordham Preparatory School, Class of 2022**

Service has always been an integral part of my life. It was a value instilled in me by my parents and nurtured by the mission of the schools I have chosen to attend. My involvement in service has blossomed during my high school years, when I have been able to participate in so many interesting, fun, and fulfilling events. I have worked with the Eastchester School Foundation for the past several years with their Harlem Wizard yearly event. The goal of that event is to raise money for the Eastchester School district to improve classrooms, facilities, and to enhance extra help classes. My specific role has been to oversee all merchandise sales and to train the student volunteers for the show. That has been a huge responsibility, but it has helped me to mature and to develop important skills that have enabled me to serve more effectively. The proceeds that were raised are converted to grants which allow teachers to purchase essentials to make a better learning environment for students. In addition, I have been a board member for The Youth Community Fund. Here I raise money and participate in selecting local charities to receive grants in order for them to further help those in need and also to promote their good works in my community. It's been great to have a direct hand in supporting worthy causes and people who seek to make a positive difference in my community.

For my senior service project at Fordham Prep, I chose to volunteer at Willow Towers, an assisted living residence in New Rochelle, New York. It has been a pleasure to accompany older people through this service. It has helped me to better understand the challenges people face as they age, and the power of something as simple as listening to a story or playing a game. I have met some wonderful people in residence and on the staff. Their commitment and courage inspire me to go back each time. I learn something new every time I serve.

The most meaningful service activity I have been involved in has been with St. Jude Children's Research Hospital. Coming into freshman year, I decided this was a cause I would champion. It has been so rewarding, and so helpful for my own growth as well. My service to St. Jude's has made me more compassionate, determined, and grateful than ever. It has taught me that true satisfaction comes when you care for people beyond yourself. By supporting and promoting St. Jude's, I have been able to interact with and meet many wonderful people over the past few years. Those encounters have ignited in me a passion to do more. I am proud to say, I have raised over \$75,000 on my own for St. Jude's. I have learned the importance of fundraising—how to do it well and what an impact it can have. I have learned never to be too proud to ask for money for a great cause. As

I approach a prospective donor to ask for their support for St. Jude's, my motto is "The worst they can say is 'no,'" and a 'no' is just a no for now!" I have learned persistence, because as I ask for donations I have in mind the faces of the children at St. Jude's. They and their families deserve our help; they don't deserve what has happened to them. So, I will ask again and again, and do whatever it takes to raise money. I have done everything from shoveling driveways to chores to babysitting, washing cars, and tutoring and tutor students in return for donations.

Being selected for the Leadership Society at St. Jude's has enabled me to help fight childhood cancer, and to see first-hand how monies raised have impacted patients and their families. I have received letters of thanks from patients currently being treated in Memphis. I have put in well over a hundred hours with my fundraising efforts to help St. Jude's. Though I have been honored with a national award, that has paled in comparison to the joy I experienced when I was surprised on a Zoom call by children at St. Jude's who jumped in on the call to personally thank me for helping them and their families through their challenges.

For as long as I can remember, living a life of service has been the most important thing to me. It continues to be so, which is why I have accepted an appointment to The United States Air Force Academy in Colorado for next year. I am proud of the work I have done so far for my community and I look forward to serving my country.