



**2023 Recipient ~ Lindsay Reis
Harrison High School, Class of 2024**

Richard Kadrey once said, "When you're born in a burning house, you think the whole world is on fire." My house was never on fire; it was always at a perfectly cool temperature. I never realized that when your house is on fire, it burns down; there is no saving a burnt-down house. I only realized this after volunteering with Chai Lifeline's *i-Shine* program. *i-Shine* is a youth program that aims to support children who are struggling with the loss of a parent.

I started working with *i-Shine* four years ago, looking to find a volunteer program that I could connect with. While it took some time to build relationships with the other volunteers and the children, I have since formed some of the most meaningful connections of my life through this program. I have learned so much about myself and about the power of community, and I feel grateful for the opportunity to give back and make a positive impact in my community through my involvement with *i-Shine*.

Each Wednesday at Westchester Day School in Mamaroneck, I spend time with the children for three hours. During this time we complete homework, engage in a physical activity such as basketball, and an entertaining activity such as arts and crafts. Throughout my four years with *i-Shine*, I have completed over 400 hours of volunteer service.

I have worked specifically with two young girls who are now in the third grade, but I started with them when they were in Kindergarten. They were not friends when I began working with them, but throughout the years, they have formed a strong bond and have become inseparable.

It has been heartwarming to witness their growth and development as individuals and as friends, and to know that I played a small role in fostering their relationship.

You can rebuild a burnt down house, but it will never be quite the same. With *i-Shine*, I strive every day to ensure that these children do not know the difference. My experience with *i-Shine* has been incredibly rewarding and has enriched my life in countless ways.

