



2021 Recipient ~ Kiara Gonzalez
Port Chester High School, Class of 2021

My name is Kiara Gonzalez. I've loved to help my community since a young age with whatever I could. During my years in high school is where I've been able to help out the most. From my sophomore to junior year I volunteered over 410 hours.

I would help during my free periods and during the summer. My first volunteer opportunity was given to me by Mrs. Gooden, who is the main office secretary. Mrs. Gooden had a lot to do in the office so I would go and help her with whatever I could. I would deliver packages to various offices and classrooms, delivered medical supplies to the Open Door clinic in the school, assisted with mailings, stuffed envelopes, helped visitors/students get to certain places around school if they weren't sure where to go, answered the office telephone, put away supplies, and assisted other offices with projects when needed. I felt good being able to help Mrs. Gooden, it was something I looked forward to on a daily basis because besides helping we had some good laughs. After the school year ended and we entered summer break I went back to visit Mrs. Gooden and saw she had multiple envelopes to stuff and send out and I decided to help her out a few times during the week to help her finish that big mailing, she deserved a little break, too.

Once we started the school year a few months passed and I continued to help around but then Mr. Gramajo my counselor gave me another opportunity. There was a young girl who was new to the school and needed to catch up to the rest of the students in her Spanish class so my counselor gave me the opportunity to help her catch up. I helped her during one of my free periods and helped Mrs. Gooden on my other free period. This young girl was a very fast learner and very smart. It took us about a month-two for her to catch up to her class. She ended up being more advanced than her classmates, I felt very happy that I was able to help her out. She was very sweet and grateful when we finished. Ms. Rodman the Spanish teacher was very amused by how far we got her in the matter of one-two months.

Helping my community with whatever I can makes me feel happy, my community has given me so much, I want to give back. I see that the mission of St. Vincent's Hospital believes in respect and compassion not just for ourselves, but for others, too. I strongly believe in this, too, because sometimes people need a hand and we should be open to helping them just like they help us. I connect to this because while I volunteered helping Mrs. Gooden I saw how much she did for our school seeing her work hard inspired me to help so that she can have a break just like we all do. Helping my community fuels me, It's something I enjoy doing and will continue to do.