



**2022 Recipient ~ Maggie Gordon  
The Ursuline School, Class of 2022**

As I near the end of my seventh year at Ursuline, I am able to reflect on the lessons I've learned and the knowledge I've gained. In my opinion, the most valuable lesson I've learned is the importance of service and community involvement. Since 2017, I have completed nearly 190 hours of service. These hours have been spent helping my community in a variety of ways. I have educated people of all generations in conservation, made sure the people of New York get their votes counted, assembled bags of groceries for those less fortunate in my town, and served the people of my communities in many other ways.

My favorite service opportunity was my time as a Discovery Guide at the Bronx Zoo. During the summer of 2019, I spent one to two days a week volunteering with the Zoo's education department. I ran and assisted with educational games to teach people of all ages about conservation, recycling, and wildlife. My time at the Zoo provided me with a unique opportunity to teach people from all walks of life about the importance of protecting the world around us. Given the Zoo's popularity, I interacted with people from all over the world who added the trip to their itinerary while visiting New York. While I spoke with people of all ages, I mainly interacted with young children, most of whom were unaware of the importance of recycling or pollinators. By teaching about conservation at a young age, we can ensure that future generations have the opportunity to appreciate nature in the same way I have been able to.

Another service opportunity I value is my service with Common Cause New York. Common Cause is a bipartisan organization that works to protect elections and the voting rights of people all over the country. During the 2020 presidential election, I volunteered to use social media to identify mis/disinformation regarding absentee ballots, polling places, and other voting concerns. I used platforms such as Twitter, Instagram, and Facebook to search for concerns of New Yorkers and provide them with solutions to their voting troubles. Since I'm not old enough to vote, I wanted to find other ways to act on my civic duty. So, I made sure that others had an equal opportunity to have their voices heard.

While both of these opportunities have reached a wide community, I have also focused on helping the people right in my backyard. About once a month, I volunteer at the Hope Soup Kitchen in New Rochelle assembling grocery bags and baskets that are then distributed to those in need. I worked with members of the Hope staff, as well as my peers, to make sure that anyone who was unable to procure food for themselves had a meal.

These opportunities have shown me the value of helping others and how valuable acts of service can be. I am incredibly grateful to have the opportunity to share my experiences with you. These service opportunities have shaped me into the person I am today and have taught me lessons in kindness, teamwork, perseverance, and faith.