



2023 Recipient ~ Emma Lanza
The Ursuline School, Class of 2024

In attending The Ursuline School, I made the decision to follow through with the school's motto of *Serviam*: "I will serve." Since early December 2020, I have managed to serve my community for 247.50 hours. This has been accomplished through a combination of school group volunteering, outside volunteer work, and school service opportunities.

In the service club *Alex's Lemonade Stand*, I have participated in multiple service projects since freshman year and achieved 23 hours of service. Through this club, I have been able to raise money for Gilda's Club by donating and selling candy, writing cards to the children at Saint Jude Children's Hospital for Valentine's Day, donating gift cards for the families of children fighting cancer through *Friends of Karen* for Christmas, and contributing money to other foundations. I also became a Probationary Ambassador in the Class of 2024 at my school, having missed the chance to become a student Ambassador in 2020 due to COVID, and gained 13.5 hours of service. In this program, I have welcomed incoming students to our school community and introduced them to the environment.

Outside of school, I have participated in the Polar Plunge virtually (10 hours), the 2021 Saint Vincent's Spring Sprint (10 hours), the preparation of patient reminders at Jacobi Medical Center (15 hours), and the packing of shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child, to donate Christmas gifts to children around the world (6 hours). Additionally, I volunteered at Saint Benedict's Food Pantry (10 hours) over the summer. I helped to distribute fruits, vegetables, drinks, and meals to the people who had come to receive them. I enjoyed seeing a smile on their face, as they were so happy to receive anything that was being offered.

In school, I have also been able to serve my community through our *Serviam* Food Drives. In participating, I have managed to achieve 89 hours of service. This project has impacted me the most because of how connected it has made me feel to my community. In February of 2022, the apartment building adjacent to my aunt's building caught on fire. To stop the fire from spreading, the firefighters had to water the roof of her building, causing severe water damage to be done to her home. Although neither she nor her daughter were home, almost all of their clothes, shoes, and other items were damaged. Luckily, they had a place to stay with my grandmother and my family helped to support them in any way possible. A few weeks earlier, there was a fire in the Bronx that had killed many people. During one of the food drives, the

participants were tasked with donating food, toiletries, bedding, shoes, toys, and books for the victims who lost their homes. Shortly after, a few of the participants and I went to sort through the items in Riverdale to be brought to the victims.

This project, along with the others mentioned, reflected the mission of Saint Vincent's Hospital. Through participating in these projects, I have shown respect and compassion for the people in my community by giving back to them and providing them with what they need. I have shown excellence in service by being persistent with the projects that I have taken part in and achieving any goals that I set in beginning the projects. I have shown the dignity of human life by doing my best to make others happy, like providing them with food or Christmas presents. Finally, I have shown commitment to my community by following through with the motto of *Serviam*, and taking any chance I get to donate or collect food or items to give to others. These experiences have benefitted me by teaching me to work with a team, communicating with them, managing time and events, and being more organized. Therefore, community service and volunteer work have benefitted me in ways I will forever be grateful for.