



**2024 Recipient ~ Grace Villar
Sacred Heart Greenwich**

When I was seven years old I met my friend Scarlett James. At the time Scarlett had just been diagnosed with no sign of cancer at age eight after being diagnosed with stage four T-Cell Lymphoma just two years before. While battling cancer she and her family created the Scarlett Fund to ensure that no other child would have to go through what she went through. Each year the Scarlett Fund hosts numerous bake sales, fundraising events and card drives which I have been participating in since I met her. The Scarlett Fund Card Drives are a bi-annual collection of cards from kids around the country to patients who are being treated on Memorial Sloan Kettering pediatric floor and their families. The Card Drive was inspired by Scarlett's time in the hospital when all of her classmates wrote her cards which she hung up around her room to bring joy into a terrifying time of her life. Since then, The Scarlett Fund has hosted a Valentine's Day Card Drive and a Winter Holiday Card Drive every year which I have been so lucky to participate in for the past six years. Since coming to Sacred Heart I have hosted both Card Drives each year in the Middle School, and brought them over to the High School last year as well. This has amounted to eleven and a half hours of community service just through the Card Drives. Additionally, since becoming involved in the Scarlett Fund I have been appointed to the Memorial Sloan Kettering Student Board and have been serving on it for what is now my sixth year. The MSK Student Board is made up of kids who live in the tristate area who are dedicated to finding a cure for pediatric cancer. Each month the board has a meeting where we discuss news at MSK, further steps for fundraising, event planning etc. Being a part of the board for so long has instilled a dedication to this cause within me, which has amounted to 12 hours of community service including time spent planning and hosting fundraisers on my own. Being a part of the pediatric cancer community has allowed me to meet so many incredible people who have taught me a furthered sense of compassion and respect for all those in need. It has also educated me on medicine, a career I someday hope to follow, as well as laws surrounding pediatric cancer treatment such as the Give Kids A Chance Act. My goal is that one day we live in a world without cancer so that no other child may have their childhood ripped away from them Scarlett did.