COMMUNITY WRITING PROJECT

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What My Community Means to Me



com·mu·ni·ty

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noun

- 1. A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.
- 2. A feeling of fellowship with others, as a result of sharing common attitudes, interests, and goals.

In the winter of 2014, the residents of Johnson County were invited to write stories about "What My Community Means to Me." I was amazed at the number of heartfelt stories. Some stories moved me to tears, especially the ones about the Flood of 2008.

Residents from the Indiana Masonic Home wrote about adjusting to a new community. Needham Elementary teacher Diane Bennis' second grade class wrote about the pride they have in their school. St. Rose of Lima teacher, Mindi Eberhart, had her students write about their many service projects.

Gaibriel Bunch says it best in her essay: "Community is not only where your home is but where your family is as well. Your family doesn't always have to be related to you, because anyone that looks out for you and likes to spend time with you is family. For a community to function they must act like one and function as one. Your community is somewhere you will always call home."

Enjoy reading these stories, keep a tissue box close by, for you may be moved to tears by the feeling of pride people have in their communities. Take a look at the index for a list of businesses, people, places and events mentioned in the essays. Thank you to all the wonderful writers in Johnson County who submitted their stories. I was delighted to read them.

Heather M. Grantham, editor Children's Librarian Franklin Branch Johnson County Public Library, Indiana pageafterpage.org

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"What My Community Means to Me" by Kuryn Brunson

My community, the Needham Elementary School Bulldogs, is located on 1399 Upper Shelbyville Road. The Bulldogs are champions of the Girls Association of School League. We were undefeated.

In the championship, we played the Creekside Cougars. In the first quarter, it was 2-5. We were winning in the second quarter because we were up by 7. We were now on fire! Good passes, good shots, and great defense! We set up play after play after play. We scored and we scored and we scored.

After all that scoring and passing we were up by 12. We decided even though we were winning we still played hard. There were 30 seconds left. We won! We congratulated the other team, and we were proud we went undefeated the whole season. The other team only lost to us two times including that championship. We had a great team and we were all great friends. Including: Elyse Capuano, Maddie Hedges, Kuryn Brunson (me), Zoe Hawkins, Ava Pinnick, Kiera Gukenberger, and Mackenzie West.

I love my sweet community. I can always count on them.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Anna Bullock

The library is in my community; it means a lot to me! One reason I love the library is that the librarians are kind to me. They know me, and they call me by name. Every time we check out and we forget our library card, they know us so they don't need my mom's ID. I also love the programs. One in particular is Filmmaker's Club. At Filmmaker's Club, we make films. We also make funny scripts, and I like being an actress! That is my favorite program.

I also like to rent the books on tape. I listen to and enjoy them at night. I also like to listen to them in the car. The Summer and Winter Reading programs are some things we do every year. And, I am crazy about them! The best thing about the Summer and Winter Reading is the READING! My favorite book is "Smile" by Raina Telgemeier it is a true story about the author. As you can see, my community means a lot to me!

"What My Community Means to Me" by Grace Bullock

Hi, my name is Grace Bullock. Part of my community is the Mutual Savings Bank because that is where I judged a cookie contest in 2013. It was really, really fun! All of the cookies had a unique taste. When Heather Grantham (librarian at the Franklin Branch Library) asked my sister and me to judge the contest, we immediately agreed!

When we got there, I was seated up at the front with my sister and my friend Kathleen. I was surprised that we got a pretty name tag in front of us! Heather played Mrs. Claus while we were there. At the contest, my favorite cookie was the Hot Chocolate Cookie. I liked that we sang Christmas carols there. I also liked the Gingerbread House Contest and thought all of them looked really great! I couldn't decide which one was the best.

Another thing that they did was while the cookie tasters were tasting the cookies, "Mrs. Claus" read interesting facts about cookies. She also asked the kids cookie-related questions, and if they got them right, she gave them the book If You Give a Mouse a Cookie." That was the first time I judged a cookie contest! I really enjoyed it and would like to do it again!

"What My Community Means to Me" by Ashton Burris

My community, the Boys and Girls Club, is part of Johnson County. It is on Hurricane Street in Franklin, Indiana. It has over one hundred kids. It is a place for kids after school. It is a safe place.

A special memory for me happened at the BGCF on January 16, 2014, I was playing football. I had eight touchdowns with twenty seconds left, and I QB sneaked it for my ninth touchdown. I waited for one second I kicked it and won 21-14. I now have 1003 touchdowns. We play like every day. I go there almost every day. I hang out with my friends. They also have fun games like kickball and dodgeball and football.

That is my favorite place in the community. It is the Boys and Girls Club of Franklin. I call it the BGCF. It is my favorite community in Johnson County.

"What My Community Means To Me" by Elyse Capuano

Needham Elementary School Basketball A-Team, on a Friday night, December 19, 2013, is where my community story begins. It's a basketball league for third and fourth girls for Franklin Community Schools. I won with my best friends: Kuryn Brunson, Kiera Guckenburger, and Madelyn Hedges. It was my very first championship game. And we were undefeated!

When we first had tryouts I was terrified. And then we got an e-mail that said I was on the A-team. I didn't know if that was a good thing or not, but to me it was. Our first game was a home game. We were losing! I have to admit our competition was pretty good, but they couldn't have their hopes up for long. We came back, and we won. I couldn't believe it! Our coach's name was Matt Pinnik, and his daughter was on the team. Ava is a 3rd grader. Also on my team were Zoe Hawkins and Mackenzie West.

Now I'm going to skip to the championship game. Of course, I had butterflies in my stomach. I had to sit out for the first quarter of the championship game. We were losing and I was starting to stop believing. I finally got in. I would shoot and then I'd have to bring the ball down the court. And then I looked at the timer and we didn't have much time left! But then the buzzer rang. It was 14-20. OH MY GOSH! I couldn't believe my eyes. WE WON! WE WON! And I still remember saying after we won. WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS, WE ARE THE CHAMPIONS! Now I'm proud to be a part of the Franklin Community Basketball league for girls.

"What I Like about Franklin, Indiana" by Zoe Catlin

Some of the things I like about Franklin are the shops. I like the shops in Franklin because the people that work at them are very kind and welcoming. Another thing that I like about the shops in Franklin are the things people sell, such as Wadsworth's, who sells candy, root beer, and all the good stuff.

Another place I like is Middle Davids Candle store, where they sell really good candles, pottery, jewelry, scarves and lots of things! Also, I like the events that are held in Franklin like Strawberries on the Square, where you get to eat strawberry shortcake! Yum! Also there are all of the parades; my favorite is the winter parade. The people give out candy and coupons. I also like that the marching band that plays in the parade because they play really catchy tunes.

Some of the people I like in Franklin are people such as Mayor of Franklin, the Chamber of Commerce, and the DDF (Discover Downtown Franklin). These are some of the people, places, and events that I like about Franklin. What do you like about Franklin?

"What My Community Means To Me" by Savannah Conner

There are many things I like about Johnson County. Here are some of my favorite places.

In Johnson County, there is a park. The park's name is Province Park. Province is a fun place for people to play. When I have fun at the park, I do things like play on the playground or have a picnic. There is a park across the bridge. In the summer, people ride bikes.

In Johnson County, I also like to go to the Skating Club. It's fun to skate there. There is a place to eat there, too. They have nachos and frozen drinks, all the regular stuff a restaurant has. My favorite thing to eat is nachos. You can buy your own skates or bring your own if you want. You can rent skates, too. There are video games. There are seats by the railing so your parents can watch you. There are toy machines, too. I have only been skating a few times.

In Johnson County I also like to go to the movies. When I was little, my mom took me there to see "The Game Plan." It's about a little girl who goes to see her dad (a star football player). Her dad never knew he had a daughter so he was very surprised. Later on she gets one of her dad's prized possessions: a special football and covers it in sparkles. The movie goes on and on until the end.

My school is Needham Elementary. There, during math we get to work with high ability third graders. Next year during math they will be doing 5th grade math. The fun part is you get to make friends. We have recess and lunch. Our school is just like any other school.

There is also a library in Johnson County. You can play on the computers there. There are many books. If you get a library card you can check out any of them. There are also many movies to checkout. The librarians are very nice. They greet you with kind voices. When you check out books they might even talk to you saying things like 'have a good day.' That's why I love Johnson County!

"My Community" by Austin Deeter

Today I'm going to talk about a special place in my community. It is Needham Elementary. It is located on Upper Shelbyville Road. It is right across from Webb Elementary. Needham has lots of things after school. One of the things I always remember is that they have field day! I love field day because it's at the end of the year and you always have fun! Needham is special to me because it always has nice teachers. And that is why Needham Elementary is special to me and it's a really important part to my community.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Alexis Dunn

The Community that means the most to me is Needham Elementary. If you were to take a glimpse of the classrooms, you would think we're loud, but it's just the knowledge inside our heads. The halls may be quiet, but you can still hear the soft voices in the music room, while people are sweating in P.E., and browsing in the library, while magnificent drawings surround the halls.

Meeting new friends along the way and soaring high above our goals every day, I think Needham is a good school with good people. There might be bad times but the teachers always make it better. And that's what my Community means to me.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Jace Fowler

My baseball team, Franklin Grizzly Cubs, means a lot to me. In spring and in summer we practice on the Franklin Community High School (FCHS) fields. In the winter we practice at my dad's facility Powerhouse Baseball/Softball. At the facility we run: lessons, boot camps, clinics, team practices, open hitting, and dodge ball. It's not only for baseball/softball; we can have tennis or football etc.

My community is special to me because as a community team we played against the most elite teams and kept them under three runs. We played the Indiana Blazers in the state championship and ended up winning 7-6. One thing interesting about our team is we were smaller than most teams, but still ended up winning against teams that were ranked top ten in America. We were small but athletic. This is what makes my community special to me.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Sabina Garcia

The Johnson County Public Library! I know a few things about it. It's my favorite community place!

The Johnson County Public is an all brick building, and down the road is the Recreation Center. Inside the library, there are lots and lots of books. There are also friendly workers to help you identify books for you!

I can still remember the first time I went to the Johnson County Public Library, at that time I was reading the Harry Potter series. So I asked a worker where the Harry Potter books were. Then I checked out the book and finished it that night!

The Johnson County Public Library is very special to me because of ALL the books, the friendly workers, and the peace and quiet that's always found there. One more thing is the different kind of genres. You can read about history, fiction, realistic fiction, or even small books that children wrote.

That is why the Johnson County Public Library is my favorite community place, and I hope it is yours now, too!

"What My Community Means to Me" by Arianna Grindstaff

The first thing I think about when I hear the word "community" is the Franklin pool. It's the most fun thing to do in the summer. You can play with friends, hang out or just sit and relax. The pool is placed at the edge of Province Park. Province Park is fun but not as fun as the pool. The pool is placed by the Franklin Recreation Center where there are lots of things going on.

The pool is so much fun. It has a big waterslide. It has really tall diving boards. It also has a kiddy pool where my little sister plays. The waterslide is really twisty. It goes round and round until you hit the water which really hurts. When I was at the Franklin pool I was scared to go down the really twisty waterslide. But when I saw my dad I was so happy. I hadn't seen him for a whole week. He was in Florida so I couldn't see him. So when he was there he told me if I went down the waterslide he would buy me and my sisters ice cream.

This place is special because it's where I saw my dad. It's where I went down the waterslide for the first time. It's where I made the best memories of my life, where I can hang out with my friends. That's what my community means to me. I loved telling my story, how about yours?

Grades 3-5

"What My Community Means to Me" by Maddie Hedges

Hello my name is Maddie Hedges, and today I am going to tell you about my favorite place in my community. My favorite place is called Discovery Center. Just if you were wondering, Discovery Center is a daycare. Discovery is attached onto Johnson Memorial Hospital. There used to be certain age groups including kindergarten. But, when I left Discovery there was no more kindergarten. It was a sad time for me because the teacher was really nice, but I got over it after a while.

Since I've told you what Discovery Center, I am going to tell you what it is like. The one thing I never understood is why all the classes were named after animals. There was the "Frog class, the Chimp class, the Cheetah class," and more! I also had some really good memories at Discovery Center.

The best memory of all was when I met a really good friend named Kiera. I did not have any friends in kindergarten at all, so one day I decided to ask Kiera if I could play with her. She said "sure, whatever" with a smirk. While I asked her, she was on a four way tube. I hopped on, and she fell off! It was about three feet above ground, so it had to hurt. Also I might have started laughing so hard that I hopped off of the tube, and started running around the playground. Then one of Kiera's friends started chasing me like I was a criminal. I thought "man, she must be mad!" but we are both older now, so we forgave each other. Now we are all very good friends!

Now, I have to tell you why Discovery Center is so important to me. I have been going there since I was exactly one year old. And trust me it wasn't like the normal thing that happens when your mom or dad drops you off at daycare and you cry until they come back. When my mom dropped me off, I was really happy to be there, and I mean REALLY HAPPY! The staff that worked there were really nice and they still are. I only know that because now Cameron, my baby brother goes there.

Finally, if it is okay with you, I am going to finish up my writing. That is what my community means to me.

"What My Community Means To Me" by Gregory Hueston

What my community means to me. It means school and school=jail but sometimes fun. Our school name is the Needham Elementary Bulldogs. Our school is located in Franklin, Indiana. The best day of our school year was two years ago on Field Day. We all got soaked with water, playing water games. The other best days are field trips like Flat Rock or the Zoo. The thing about school is recess.

Why school is special to me is because I get to learn, play, eat, hangout, and read all the time. The teacher always pushes us to reach our goals from 7:15 a.m. -2:20 p.m. so we can all pass ISTEP.

Well that's it. School is jail, but don't count out all the fun that you can have at school. That is what my community means to me.

"Needham Elementary" by Helen E. Hurley

Hello, I am here to talk about a place called Needham Elementary. A school with five grades: Kindergarten, first grade, second grade, third grade, and fourth grade, and we are Bulldogs.

We are a very active school with kids who love to read. We also have many clubs, learning activities, and extra curriculum. Most of the kids at Needham have very creative minds. Also we have a thirty minutes recess to help us have a taste of freedom before we go to more mature schools.

We have respectful students and have very intriguing field trips that can help us understand more about that direct subject. We also have a high ability program that offers a higher lexile for kids like me.

Our school also makes sure that we are happy and healthy. We have (in my opinion) very difficult challenges that the teachers or parents make with us. And that is what my special community means to me.

"The History of Needham Elementary" by Carson Johnson

The history of Needham Elementary started with many rooms just like today. It's very large and not so crowded school, but now Needham is the best school I've been to. Our P.E teacher is Mrs. Spaulding. She teaches everything about physical education. Then there is our art teacher, Mr. Scott. He teaches everything about art. Mrs. Ludwig is our music teacher. She teaches everything about music. Last, but not least, Mrs. Dixon. She helps us check out books. Now our fourth grade teacher is Mrs. Bennis, she teaches us everything we need to know. Our school principal is Dr. Pettet. He has been here for six year. He is amazing!

Needham means the world to me like I love Needham. Friendship is really special to me because I barely have any friends. So it's very important that I try to accept whatever it is in my life, and help others. So I appreciate it a lot. I hope that I don't get picked on. Needham is an all out school. What will happen? All I know is that I am a 10-year-old kid at Needham Elementary. Whoever is reading this I appreciate your very kind acceptance.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Hannah King

Do you have a community that you like? Before you answer let me introduce myself. My name is Hannah King and I am a fourth grader at Needham Elementary, my community. What? You have one? Before you tell me I will tell about my community. No time to waste, let's go!

Needham elementary is a school for kindergartner - fourth graders. The school is located in Franklin, Indiana 46131. Our mascot is a bulldog and our school colors are purple and white and our principal's name is Mr. Pettet. When I think of Needham I think of the quiet sounds of pages in books flipping and the subtle sound of pencils scratching paper.

That reminds me of a day that the sun was blazing down and I was eating ice cream. Did you guess already? Yep, it was the last day of school. We played on the playground and watched a movie and played on computers all day. THAT was a day to always remember. Oh, I'm getting off track let's get back to the point.

My school Needham Elementary means a lot to me because I have been going to Needham at least for half of my life and I have been a student for Mrs. Bennis for three whole years! I never wanted to let her down so I worked hard to stay in her class. Successfully, it worked! I was very happy. That is the special reason why Needham is meaningful to me.

That is all I have to say and I am sorry to tell you I can't stay to listen to your story. That is what my community means to me.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Jacob King

The community in Johnson County that means the most to me is Needham. Needham is an educational school to learn. There's lunch, recess, and you can have a good time. We also learn about history, math, reading, and science. And we have a different special every day. School does have a playground, too!

The cool thing about Needham Elementary is there is a basketball league. There's the A-team and the B-team. The B is for the people that need an easy league. A-team is for people that need a challenge.

Needham means a lot to me. The janitors are nice like the teachers. And they are nice to every student. The cool thing is you get free time if you have enough purple tickets. That is my Johnson County community, Needham.

"What My Community Means To Me" by Hannah Martin

Needham Elementary is one of my favorite communities. I have gone there since kindergarten! It is located on 1399 Upper Shelbyville Road. Let's learn more about my community! Needham Elementary has two playgrounds, two computer labs, twenty classrooms, a library, a giant gym, one art room, and a music room. There are fifteen (and counting) wonderful teachers and one amazing principle, Mr. Pettet.

One of my favorite memories is the last day of school last year. We got awards, played on computers, watched movies, and had popcorn and root beer floats!

Needham is special to me. Without it I would have not made all of my amazing friends, had fun, or had my forgiving teachers. Needham Elementary is a special part of my community. And that's what my community means to me.

"What My Community Means To Me" by Xavier Matier

My favorite community in Johnson County is the Boys and Girls Club. The Boys and Girls Club (BGC) is really fun. There are so many rooms there such as the Homework Room, the Gym, and the Game Room. It is located at 101 Hurricane Street, Franklin, Indiana 46131.

A memory that I have is BG Buck Friday. That happens on the first or second Friday. It is when you can spend BGC money for toys. Last BG Buck Friday I got a video watch.

The reason the BGC is special to me it takes care of me and everyone that goes there, like my friends. That is what my community means to me.

Grades 3-5

"What My Community Means to Me" by Ruth Ross

My community, Needham Elementary, is located in Franklin, Indiana. Needham is a school that I go to. Needham Elementary has a big play ground. It has a rope tree. Needham Elementary has purple and white walls. It has three bathrooms and a lot of different classrooms.

I like Needham because it has many opportunities like Math Bowl, D.I., and counting purple tickets. My favorite activity is D.I or counting purple tickets. When I go to Math Bowl I have to go to the practice on Wednesdays after school. For D.I., I have to get my lunch early and I have to go to Math Bowl an hour early, too.

In conclusion, Needham is very special to me because I have been going to this school for five years in a row! And that is why my community is very special to me.

"My Community" by Gabi Sherry

I would like to tell you about my community and why I love it. I love my community because of all the history it holds and the fun things to do there.

First, one of my favorite places in Franklin is the library. I love all the workers, the books, and all the fun programs. I also think that just going to the library and reading is fun. They also have computers to do your school work.

One of the other things I like about Franklin is the Artcraft Theater. The Artcraft usually only shows older movies that people would not think to put in the DVD player! They also ask at the Artcraft who traveled the farthest. If you traveled the farthest you get free things from the concession stand. One time I went to the Artcraft for my best friend's birthday and we brought her Elf on the Shelf and we said that he was from the North Pole so he must have traveled the farthest! They also do a raffle and give out free gifts.

And last, but not least, is Franklin College! This is a good college if you are wishing to become a teacher. Both of my parents are graduates of Franklin College. Also my grandma used to work there.

Those are just a few of the many reasons why I love my community!

"What My Community Means to Me" by Emma Smith

The Franklin Animal Clinic is my favorite community because my mom works there. Franklin Animal Clinic has two floors. It has two tables for C-sections. It has some tables for surgery and a room for bathing and cleaning teeth. The upstairs is for eating lunch, meetings, and putting reports into the computer. Also the cat Momma lives up there. Momma is a cat that is there to donate blood to other cats that need blood. Franklin Animal Clinic is right next to the skating ring.

My favorite memory was when the school skyped my mom and I chose to be with my mom on the skype instead of watching the skype. I got to walk a dog with a cart on its legs. We also saw a dog get pilled. Then we went upstairs and sat in a chair while the second graders asked questions. The saddest part was going back to school.

Franklin Animal Clinic is special because my mom works there. She is a vet and her favorite thing to do is do surgeries. Once she had to do a surgery on a dog that swallowed lots of pacifiers! That is what my community means to me.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Karley Spears

Franklin, Indiana is the community I love because they supported me when I was going through cancer. They made me cards, and we sold bracelets and that helped raise money. I went to Riley Hospital, but Franklin Community is the community that helped me.

When Franklin Community helped me, they helped me know I could fight cancer. I was in second grade when I was going through cancer. Franklin Community is mostly my school, Needham Elementary. That is where the cards came from, but outside of Needham is where we sold the bracelets.

When I was at Riley, I had to get CT scans, blood draws, and two surgeries. I had cancer right under my right eye. I still have checkups just to get my blood drawn and to make sure I do not have a spot of cancer inside of me. That would be very bad, because I do not want to lose all my hair again or have to go through cancer treatment once more.

My happiest memory of being at Riley is when I was a survivor. I was done with cancer and I got to ring the bell. The saddest and scariest part of going through cancer is when I found out that I had cancer.

Because they gave me so much support, Franklin Community means so much to me.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Dawson Taylor

My favorite community is Johnson County because there is fun stuff here like the Franklin Pool. Franklin Pool is my favorite part the community.

The best part is the food, the new slide, Water Park, and diving boards. A memory here is the time I did a triple back flip. Another time was when I was jumping off the diving boards into the pool when it was raining. This is why it is my favorite community.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Collin Webb

One community that I like in Johnson County is the Johnson County Public Library (JCPL). It has many activities and a very large variety of books. The JCPL has many contests, books, and many other fun things. The JCPL will help anyone that asks for a preference of what book to read.

One time when I went to the JCPL, it was for Book Beat. Book Beat is when you read a series of books before the competition. Then you are put into a group and answer questions about the book. In Book Beat, my group did not win but had a lot of fun walking to the library and then going to the park.

These are just some reasons why JCPL is my favorite community in Johnson County.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Lacy R. Weeks

My favorite community activity is cheerleading. When I was in third grade, I went to Creekside Elementary in Johnson County for my practices. Cheerleading was fun to me. It was always Creekside where we practiced. I always loved it a lot. We had a demanding coach. My cheerleading coach was pushing us harder and harder because we had a competition coming up.

I remember when I had a competition at a middle school, and other cheerleading groups came from all around Indiana. When my group did our cheer and dance we won and took first place. That day I was so happy. We stepped up to get our trophies. After we got our trophies, they played some music and we all danced around.

What I loved about cheerleading was running laps. I always needed to exercise. Then, my friend joined. Every day I came, she came. And, every day group four usually watched us if they were allowed. What was special to me was that my friend always did everything with me when we were in cheerleading. I thought it was cool when my sister came in to watch me.

Cheerleading is my favorite community activity in Johnson County. I always looked forward to it every day. My cheerleading took place in my community, Johnson County, in Franklin, Indiana.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Zachary E. White

The Franklin Boys and Girls Club of Johnson County has its downsides, but more upsides. An example of an upside is that there are sports all year round. One downside is that it is usually loud, although there are a lot of things to do. Like you can play in the gym, or you can do your homework, or play in the game room, or do arts and crafts, or you can sign-up for computer lab, or play with LEGOS. And if you're in sixth grade and above you can go to the Teen Scene. The Teen Scene is when you can watch TV and play games.

The sports you can play are football, tennis, soccer, baseball, and basketball. The last time I played football I won the championship. My team was the Bengals. I played safety (S) and wide receiver (WR). I had a pizza party with my coaches and teammates. I had a blast.

I think the Franklin Boys and Girls Club of Johnson County is a fun community. I have a lot of fun there. I think it is great place. The Franklin Boys and Girls Club of Johnson County has a lot of things to do. The Franklin Boys and Girls Club of Johnson County is a fun community.

The Franklin Boys and Girls Club of Johnson County have its downsides, but has more upsides. The Franklin Boys and Girls Club of Johnson County is a great community.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Rose Yang

What my community means to me. The community I chose is Needham Elementary. The features of Needham Elementary are truly beautiful. Like the ruby walls on the outside to the knowledge inside. Also, there are the loud classrooms to the quiet halls. Surrounded by the soft music with the paintings of peace, with the books of learning and the exercise of P.E., just all located at Johnson County.

The best memory of Needham is the encouragement I felt when I won the "I Love to Read" challenge. When I won, I realized that Needham is the reason I won. How I feel about Needham is really remarkable since I have been here for grades kindergarten to fourth. That means it is a tremendous part of my life.

Needham Elementary located at Johnson County, will be a place to remember. This is what Needham means to me.

"A Special Place Called Greenwood" by Michelle Zheng

Greenwood has always been a very special place to me. It is better than any other gift wrapped up with a fancy bow on top. I was born here and lived here every since. This community means many things to me. It's not just a place. It's a very special place, this community has everything, my home, my family and friends, doctors, the library, school, and it is the most wonderful place I have ever been.

Living in Greenwood is better than anywhere in the world, North America, The United States, Indiana, or any other city. It's not fancy as Chicago, Illinois, or New York City but it is absolutely wonderful. This place means many things, not just a home, but much more.

Greenwood has doctors to care for the sick, builders to build homes and stores, banks to keep money safe, teachers to give children, teenagers, and adult's education, libraries to check out videos and books, best of all parents and families that love you and me.

I live in Greenwood with my family which means everything to me. I celebrate holidays, care of my neighborhood, and appreciate everything and everybody around me. I'd never dream of moving anywhere in the world. If I did, I will never let it out of my sight or I will never forget this place. It is hard to forget Greenwood because this is my home with friends, families, schools, libraries, and shops. If I ever travel I will remember where I belong, where my life started. It holds a special place in my heart, unforgettable, and full of special moments and memories. All in a wonderful, unforgettable, heart-holding place called Greenwood.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Colin Baker

What St. Rose of Lima School does to help people is we get canned foods and collect it and give it to the poor. They also give coats to the poor because the poor people can't afford a coat. We also donate toys and games so kids have something to play with. We can donate lots of water and give people new clothes or clothes that are clean that we can't fit into anymore. We can also donate pillows so they have something to sleep on. We can donate money to buy a bed, and try to get the whole school to donate.

We can try getting other people from other schools to donate for a person who needs a home and food and other things. We can try giving them a couple jugs of water so they have lots of water to drink. We can give them money so they can get a car and so they can get to the store. We could get them toothbrushes so they can brush their teeth, and get them mouthwash so they can rinse their mouths out to be fresh and clean so they can have healthy teeth and gums.

We can also give them books that they like to read, and maybe a bike to ride. Also get them a helmet and kneepads so if they fall off their bikes they won't get hurt. We can buy pants and shorts for people to wear. These are good examples of being a community and working together because you are helping families in need.

"My Community" by Emily Barnard

To me, my community means family. We care about each other. We want the best for each other. If something bad happens in our community, we all do what we can to help the problem.

An example would be the "Strike Out Leukemia" 5K. "Strike out Leukemia" was a 5k run/walk that took place in order to raise money for Chelsea Clark, a seventh grader at Franklin Community Middle School. My family participated in the 5k. We are good friends of the Clark's and it felt so good knowing that while we were running, money was being raised for Chelsea. The money that was raised went toward treatments for Chelsea. People were also selling "Chelsea Strong" t-shirts and bracelets to raise money for the Clark's. That is just one of many things my community will do in order to help someone in need.

That is what I love about my community, we care. We care about each other, we care about our city, we just care. We want to help each other. Our community is great. We do all kinds of things for others. Like after the flood, everyone was out helping each other clean up a neighbor's flooded basement or when Imagination Station was going to have to shut down due to lack of business because of the construction. I know a lot of people who were out there trying to get people to go to the store. I love my city, and I wouldn't want to live anywhere else.

"My Town, Edinburgh" by Isabelle Beach

I live in Edinburgh, Indiana. It is a small town in Johnson County, but I love it. It is so pretty in all seasons. Edinburgh is like an old small village. It has a church bell that rings every Sunday before church starts. There is a hill that kids slide down when the snow is just right and when you walk down the streets, it looks like you have taken a trip down to the old pioneer town. The old buildings are very neat. Some people are friendly, some not. I love living in Edinburgh. In the spring time and fall it is very pretty. If you go to the top of the school hill at the right moment, it is very pretty. All the colors just come together and it's just perfect. I love my town.

This town means everything to me. I have lived here since my third grade year. I am in seventh grade now, and I intend to spend the rest of my middle and high school years here. I love the school district. The teachers are all nice, and the townspeople are nice, but some aren't that nice.

My favorite place in Edinburgh is the town's library. I love to read and write. Edinburgh band and choir do concerts, and almost everyone shows up. It is a thrill to be a member of such a wonderful town. People always say, "Don't judge a book by its cover." Well, people judge Edinburgh by the rumors that have always been going around about our town. Yes, there is a lot of "bad people" but every town has a few "bad people" in their town. Every town is special in their own way.

My little town, it is just an old town that has just a few "bad people", but I always take walks down the streets and I am still here to this day. I go to the parks and it is so peaceful. I swing high and I see the clouds coming and going. Edinburgh doesn't get all the credit it deserves. Some people don't or didn't know that Edinburgh even existed, even though there is an Edinburgh outlet mall in Taylorsville and a water tower that says, Edinburgh, Home of the Lancers painted on it. Edinburgh may not get all the credit it deserves, but it has many people in this small town that loves it. Beautiful skies, football games, picnics, parks, and the people. I love this town! My town, Edinburgh.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Isabelle Blackwell

My community is one of the best. Franklin is a town that everyone helps out when there is something that needs to be done. When we had the Flood of 2008, a lot of houses in Franklin got flooded out. The people in Franklin rallied together and helped the people whose houses got flooded.

We lived about fifteen minutes away from my Nana's house. It took about two hours to get there! The roads were really bad. People were caught in the water and had to evacuate their cars. We live on a farm. I was really worried about my animals back home. My mom told me everything would fine. My sisters and I were very scared. We were cramped in the back seat of my dad's truck with our old dog. Finally after a long drive we arrived at my Nana's house. After the big storm was over we saw all the damage. Her gym/garage took the worst of it. We kept the barn for storage. Almost everything was ruined! All the things that we could save we saved, but most of it was ruined. After that was over we took a look at her neighbors' house. They barely had any water damage. My house was fine too.

Downtown Franklin probably took the worst of it. Our beloved Artcraft Theater had a couple inches of water! Franklin's streets were very flooded. It took us a couple of days to finally assess the damage. Franklin was a mess! Cornstalks were cluttered in the streets, furniture was soaked, and houses had so much water damage they weren't habitable. But we didn't let that bring us down; we rallied against the flood and helped those in need.

People all over the country were talking about the 2008 flood. We were on national news! Some people came from different states to help out. I am so thankful for those people. They were all so kind to come and help us out with the 2008 flood.

My community is the best. I love how we rally together though tough times. I love Franklin because of so many things. One, Franklin is very historic. Two, Franklin is a very fun place to live in because of all the amazing stuff we do. Three, Franklin has so many great things to offer. From the Artcraft to Franklin College, we have the best community. That's what my community means to me.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Preston Bonham

Community to me means a united group of people willing to help someone in need (hint: the word unity is in community). For example, St. Rose of Lima, my church (at Christmas time of course) puts on a little Christmas program. Well, the little children sing and have fun while the older kids (eight years to early teens) read and give kids props for the play. It's adorable watching the kids having fun. I was the guy that gave the props to the children.

After the program at the church we go over to the nursing home and do a smaller version there. To me, it's fun to show the people that don't get to see little kids much, watching the little kids have fun. That's an example of what my community means to me.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Lilly Boring

I think too often people take things for granted. Simple things, things we do everyday. Doing something as simple as playing a game, or coming home and seeing your family, all standing there waiting for you. Each of these things is a blessing. A blessing some people, even right here in our community, don't have the privilege to receive.

Here at St. Rose of Lima School, one school year brought many changes, a new principal, new teachers, even new classes. Our then new religion teacher, Mrs. O'Brien, had the idea of starting a service class. Each Wednesday after lunch, the seventh and eighth grade students meet in her classroom along with our language teacher, Mrs. Eberhart, to carry out a service project that will help out the needy, or cheer up someone who is down in the dumps.

One of our service projects earlier this year was collecting games for kids in the Johnson County Juvenile Detention Center. We created posters, performed a skit during morning announcements, and wrote an ad in our church bulletin. People were super generous and we got tons of games.

We have also done projects that benefit people outside our community as well. We are currently working on a project for a charity called "Wrap Them in Love." Each student has designed two or three quilt squares that will be put together to form a quilt. Our quilt will then be given to a child who needs a blanket during this cold winter season.

Our service class here at St. Rose was a great idea. It gives us students a chance to help out our community and other surrounding communities, no matter how small a difference it may make. Our theme this year at St. Rose is from Mother Theresa, "Do small things with great love." This service project was a great way to carry out our theme.

So the next time you play a game, enjoy it just a little bit more. When you come home to your family after a long day at work or school, give each one of them a big hug. Remember that some people, even right here in our community, don't have these simple blessings. You do. How can you help those who don't?

"What Community Means to Me" by Gaibriel Bunch

My older sister, Leigh had an idea to help the homeless and share the love this Valentine's Day. I asked her what I could do to help and she said that I could help by gathering blanket donations. The plan was to have fifty sack lunches, pillows, and blankets to hand out to the needy. We had the money for sack lunches and my parents were getting the pillows. We only had 21 blankets and only about two weeks to get the rest of the blankets.

At my school, St. Rose of Lima, the next day, I asked a group of my friends to help me make posters. I also told our principle Mrs. Floyd about our project. We hung about 25 posters around the school and made sure everyone knew about the donations. About a week later, my teacher Mrs. Eberhart told me that there had been blankets donated in the school office! I raced to the office right away, and found that five blankets had been donated! My sister and I were very grateful that we had gotten the donations, but we also were running out of time to get more blankets!

We will get the sack lunches ready the night before Valentine's Day and make sure everything is prepared for the day ahead. On Valentine's Day, we will deliver the packages to the homeless and needy of Indiana including Johnson County. I am very excited to have a chance to help the community and spend time with my sister! We hope to get more donations and to spread the love on Valentine's Day!

I'm so glad that we as children can have the opportunity to help make a difference in our community! Many people think that children can't cause a big change for the community, but with a good idea and your friends to help anything is possible. I hope that children everywhere will continue to help their community and make a change for the better!

Community means many things to me. Community is not only where your home is but where your family is as well. Your family doesn't always have to be related to you, because anyone that looks out for you and likes to spend time with you is family. For a community to function they must act like one and function as one. Your community is somewhere you will always call home.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Jimmy Cantwell

This winter, my teacher at St. Rose of Lima School wanted to donate decorated quilt squares to an organization called, "Wrap Them in Love." They take these decorated quilt squares to make quilts for needy children. We knew we were making an important service project. All were needed was supplies. The grandma of my classmate, Isabelle, donated the cloth. She even donated the cloth precut. Mrs. O'Brien gave us fabric markers. This was my favorite service project ever!

For another service project, we decorated cookies. It was not fun; we didn't get to lick the spoons. The cookies showed that we cared about the firefighters and were thankful for their service. Sprinkles were my favorite part of this project. This made me very hungry. These are some examples of doing good things for my community and what community means to me.

"The Paw Pounder" by Steve DeAngelo

Last year, over 150 pet owners went to the 15th annual Paw Pounder fundraiser for the Humane Society of Johnson County. For the fundraiser, people bring their pets and go for a walk. They raise money for the local Humane Society. It is held at Province Park. It was truly an awesome example of charity from all the people that did the walk. The Paw Pounder walk collects donations, and with the funds they receive they help many animals. The Humane Society of Johnson County not only has the Paw Pounder race, but they also have a kennel to run. Their kennel has cats and dogs that they put up for adoption. Go for a walk and check them out because they're a good place. They should be recognized for the good things they do for the local animals.

"What Community Means to Me" by Sam Dever

Community is a place where you live with your friends and family. Community is a place where everyone can get along. And, a community is a place where everyone can get together and help each other.

A community is a place where businesses thrive and where empires start. It is a place where crime barely happens, a place where friends gather, and a place where farms grow and where the grain keeps going, helping the unfortunate., playing sports and caring for each other. That is what community is all about.

At St. Rose of Lima, my school, we have done many things to help people in Franklin and even Johnson County. Helping at the Juvenile Detention Center, sorting the food at the food pantry, and helping the homeless are just a few things we have done. We have also had the chance to run a 5k to beat leukemia and other diseases, make cookies for fire fighters, and make valentines for vets. Doing these things is what being part of a community means to me.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Hunter Dillow

My community is special to me. It is nice to have a nice, clean community. I like to go to community gatherings and events. I am very sad that Don & Dona's Restaurant closed. I liked to eat there with my family on the weekends. I think our community is good to be around because we're clean and very helpful. And that's what my community means to me.

I like going to community events like the county fair and the Franklin Pool. My favorite thing is the Fourth of July party at the fairgrounds. I really like the people in my community. I am very thankful for the people that set up the events. My community means a lot to me I am thankful for my community.

"My Community" by Kaitlyn Dinkel

A community is a gathering of people coming to support those in need. I have done this by making cards for the military, and by donating clothes to a young mother. My favorite thing I have done to show my community we care is by making a quilt for families in need.

In our service class at St. Rose of Lima School we designed a quilt piece that will be made into a large quilt for needy families. I enjoyed this service project because I knew we were wrapping the needy families in warm blankets during the cold winter months. Even though we could not see the families these blankets were going to, I knew they had smiling faces to see that their community cares about them. I hope the families who received the quilt found hope in a new beginning.

This service project was done through a foundation called, Wrap Them in Love. Wrap Them in Love, was started by a lady who had adopted five children. Her dream was to one day visit orphanages in Korea, where most of her children came from. The lady wanted to bring something for the children there to stay warm with and to comfort them when they were crying or lonely. So instead of just making a couple of quilts, this lady started a donation center for quilts, which eventually turned into a foundation. I found this lady's story interesting and inspiring, about how she wanted to give love to the children in orphanages.

This project showed me that you don't have to physically see the people you are helping; you should just want to help somebody and comfort them. I hope more people want to help Wrap Them in Love or just help somebody locally who may need somebody's love and care. Remember there are many other ways to show people how much you care about them, such as, making a card for them, or even just praying for them will help them feel love from their community.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Coby Dodds

In the summer of 2013 a couple of my friends and I ran the Strike Out Leukemia 5K run. The 5K was for Chelsea Clark. The run was at the Franklin College. We went around the track twice, and then we ran the rest of the 5K through a scenic bike trail. It may have been the College's cross-country trail but I don't know.

When I got there they were having a speech and Chelsea was there too! After the speech we all lined up. When we were supposed to go, the gun sounded and we ran. There was one guy who, as we were running, had already started to come back. I ran with my friend's younger brother and some of his friends for a while, and then I went ahead of them. I won first place for my age group. When I finished I went and got some food, and I almost fell asleep in the chair I was sitting in because I was so tired. Afterwards, the jump rope club from my school St. Rose of Lima, came, so did the Colts. They put on a show for us. Their coach was Mrs. Sears. She was also our P.E. teacher. Mrs. Sears was awesome. The reason I chose to talk about this event is because everyone came together to support a young girl and her family. Just the fact that so many people gave their time and money to help that family makes me really happy with my community. That is what my community means to me.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Lance Estes

One day at my school, St. Rose of Lima, I signed up for the countdown to Christmas tree journal project. A Christmas tree paper came in the mail and every day a number was in the newspaper. You had to cut it out and glue it on the tree. You had to be careful sometimes, because more than one was in the paper. A lot of people signed up in the community and when it was all over they drew two names out of the bucket.

Your name was in the bucket if you completed the project and mailed it in. I got picked and another boy did too. The prize was a \$25 gift card and your picture in the paper! They where so nice that instead of a \$25 gift card, they gave us each a \$30 gift card. I think that this is a good example of what my community means to me, by helping kids to learn in a fun way.

"My Community" by Spencer Fears

My community and my school, St. Rose of Lima, have been great to my friends, my family, and me. The park and library are great places to work and play. I remember one time in 2012 there was a 5K run for a kid with cancer. The run was at Franklin College at Grizzly Park. It was a small run, about 150 runners. I got there right after the run started, fell and hurt my knee, and ended up starting two minutes late. In the beginning, I sprinted to catch up to the first group. I passed a person in my class. We ran the rest of the race together. I did finish before her but only by a hair.

After the run there were lots of festivities. They had food and drinks. I won second place in my division. The run was a good opportunity to serve my community. Running the race made me feel like I was helping the kid with cancer and my school and my community. The run earned a lot of money for the kid and her family and that kid is still here today because of the community and the people that participated in the 5K.

"My Community" by Kolton Ferguson

About a year ago, I started serving at my local church, St. Rose of Lima. It is not that big of a church as it can only seat about three hundred people in it. The sacristy isn't that big either as you can see the servers, eucharistic ministers, the priest, and whoever else is helping, bumping into each other. But, all that does not mean it is a bad church. It is a nice place where I got baptized, received my first communion, and am now serving during mass.

As I said before, I started serving about a year ago. Before that, I had next to no idea how to serve and all my experience had come from the one time I had served at a school mass. I went in on the day that we were being taught how to serve and that is when I met Mr. Novac. He's a nice person who taught a lot of people how to serve at St. Rose. In a month, I had served at three different masses, though they were all in December.

Serving is fairly easy and you end up doing a lot of things that make the mass seem to go by quicker. Sometimes all you have to worry about is a candle and where and when not to have it.

Sometimes you have to worry about the cross and carrying it up. Sometimes you have to worry about the gifts and where to put the stuff. But probably the most important job is when you have to get all the things ready for communion.

As time went on, times I had to serve went scarce and I was just serving about once every month. In the summer, not many people come to mass and I occasionally found myself as being the only server. One of those times I forgot to light the Easter candle and after I got through two locked doors and missing a lot of the readings, it was finally lit. I also once got candle wax on me when I was carrying a candle. If you are wondering how it feels to have candle wax on you, it feels like there's something burning on you, which is followed by having something cold and hard on you as the wax cools. Not an experience I want to have to go through again.

There are quite a few people I have served with over time. Probably the most notable is Josh. Josh has probably served with me the most times out of anyone and it feels like I serve with him more than I do without. Whether or not he has to, he shows up to serve on pretty much every Saturday unless he has something else come up. While I have served half of my masses with him, he's probably spent only a quarter of his masses with me. Maybe even a fifth. I do not really know exactly what the number is as I have not asked him.

So that's what I think is the only thing I end up doing for my community. It's not as big as what some other people do, but for a guy that spends a lot of time on a computer, it is quite a bit to do.

"What the Community Means to Me" by Sofia Filis

In August, the entire Franklin College freshman class and others helped move, organize, and carry things to help places. The program was called FOCUS. My mom works at Franklin College so I helped, too! It was a long, hard day! My mom and I were at the Artcraft and it was hard. Others were at Creekside, food pantry, and lots more!

At the Artcraft, we took out trash, mopped, swept, dust, cleaned windows, vacuumed, and lots more! It made a big difference when we were done. I felt very good about what we did that day. I think everyone was helpful and working hard that day. We all made an improvement and we also made new friends. Working together is a very good thing to do!

The entire Franklin College freshman class has to do it and if others want to they can help, too. I was very surprised about how many extra workers were there! That shows how much people want to help the community of Franklin. All the Artcraft workers and the owner were impressed and very grateful for us helping them. They all said, "Thank you!"

I heard that at Creekside, they helped plant plants and trimmed bushes. Others, painted, carried things, and cleaned up everywhere. Lots of things needed to be improved everywhere in the community of Franklin!

Knowing that people were grateful of what we did that day makes me happy! Lots of people were helping each other and that's what God wants to see! I bet he is very proud of what we did that day! Everyone can do something as simple as that!

Grades 6-12

I hope you know how much you do helping out friends or anyone. Helping is a kind, nice, and caring thing to do. Every time you do something to help others, you feel special or good. You also know that you are appreciated!

"What My Community Means to Me" by Michael Fletcher

What does my community mean to me? My community means a lot to me. In my community I do a lot to help out, and in this story I will tell some of them. Most of the things I have done have been with my school, but I still worked and helped. Here are some of my stories.

We were at my school, St. Rose of Lima, and working on projects, one of them was giving kids in the Juvenile Detention Center games so that they have something to do during down time. We were not allowed to bring games that would encourage gambling or anything bad for their future. We all really hoped they would enjoy the games we gave them.

Another project was making firefighters cookies. Firefighters work hard to keep their community safe and sometimes people do not appreciate their work. So, we made them cookies so that they knew we were thinking about them. This was our second project. Our other project was collecting blankets for the poor and homeless people during the winter. Some people will be outside with nothing to keep them warm. They could get really sick if they were out there in the cold for too long. This was another service project.

Our last service project was helping out at the food pantry. We helped sort out food and also helped out with telling if the donations were edible by the dates on the cans and boxes. We also brought in a lot of cans of food. This was another service project. These were our service projects over the past couple of school years. I feel really good about all of them also. We were very proud to do all of these. These were some of my favorite service projects to help my community.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Nicholas Galloway

When I got an appendectomy last year, my class at St. Rose of Lima School prayed for me and made me cards. The funny thing is, I never did get them. Then there was the time when my dad was dying and I was in Florida for about a month and a half. They sent a card and sent a picture of the class saying, "We miss you!" So, I think the St. Rose community is full of fabulous and caring people and I'm glad to be part of it.

What I think of when I hear "good community" is people who are friendly to one another and work things out if there are problems. They care for one another and support each other. At St. Rose, that is what you get because the students and teachers care so much about you. It is nice to have people around you who care, and that also support your decisions and help you with anything. Teachers will come into school earlier or stay after longer if you need extra help. They do what they think is best for you. That's what I think of when I think of a good community, and I'm glad I'm here.

"Community" by Ana Garnica

Community is a group of people coming together to help each other. Having a great community can be very helpful. It is important for the community to come together and help each other. There are many ways a community can come together, such as: having bake sales, car washes, and many other fundraisers that can help provide for the community. At St. Rose of Lima School we have supported many organizations in the community, many through our service class.

Some examples from our service classes are that we have made quilt squares for the Wrap Them in Love Foundation. The squares were sent and made into quilts for sick children. We also made and sent cookies as a thank you for the firefighters. We also collected games for the Juvenile Detention Center. Our service class has allowed us to come together to help many people in the community.

Being part of a good community gives you many opportunities to help out around the community. I really like being part of a community that is willing to help and support the people around their community. People who care for their community and help have really made a difference in the lives of many people. A helpful community is a great community, and ours is Johnson County.

"Community" by Isaac Garnica

Community to me is people getting together to help other people. Helping other people is fun, if you don't know how to help other people, ask your parents or see if anyone you know, knows who or how you can help. It doesn't have to be big, just be kind and try your best.

Here are some examples of what I did with my class at St. Rose of Lima. We put icing on some cookies for the fire fighters. We also got some board games and gave them to the Juvenile Detention Center kids. We also got shoes that don't fit us anymore and then donated them. These are some of the things my class and I did.

"What Community Means To Me" by Daniel Heinrich

Community means a lot to me. An example is coming together when people are in need like when our service class made quilt squares that would be sewn into quilts for needy children. Our class put a lot of effort into crafting and creating the quilt squares. But, the main reason that made this project possible is our teachers and another student's grandmother buying the supplies for all of the students in the middle school, which costs lots of money even for a small school like ours.

Another example of what community is to me is when the middle school collected games for the Juvenile Detention Center to help them have a better life and forget about what they have done in the past. That is what community means to me.

"My Community Is Important to Me" by Elizabeth Kummer

My community has inspired me to start learning about how to be a writer and how to write books. It has been three years since I felt that. I remember everything that happened when I started to write. My teacher made us keep journals. Every morning we would take them out, choose a writing prompt, and begin writing.

Deeper in the year, I started to feel like writing, it is what I can do well and feel good about it. Since then, I have been writing many stories. Maybe soon they could become books. My community does many things for me but this affects me more than anything else. It has been different these last few years for a few reasons. For example, I have improved in my skills as a writer. Also, my ideas are greater and come faster. If I continue this way, the chance of being a writer becomes better. My community might be different than others, but in my eyes different is a good thing.

"My School Community" by Amber Linton

At St. Rose of Lima School, my sixth grade class, as well as the seventh and eighth graders, have service projects every week. During this past year we have done lots of good deeds for the community. Most recently we've made Valentine cards for veterans; we've decorated quilt squares, donated board games to the Juvenile Detention Center, and made cookies for firefighters.

Last month my class decorated quilt squares for needy children. My class put a lot of time and thought into decorating these quilt squares, so that when they were sewn together the quilt would look beautiful. In fact one of my classmate's grandma donated the fabric for our class to use which was a nice act of kindness to help out our middle school community. It doesn't matter how big your acts of kindness are because Mother Theresa did various small acts of kindness and became a canonized saint. In this case bigger is not always better.

Another service project we did was collecting shoes for the poor. We collected shoes because we wanted kids to keep their feet warm and dry. We didn't necessarily need to donate new shoes, but not shoes that were falling apart either. My class wanted kids to be able to walk without their feet hurting every minute. The organization that the shoe donations went to, gives the shoes to those in need in Africa, or recycles them for money to help get villages' clean water.

One of the local service projects we did was making cards for veterans who have served our country. Our whole school did this project because it was Catholic Schools Week. St. Rose wanted to thank all those veterans out there for serving our country.

The next project we did was donating board games to the Juvenile Detention Center. The kids there don't have many games to play so we wanted to donate some. It would be boring if you just sat around all day so we wanted to give them something to do. We donated a lot of games, so I think they won't be bored for a while.

One of the first service projects we did was making cookies for firefighters in Franklin. All the middle school participated in this service project. Each kid got to do two cookies each. We decorated the cookies with red, white, and blue icing. It felt great helping all of these people and I'm sure my class feels the same way.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Max Linton

My community means everything to me. We have each other's backs. We help people if they need it. We catch them if they fall and bring them back up. Some examples of our community helping each other is when the local toy store, Imagination Station, was about to go out of business due to road blocks from construction. People helped by supporting their fundraisers and eventually they saved the toy store. The people that helped with the fundraisers helped hundreds of kids and put smiles on their faces.

Other examples are when some of the seventh and eighth graders at St. Rose of Lima School helped make a Thanksgiving dinner for families who can't afford things like that. They collected baby clothes for newborns in need, made rosaries for another church, made quilt squares to be made into quilts for sick children, the list goes on and on, but there is one other thing that I think really helped a girl in our community.

A Franklin girl named Chelsea has leukemia, and our community came together and created a race to support her and her family. Various families created a 5K race called, Strike Out Leukemia, and many people participated. After the race was finished, we gave the money to Chelsea and her family, for any struggles that they might have. My community means everything to me and I would not trade that for anything.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Seth Long

Lights, camera, action. These are some of the words used to create a film. Downtown Franklin, Indiana is the proud location of the Franklin Film Festival. The purpose of the film fest is to get young film creators a chance of experience and to get recognized by the community. A cool perk to the film festival is that it's held at the Historical Artcraft Theatre, established in 1922. The prize, if you win the film fest, is usually \$200.00, I believe. Once you win, your film will be entered in the Heartland Film Festival, which pays a lot of money if you win.

If you want a good chance to win you need an original idea. Nobody wants to see the same thing over and over again. Go around your town and find a topic that interests you. Make a movie that you would want to see. If it's boring to you, it will be boring to the community. Try and try again until it's just right. You will need good equipment for the festival. I suggest a good DSLR and a high quality audio recorder. And for an editor, use Adobe Premier Pro CS6. This will cost you a lot of money but trust me, it's worth it.

If you win, you'll get the money back in the end. Overall, the Franklin Film Festival is a lot of fun! I'd love to see everyone from Johnson County come to the Festival. If I was to win in the Film Festival, I'd use my money to buy better equipment, try to win the Heartland Film Fest, then donate ³/₄ of my winnings to charity. I'm not in high school yet so I can't technically enter the film fest, but I have time to think of what I'm going to make my film about. And that's, "What My Community Means To Me."

"What the Community Means to Me" by Olivia Marrs

My story is about how the community gathers together to support the people who are at a loss when losing their family members that have cancer. An example of this would be during the Relay for Life, there were people who wanted to earn money and walk for cancer patients in Johnson County. Other people provided entertainment during the walk. I was walking for my grandpa who died of bladder cancer.

At the beginning of the walk, all the cancer patients at Johnson Memorial Hospital came out and walked the first lap with us. After that, people came up onto the stage and with pictures of their loved ones. All survivors were congratulated with hugs and love. Everyone had so much fun! Some people were crying about their loved ones, but other people cheered them up. It just makes my heart melt that everyone gathered together to support the people who need it.

There were also stands set up for people to look around and buy things or donate money. The money went back to the cancer patients that need it. At night, we gathered together and lit the luminaries in memory of people that had passed away. Some people asked around the hospital for more donations because every lap you take, you get money for cancer patients. We ended the night with prayer and people called out the names of lost loved ones. Everyone stayed for a while after that talking. It ended early in the morning and the next group of people came to walk so they could earn a lot of money to save cancer patients. They earned thousands of dollars! That's an example of something good that happened in my community.

"What Community Means to Me" by Riley Marten

To me community means a family. People who take care of and look out for each other. My class at St. Rose of Lima school has done this with a series of service projects in school this year. We did them to do our part for the community.

One of our projects was donating board games to the Juvenile Detention Center. We did this project because these kids have hard lives. We showed them someone does care about them. The games we gave were used as rewards for good behavior. This project helped us better the next generation in Johnson County.

We also did a project where we made quilts squares for needy children. These quilt squares get put together to be made into quilts. It was our way of telling them everything will be okay. We wrapped them in our love, just like the organization that we did this for, Wrap Them in Love. They donate to kids in Johnson County and others too.

In conclusion, Johnson County and Franklin, Indiana is my home. It gives me a place to live and just be me and to know that I will be supported if I need it.

"Moving Help" by Alyson McElwain

Hi, my name is Alyson. We used to live in a small five-room house in the middle of nowhere. My sister and I had to share a room while my mom wanted more counter space. We desired to move. We found an amazing split-level house with our own room and we had a pool!

Though the pool was a lot of fun, we had some, I mean, a lot of work to do. We had to pack up every room in the house. Then we had to unpack and get pool stuff. The pool, it turned out, had algae-filled water but we eventually got it to be clear. When it was time to get the last boxes we lost Charlie our cat. He snuck out when my dad was putting boxes in his truck. We were so sad for, like, an hour but then we found him hiding under a bush. We were so happy!

We had a lot of stuff to take care of in a short amount of time. That's when our family and friends came in to help. My mom's friend Marti set up my room (note that my sister and I were at a friend's house). My grandma and my mom put away the kitchen. My dad and uncle were working with the pool. Everyone helped with furniture and decor. Before then we were busy painting the walls. At one point the living room walls were tan with orange accent walls. Yeah, we had a lot of painting to do. We had Subway sandwiches a lot during that painting time. I got sick of sandwiches really fast. I mean who wouldn't, right? I like them now, which is six months later.

So, about the pool: As I said it had green water from the algae. It's an in-ground pool and it goes from 3-6 feet. We just recently got a singing boat that floats. While we swim it will sing and make us laugh. We also have a ton of pool toys such as an inflatable raft and inner tube. We have about 13 pool noodles and some diving rings. I have goggles, flippers and snorkel. I love to dive to the bottom of the pool and collect diving rings. We also have chores to do like cleaning the pool cover and vacuuming leaves from the bottom. It's a lot of fun when you can play in the pool in the summer with friends.

I'm really thankful for my friends and family that helped me to move into my new house. We would still be unpacking if they didn't help! We are currently happily living in the new house with plenty of counter space and our own rooms. And we have a pool so that's a bonus! I also want to thank the library for giving me the opportunity to express my thanks to my family and friends. Thank you everyone!

"Acts Of Kindness" by Katie Jo McKee

I'm Katie and I go to St. Rose of Lima School. Last year we did a service project and this year we did a completely different one, but yet they seem to be equally nice. When I was in sixth grade I went over to the Methodist Home. I met a girl named Angie. We played hit the ball with the noodle. It was a lot of fun. This year I helped decorate cookies for two fire departments to thank them for their service. Our teacher baked them at home. After we were done I took some to the Amity Volunteer Fire Station where my dad puts forth his time. In doing these service projects we helped our community, thank our heroes and tend to the elderly.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Kelley McMillian

What does my community mean to me? It means a lot to me! Some things that our school, St. Rose of Lima, has done for the community is movie fundraisers. We send fliers out and let people know about the movie! After the fundraiser we can use the money to get new things for our school. Another thing we have done is to make cookies for the firemen! We had two different kinds of icing and we decorated the cookies. Some people did hearts and others did different patterns. Then we sent them to the firemen to thank them.

Our service class also decorated quilt squares that would be put together to make quilts for needy children. We got fabric markers and quilt squares, and then we decorated positive things on them. We decided to do this service project because it's getting extremely cold outside and to make needy children happy. Last week we made cards for the veterans so we could thank them for their service. This felt good to do, too! These are things that I like to do for my community and with my school.

"My Community" by Tanner Pappas

What community means to me is helping out other people in your community. We at St. Rose of Lima School have helped our community many times in service class this year. For example, we made valentines for veterans. It was easy. We made valentines cards for veterans, wrote a nice message, and drew on it. It was fun and easy for our class. The whole St. Rose of Lima School made these, except preschool, kindergarten, and 1st grade. Almost the whole St. Rose community in Johnson County did it also. It made me feel happy to know that some of our soldiers got the valentines cards.

"What a Community Means to Me" by Mary Rose Roesener

Hi, I am Mary Rose. I have lived in Johnson County all of my life and let me tell you there is no better place to live than Johnson County. To me a community is everyone coming together to do good things for people or businesses. Somewhere that everyone is happy and willing to help.

Throughout my whole life my family has gone to so many fundraisers and helped support a lot of places struggling to stay open. Our local toy store, The Imagination Station, is a Franklin toy store for kids, but when the road that you drive on to get there was closed for construction the store suddenly had a big decrease in money. They needed over \$10,000 in order to keep the toy store open. One night, my mom told me that we were going to head down to the toy store where a fundraiser was going on. I thought that there was not going to be many people there, but there were so many people that you could barely move around! With lots of fundraisers and generous people, the toy store was able to get back up on its feet and stay open!

Another fundraiser was for a girl named, Chelsea Clark. Chelsea is a student at Custer Baker. She is the sweetest girl you will ever meet and it is too bad that she got Leukemia. We wanted to raise money for her so we decided to set up a 5K run/ walk called, Strike Out Leukemia. It was on a chilly Saturday morning, but it was all worth it. We had a great time with a lot of people, around 100-300 people that came to participate. Right before the race started we had someone sing the national anthem then we had Chelsea come and walk out. Everyone clapped and she had a huge smile across her face. After the race ended, we had lots of volunteers come and bring food. Our St. Rose of Lima School jump rope club made a special performance and a Colts truck came for all the kids to see. It was a great event and I am glad we did it. We raised a lot of money for Chelsea and then, not only was Chelsea smiling, but everyone else was smiling too.

To me, Johnson County is the perfect little community where everyone is always smiling and willing to help each other out. No matter if you are helping one person or hundreds of people, everyone is willing to help. That is what a community means to me!

"What My Community Means to Me" by Jeremy Ryan

I live in the small city of Franklin in Johnson County. I live with my mom, brother, grandmother, and grandfather. My brother and I go to St. Rose of Lima Catholic School. I am the mascot at my school. I'm at lots of school activities being the mascot. Go Lions!

One weekend my school was doing a 5K for someone with Leukemia. They wanted me to appear as the mascot, so I did. It was a lot of fun and a lot of people were there.

We had lots of fun, we had a Colts museum and food and there was a baseball game at Franklin College at the end. It was fun and I like to help and I'm glad that many others do too. We helped raise a lot of money and had fun doing it.

I like my community because they will help those in need. I know that they will be there for my family if needed too.

"What the Community Means" by Lorenzo Salazar

My name is Lorenzo Salazar, and I live in Franklin, Indiana. Even though it's small, Johnson County is full of activity. People should not be fooled by the size of Johnson County because there is more than meets the eye.

I will start with my hometown of Franklin. Other than sledding, there isn't much to do in the winter. However, in the summer there is plenty to do. For example, you can spend a day at the pool or go on a bike ride through Franklin. Also, the Fourth of July celebrations are great. Luckily the Artcraft Theater is open all year round.

Next is Greenwood. This community is home to many strange and funny occurrences. Along with the various pawnshops there is also the Greenwood Park Mall. The mall is a great place! Along with the stores like Hot Topic and Zumies, there have been some cool things that have happened. Once, I was at the mall with a couple of friends and a bunch of guys dressed as storm troopers came in for a fundraiser and walked around the mall.

Another place in Johnson County is Edinburgh. There isn't a lot that I do in Edinburgh but there is enough to tell you about. In the summer, I go to the Edinburgh pool and swim with my friends. In the winter, there are plenty of fun hills to sled on. They sure have gotten quite a bit of use during the "snowpacalypse" this year.

Lastly, I will tell of the service projects at my school, St. Rose of Lima. Numerous times we have gone and helped out the Methodist Home, whether it's delivering Christmas cards or just being with the occupants. We also collect food, clothes, and blankets for the poor. In conclusion, community is an important part of everyday life.

"What Community Means to Me" by Brooklyn Stubblefield

Every year we have a fundraiser called Carter's Wish Foundation. The community comes together and just helps out his family with donations for the fundraising event. It is at Otto's Golf Center in Greenwood, Indian. We are thankful that they lent their golf center to us so we could have this event. When you come, you walk in the door and sign up for drawings and get your golf equipment to go golf or to the batting cages. After everyone has come, you can get golf lessons and food and drinks are provided. After eating, there is a golf tournament, just like every year. The kids just have fun and enjoy playing with each other. They will have an adult with them the entire time too in case their parents are playing in the tournament. People just enjoy themselves!

Carter was born with a bad heart, which led to a short life for him. As a baby, he was on life support just to keep him alive. He soon got transferred to another hospital, but that didn't help either. But, God put him here for a reason. He is not suffering anymore and is in a good place. The short life he lived was a gift. His fundraiser helps people to remember him and helps out needy families every year.

What the family thinks about this event is they are very appreciative for all the donations that everyone has given to their family. They have said that just having this event brings smiles to their family's faces and they love to see everyone who cares about this event. And, you can really tell how much everyone cares! Since my aunt (Carter's mother), works at Riley Hospital for Children, some of the fundraiser money gets donated to them to help other children in need. They are so thankful to everyone for all the support they get from the fundraiser.

"Strike Out Leukemia" by Emma Sutton

In mid-October of 2012, one of my volleyball friends Chelsea Clark was diagnosed with a type of cancer called leukemia. So in order to raise money for her chemotherapy, the whole town did a 5k run. At our school, St. Rose of Lima, we had a jump rope club called Leaping Lions. Our amazing coach, Mrs. Sears decided that the entire team would perform at the fundraiser. After the run and the performance, there was a baseball game. Hence the name Strike Out Leukemia.

So when we arrived at the Franklin Community College where the race would take place, there were people warming up doing Zumba. We were all covered up in blankets while we signed up. When everyone was all signed in, a couple people gave a speech about how amazing this was and what a great cause it was for. After the amazing speech, the race had finally begun. The minute the gun went off, everyone started to sprint. I just kept running and running until I was as out of breath. Finally after a while I could see the finish line. I used all of my energy and finished the race.

After I ate, I noticed my shoe was irritating my foot. So I took it off and found the back of my heel bleeding. Now whenever I run, I always wear proper shoes. Later I washed the blood off and just walked barefoot. Half an hour after the race, Leaping Lions did their performance. It was flawless! It was a perfect day for a run.

"What Community Means to Me" by Summer Viles

Our middle school students at St. Rose of Lima did a very good deed. We made quilt squares that would be turned into a blanket for needy children. We thought it would be nice to make the needy children happy. We spent a lot of time creating and decorating the quilt squares. These went to needy children in Johnson County and other places. I hope that the children that get these quilts are very grateful.

My friend at school collected blankets and food for the poor. She and her family made sack lunches and got pillows and blankets to personally give to the homeless. Some people donate money to the poor and food to the food pantries. Those people in our community are very caring and loving. If you are one of those people, I just want to say thank you very much! I look up to people in our community that are very loving and nice to others. I think we should all do nice things like this when we can, to help the poor and other people in our community.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Aiden Willey

When the flood hit in 2008 we didn't even know what would happen. It just kept on raining and pouring until the water was several feet high in places. The flood was in Johnson County. It went from the stop sign at the beginning of our street to our neighbor's house at the end of the street. The flood was huge and the water started at about 2-3 inches in our backyard.

The water kept coming until it flooded the whole street. No one could get in or out. The street drains were clogged too! So, the water was moving very slowly. We were late for school and work. We couldn't get much help because of the flooding. Our neighbors tried to drain the water into a small ditch. This ditch drained into the small creek nearby. It didn't work. We all tried to think of ways to get the water to drain somewhere else, but nothing worked. So, we decided to wait. Many people cared and tried to help and prayed for us.

Finally, the water went down several inches. We tried to drive through it with our truck. The truck had four-wheel drive but it didn't make it. Eventually, the flood ended and from then on we tried to always be prepared and ready for anything. We were all happy that the weather hasn't affected us like that since then. I am happy that my community worked together to help everyone through the flood. That is an example of what my community means to me.

"My Community" by Valerie Workman

Mrs. O'Brien. I had only seen her a couple of times around the church, St. Rose of Lima. Now, here I stand waiting to go into my first ever Religion class with her. For all I knew I could be walking into a trap. Was she a kidnapper? Maybe a thief wanted by the government? I didn't know, but I knew I was probably exaggerating just a bit.

Then, I saw her. Her long jean skirt waved against her sandaled feet as she walked down the hall towards us. Her voice was smooth and told us we could go into the classroom and sit down. I shifted uncomfortably in my seat as I glanced around the familiar room. Last year, this classroom had been our social studies room. Mrs. Britner had been our teacher but had decided to leave and try something else in life. Her decorated room with maps and posters of places around the world was changed now, into a plain white study, with a small desk and chair. I guessed from what I saw and somewhat already knew that Mrs. O'Brien was plain and liked the simple life.

Once we were all settled down, she started her lesson. I kept my eyes on the clock the whole time and waited as the class dragged on. After the 45 minutes we spent working on following God, I realized I had absolutely no idea how to do my homework. Feeling especially stupid at this point, I reminded myself of my goal for the year, to get straight A's. I would need to pay attention in class from now on and focus harder on my work.

The next day I went and apologized to Mrs. O'Brien for not paying attention in class. She seemed really kind and understanding. This was good for my laziness, but also bad because we had kids in our class who used these kinds of teachers, to mess around and talk during class. I walked to class and afterwards I found myself excited and anticipating the next class. Wednesday, I had my first ever Service class. I was excited because I loved helping others. Halfway through, I suggested going to the Johnson County Animal Shelter to see if they needed help with anything. It turned out that my classmates had some pretty good ideas, too. Every time we had class I decided that I liked Mrs. O'Brien more and more. Every service class we did something new and fun, but for someone else at the same time.

A couple weeks ago, we made quilt squares for needy kids around Indiana. Last week, we made cards for people at the Methodist home to write to us as pen pals. Not everyone knows about St. Rose, but we sure love helping others especially when it has to do with something we love.

About a month ago a couple of my friends and I attended mass on Sunday. We had a huge scare when in the newly deceased column, Neil O'Brien, was one of the names listed. Mrs. O'Brien had a son named Neil and I had known him. She had not been at school on Friday, but I thought it was because she was sick. I quickly sent her an email, but she never replied. I paced back and forth in my room, scared to think about what Monday would bring. Monday afternoon, I waited at the door for Mrs. O'Brien. I expected a substitute, but when Mrs. O'Brien came striding down the hall, my heart seemed to jump into my throat. I prayed to God that it hadn't been her son, but Neil wasn't a common name. Once inside the classroom, I slowly approached her and asked her about it. She sighed and then smiled. I was confused but I took this as a good sign. It hadn't been her son. I don't think I had been this relieved in my entire life. I can't imagine what would have happened if she had a loss in her family.

Every day I thank God for Mrs. O'Brien and how much love and faith she has brought to this school and all of us. Ever since I was little I have been distracted at mass or haven't been as close to The Holy Spirit as I have wanted to, but Mrs. O'Brien has helped me break through that distraction and get closer to Jesus. She has helped the community by her need for helping others, our school by teaching us about our faith, and me directly, by helping me grow closer to God. This is my example of someone caring in my community helping me and making a difference.

"Whiteland, Indiana" by Annastasia Zellars

There is a little church in Whiteland, Indiana called Southpointe Church. It is usually a very quiet little church, but on the first Sunday of every month, there is a little something that we call Middle School Madness. We all meet in the church at exactly 5:30 at night until 7:30 at night. We go in, eat pizza, drink cokes, chat, and sing a few songs. However, this is only for grades 6-8. It is very fun, and once you come, I guarantee that you will want to come every month. You might hear some pretty weird things in our conversations, but you can still be part of our conversations. We will make sure that you feel welcome at our church. Our church is at 70 West Street in Whiteland. We will really enjoy your company. Also, we have a youth group for grades sixth through eighth. I hope you can make it to Middle School Madness. I really look forward to seeing you there on the first Sunday of every month.

Ages 18 +

"Our Move to Franklin, Indiana" by Perrietta Appleton

For anyone who has ever said that you can take the person out of the country, but you can't take the country out of the person I can attest to that being untrue! I was very familiar with the city of Franklin, but never envisioned myself moving here. You see I came from a rural community that is also known as a sleeper community, in Northern Indiana. My husband was born there, and I came to the area at a very young age. We were surrounded by not only wonderful neighbors and friends, but also corn, beans, hogs and farmland. To be able to do any shopping, anything cultural or entertainment, etc., one had to drive many miles to accomplish those things. When you are a country person you will always say after visiting the city that "It's a nice place to visit, but I wouldn't want to live there!" We had never experienced the wonderful convenience of having many of life's amenities and services close at our door.

Well, all of that and our lives were changed drastically a few years ago when we moved to the Indiana Masonic Home in Franklin, Indiana. Sometimes the road of life converges and you take a chance on a road not traveled. Those of us, who believe that a higher power assists us in our lives and with life's choices, sometimes just faithfully move forward.

Well, the forward move to Franklin was a terrific one for us. Most all of the people that you meet in life are good decent people and that is certainly the case here in Franklin. The community outreaches by the officials who govern strive to make the city good for all its residents, and that is very evident. There are always activities and events for all ages. Many events happen on the court house square downtown. By the way, the court house in Franklin is such a beautifully historical structure, and much pride is taken in the building.

A wonderful Fall Festival is an annual event held on the square. A great Farmer's Market summons many to the downtown during the summer months. Many businesses and corporations offer employment and convenience to residents. I watch with pride and hope as the merchants of different home grown businesses strive to serve and survive. The wonderful history of Franklin is evident in the downtown architecture and also the many beautiful older and well-kept homes throughout the city. I love to ride through the Franklin College Campus as the feeling of history and learning permeate the area. Old Ben Franklin's statue stands proudly as a centurion on the campus grounds. Once in a while the college kids will change his dress style or color with spray paint, but he soon reappears in the everyday drab gray outfit that he has worn for years.

The city of Franklin has been in existence since the early 1800's. A wonderful museum depicting many of the beginnings and the changes in the city are showcased in the old original Masonic Lodge building downtown. It is such a stately older building and it is an ideal setting for the museum. The wonderful old Artcraft Theater with its original marquee still shows old timeless movies and hosts community events. The swimming pool complex has just been remodeled for great summer fun, and it is beside the Cultural Arts and Recreational Center which is a community jewel for the residents and for all sorts of activities. The Greenway trail for bikers and walkers encompasses many miles and takes you from one side of town and on through Province Park. I love the fact that you can ride or walk under US 31 and into other park amenities on the other side. The Parks Department works diligently to maintain all of these things.

The city boasts two Retirement Centers, one being the Methodist Community and the other is the Indiana Masonic Home. The Methodist Community was begun by the Indiana Methodist church in the early 1950's. As we now reside on the Masonic Home Campus, we share so much pride in the heritage of this Home. It was founded and built by the Free Masons of Indiana. It was opened in 1916 and will soon celebrate its 100th anniversary. It was started as a sanctuary for aged Masons and widows and orphans as well as Eastern Stars. Many children of years ago grew up at the Home as well as thousands of others who have taken residence there through the years. It is now a continuum living community where many of those original Masonic Home kids have come home once again in retirement living. There has always been a good working relationship between the IM Home and the city, and the annual July 4th Festival and fireworks are held on the Home's circle grounds.

There is something so wondrously fascinating about residing on historical ground and seeing it and having it all around you. But more impressive is the pride that is very evident in the city of Franklin as it constantly strives to progressively stay updated yet maintain its wonderful historic and small town appeal. If I am ever asked about missing our long time home and old friends up North, a simple saying suffices.

Make new friends But keep the old One is silver The other is gold.

Franklin truly shines!



"What My Community Means to Me" by Jane Bingham

As a lifelong resident of Franklin, I feel a deep sense of community. I am proud to say that Franklin is my home. This is a great time to be a part of Franklin. There is such a revitalization happening now. New shops and restaurants are popping up all over with more to come in the future. Streets are being improved. It seems there is an event or celebration for all ages.

One of my favorite places in Franklin is the Johnson County Public Library. Both the present location and the former at Madison Street and Home Avenue are special to me. I have always loved to read. That's why I belong to the Friends of Johnson County Public Library. This organization supports programming at all the branches. I encourage everyone who loves our library to join and become active in our Friends organization.

"Marching to Our Own Drummer" by Jill Bode

I wake with a sense of anticipation, to a sunny morning filled with promise, a day with infinite possibilities of dreams to be seen. As I drink my first cup of coffee, I try to imagine the colors, sounds and movement, but finally give up in favor of simply getting ready to go. Soon enough, I snap the leash on Oscar Wild, my fluffy, black Lower Essex Hasselhoff Retriever, and we head toward downtown, with Oscar tugging at the leash to encourage me to walk faster. I have a date with a small boy and his mother. It goes without saying that we'll meet up on a specific corner at the appointed time, we always do, no confirming phone call or text message is necessary.

We're so close now that I can hear the sirens and see others like me, who have waited a little too long to make their way downtown. Cars begin to back up as traffic is stopped by the officer who drives the burgundy car, the same one who is always on "our" corner. "Look Joseph," says his mother, "there they are!" We wave and quickly dash across the street to join them. It's begun! As long as I can remember, I've loved parades. Who knows if it is the music, the animals, the candy or the people watching, but there is something undeniably magical about parades. They fill me with joy and excitement, so much so, I become almost giddy.

I feel especially lucky to live in a town that really knows how to put on an amazing parade. It is not unusual to have our town's parades last 90 minutes—they are filled with dance teams, tractors, antique cars, town leaders, floats and (my favorites) Masonic motorized units of tiny cars, motorbikes and even planes. Since we position ourselves at an intersection, we have surprises coming around the corner every few minutes. Little girls dressed in sparkly dance uniforms perform for us, politicians drive by in convertibles or vintage fire engines. Tractors pull themed floats filled with waving children. The Masons pull out all the stops and have dozens of mini-cars and motorcycles driving and weaving their vehicles in intricate patterns that involve precision and near misses in equal measure. And the candy, oh the candy, it is enough to make even the smallest children generous with their haul.

Every unit of the parade strives to have copious amounts of candy to hand out to parade watchers, from the very beginning of the route to the tail end. Plastic Halloween pumpkin buckets during the summer parades are not an uncommon sight, since so many types and flavors of candy are thrown in such quantity. Joseph is particularly generous, giving me all of his Tootsie Rolls, which he knows are my favorites. An act that is both sweet and practical because he doesn't much care for that particular type of candy and the sheer weight of the collected treasure he needs to carry home is a lot for a small boy. Before we know it, this parade is over; the last fire engine siren fades into the distance. We stay just a little longer to be sure, but when the street sweeper arrives, it's over. We discuss our favorite parts as we walk back towards our homes, just a little sad that another parade has ended. But, soon enough, we'll be back again, same place, same time for the next parade in our small town.

"Home Educators" by Ginger Bruce

My community is merely more than a definition. It is an expression of meaning to one's heart through inspiration, encouragement, support, resources, unity, connecting, experience, freedom and participation. It means unity, active, adjusting, connecting and resourceful. When I planted a seed to homeschool I didn't know it was a beginning to a family legacy. Deuteronomy 6:6 states the commandments the Lord gives are to be planted on our hearts. We are to impress them diligently to our children and on their children. We are to talk about them when we sit at home, walk along the road, when we lie down and when we rise up. Homeschool allows unhindered freedom to learn, explore surroundings, environment and growth outside a curriculum written by one individual, an opportunity to achieve and be curious through seeing, touching and experiencing 24/7, freedom from a scheduled school agenda and the ability to learn within context of adapting to real life.

The reward with homeschooling, learning is living and living is learning. The development is a healthier self-image and confidence in taking a stand for what is right. My children show so much more courage being homeschooled compared to when I was a public school student. I was harassed by classmates and bullied by a teacher my junior year. My heart was set on

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home educating my children and God gave me favor to do so when His will was the right time for me. I had some spiritual maturing and renewal of mind in order to LIVE His will.

After successfully homeschooling seven years now, graduating one and a second one to graduate next year, I have no regrets. I'm proud of my children and commitment I made to myself. Proverbs 22:6; Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it. The balance I can anchor my teaching in the principle of love. Adapting to give an education which brings heart knowledge as well as head knowledge.

With the varied hours of my faculty position and sacrificing the main part of my daytime hours, I took part time multiple employment positions third shifts and weekends. To be a parent and teacher is a two-hat challenge I'm capable of. When learning is not on a schedule, we can model the fruits of the spirit with excitement for life around the clock. As an educator I can be an inspiration with my words to motivate others who want to homeschool their children, a gift of giving a story to other communities.

Homeschooling is a community of engaged students and adult educators building a current of diverse people supporting each other in their dreams, interests and learning at a comfortable pace. Supportive groups nurture and share with a connection of advice, mentoring and counseling with each other on a regular basis. Some become best friends while others are more private, ability to be creative innovators, learning to replace competition with unity and cooperation which builds teamwork in each family. Each homeschool is freely to educate in their own style of what works with their circumstances and environments. Parents set the example for their children on the value of leadership in all communities. Families can grow, learn and explore together building healthy relationships while enjoying life.

Accessing resources (libraries, city parks, websites, churches, museums, etc) flows like a current from the heart of any town or city. Connecting through education to make a difference, homeschooling opened my eyes to the full depth of the benefits I will reap in future generations. Psalms 78:5-8; For he established a testimony in Jacob, and appointed a law in Israel, which he commanded our fathers, that they should make them known to their children: That the generation to come might know them, even the children which should be born; who should arise and declare them to their children: That they might set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep his commandments: And might not be as their fathers, a stubborn and rebellious generation; a generation that set not their heart aright, and whose spirit was not steadfast with God. Knowing I am doing what is in the best interest of my children when I receive positive compliments on their character, manners, behavior and attitude. It is 'living out' an atmosphere where Christ is the center.

Giving kids an easier time relating to people of all ages by volunteering, serving and having consideration for those 'in need', this example was an assignment in early elementary from one of my homeschool sons on 'community'. Title: Places to Have Fun (A shape of a 'key' was cut out, colored yellow and his words on paper pasted to the 'key'). The key to a community is a place to have fun. A place to have fun is important because having fun gives you a lot of exercise and relieves stress. A place to have fun is a good way for families to be together. Sports like baseball, football and soccer fields, a basketball court bring friends together. Groups who make a team and compete, skate parks build strength, skills and making new friends. City parks have different kinds of equipment to enjoy, a place to make memories. The parks I have been to have ball courts, ball fields, skate parks, pools, theatre's, rivers, cook outs, train rides, paddle boats, fireworks, fishing derby's, ski slopes, hiking, golf and much more recreation.

"Why are My Peers Important?" by Eileen Paige Castro

My community to me means peers. Did you ever notice a baby? I see an adorable human being. I also observe this little tot, when in the company of another baby, very interested in watching other babies, toddlers and teens and so on. Peers are vitally important.

With the first grey streaks in my hair, my visits to the beautician included questions of how to "hide the grey." It seemed this is what everyone does (I was told) in my age category. Within a few years my curiosity about what my "natural" hair looked like began to emerge. I stopped coloring my hair. Not only did I find a nicely grey-streaked brown hair color which I liked, women began sharing with me their own stories or woes about becoming older. My naturally grey/brown hair color seemed now to invite other women about my age to know I am a peer with whom they could confide some of their own observations of entering older years.

Hair color and other cosmetic enhancements have an important role for women yet it seems to me our youth-focused culture in America categorizes elders. The focus is on productivity, speed, breast size, muscle and vibrant youth. The wisdom of the elder years is considered "out of tune with reality"; therefore, many American elders recede into the background. Seniors need peers to support, encourage, listen and challenge one another.

In a recent visit to a European community, groups of elder men or women were commonly observed standing with one

another or seen sitting enjoying the silent company of one another together. Consider how an elder generation lives in other cultures. In other countries of the world, particularly some Asian and African communities, there is a pervasive culture of dignity and respect for elders.

In 1990 my 75-year-old mother and I took a once in a lifetime trip to Ireland. During that ten day visit I was struck by the way my mother was received by the Irish people. My mother had no physical limitations in traveling yet everywhere we traveled my mom was catered to and treated with great kindness. There was a respect given us that I had not perceived in our trips in America.

Youth is a vibrant and essential part of society. Youth are not only reminders of fresh energy we had or what we did in our past, they are the basis for hope about the possibilities for the future. My seven-year-old grand niece recently taught me new things about my IPAD and a 13-year-old taught me how to text just a few years ago. All ages continue the spectrum of life yet peers can make a huge difference in the day to day affairs and choices.

Many senior adults enjoy their grandchildren and great grandchildren; they share those special moments yet some spend many of their hours alone. A term "the sandwich generation" has evolved for some adults in the last 20 years. The term refers to caring for the needs of young children as well as looking after the older parent(s) yet now it is not uncommon for those in the grandparent generation to be housing their adult children or raising their own grandchildren. A nearby community senior service indicated calls are received daily for emergency food and transportation needs for seniors living in our community.

In a community such as the one in which I reside, adults of many ages are peers to one another. Daily residents are conversing with one another in small groups; they share interests about subjects that are of interest or importance and/or sit silently together in the same area. My "retirement" community of the over 60 years of age offers opportunities to be in the company with many other peers. Contemporary life experiences, entertainment, meals and interests are shared with one another yet alone time is respected. Through conversations with peers, I consider the many options available in these retirement years; this exposure challenges me to do what I can to enhance the days of my life in simple ways.

In my community I meet single, widowed, widower and married people (in an age ranging from 60's to 90's and even 100's) from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. If asked about their experience, any resident will share a story of what it means to live in this retirement village community. Our community is a well known fraternal organization which has been around for a long time and continues to have a significant impact in Johnson County. My community is the Indiana Masonic Home Village and with these peers I call it my home.

"Trafalgar: Safe and Friendly" by Niki Downey

My husband and I saw Johnson County and we just were overwhelmed with the tranquility and beauty of the area. We wanted to live in an agrarian town that had a Heart. We found Trafalgar. We moved into a two room house in 1970s it had a few acres of property and a little pond. Immediately David started to commute to Indianapolis and I was left alone in isolation at home, there weren't any cell phones or computers so I learned how to handle quiet. We got a dog and I had someone to communicate with, she wasn't good at texting.

The telephone lines got crossed a lot in the 1970s and I got quite a few wrong numbers. If they were other "878" prefix numbers we tended to stay on the telephone with each other and get acquainted. I made a few friends this way. Later when I did have children and they got old enough to answer the phone, if it was a wrong number they would always say "Mom its Wrong number- it's for you."

You do not need to be in a country home long to know there is a lot of activity around you. What am I supposed to do with this abandoned baby raccoon? We had her for about three years and then she moved on, she was litter box trained, she had her wire cage home under a tree, and was free to come and go into the woods, many times she would come home to use the litter box.

We had many baby animals that rested here, ate or recuperated for awhile but eventually left for the woods. The animal visitors were baby fox, baby skunks, and birds that were getting their flight plans; the deer ate and enjoyed everything we planted for them in our vegetable gardens. The deer liked it all and were not finicky eaters.

We visited friends in New York in the late 1970s and in the morning around 4:30 the traffic started, sirens and horns and the beep, beep, beep, back up sounds on the garbage trucks startled us awake and shattered our morning tranquility. We could not go back to sleep, we came home exhausted. We invited these New York friends for a week-end in Trafalgar.

We thought they would enjoy the quiet country. After the first night they complained bitterly. First they couldn't get to sleep because the moon and the stars were so bright they shined through the window, and then they were awakened at 4:30 in the morning by the frogs and birds, which woke up with the sun, and started chirping and bellowing! How do you get any sleep around here they asked? The next evening when the cicadas started to sing with their shrill loud courtship songs it was more nature then New Yorkers could endure. They were happy to leave for their bright artificial lights, and back up sounds of the garbage trucks.

Have you ever seen the small kids ride a merry go round and wave to parents and friends? Or have you seen people in boats as they wave to another boat? That is how the road we live on is like. Everyone waves as you pass by in the car. When you go for a walk you wave to everybody and sometimes you think to yourself, what is all this waving about, but another car goes by and waves so you respond. If you are on our road and someone does not wave, you immediately realize they are visitors, they don't know how to act.

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My kids tried running away from home because they were angry for some small reason. They would start walking down the road and after a few people waved at them they would turn around and come home, there wasn't any place to go and everyone was waving at them so they forgot why they were running away from home and came home in a better mood. The town center is five by six blocks total; it's pretty hard to get lost. Who cares if your GPS doesn't work in the middle of Trafalgar, you don't need it, and you either turn at the only stop light in town or go straight. On the country roads your GPS is not going to help you either, "You have entered an area with no map coverage." So if you do get lost, go back to old school technology, and stop and ask for directions. The only problem with that is you may get into a conversation with a few people, all trying to be helpful. One time when we had a very snowy and icy road, two neighbors stayed at the top of the hill to help push, pull or help cars maneuver the hill as people came from work.

Our library is beautiful and so special. It is like going to a very luxurious Hotel or lounge to sit and read, or use the computers. Each month there are interesting programs and events that are scheduled to keep you informed and entertained. There is a young children's activity room, space for teens, and a community room, used by many organizations. One popular class is the tutoring for senior citizens using new technology; you can impress the youngsters how "nerdy" you are. It is a beautiful asset to the community of Trafalgar and Johnson County.

We are primarily a Christian city with very traditional morals and standards. The Lord's Locker has been on the giving and receiving end of Trafalgar's generosity for 17 years. People and churches and organizations, donate time, money, food and household items. People, who are in need, are helped through this Christian outreach. Trafalgar still has the Old Town feeling, the church bells from Trafalgar Christian Church toll on the half hour and hour in downtown Trafalgar. It always makes you stop to listen and remember when all towns had church bells. We are blessed.

"Heritage" by Josh Etter

Franklin = History. Franklin, Indiana is one of the most historical towns I've ever been in let alone be lucky enough to have had the opportunity to grow up in. Even to this day the town holds certain events, opens certain shops, and preserves certain buildings to maintain its historical value. With buildings such as The Historical Artcraft Theater, M.W. Wadsworth's & Co Fine Chocolates, The Willard, Benjamin's Coffee Shop and many more it's hard to not be drawn in by Franklin's old school feel.

Franklin's most popular event is the Farmers Market which takes place the first weekend from May to October on the southwest corner of Jackson and Jefferson St. They also have "Cruisin' the Courthouse" down on the square. This consists of classic car owners bringing their vehicles down to the square and showing them off to the town. With plenty of restaurants to choose from and the Artcraft playing a carefully selected classic film, it's the place to be on Friday and Saturday nights.

Within the past few years they have started restoring the downtown area by repaving the main roads, installing new lights, fixing dilapidated sidewalks, amongst many more things. After a grueling couple of years they finally completed the main downtown area and the face of Franklin giving a fresh new look to Johnson County's seat. They've added many new businesses to try and bring more people into the downtown area and have succeeded. Although some businesses tend to have a very short lifespan, it still brings people into the heart of Johnson County's most historical city.

Although Franklin has worked extremely hard at preserving the small town feel, they still encourage growth. The Artcraft Theater is starting to add more events to their schedule; they branch out from classic movies and film festivals. Now they are doing musical performances and acts. There are more events taking place on the square; some of which include: Strawberries on the Square, Smoke on the Square, Beer and Bluegrass Festival, and of course the Holiday Lighting Ceremony. As Franklin expands it continues to keep its roots.

To me my community means heritage and never forgetting where you come from. As time has progressed many towns have become so big and have changed 100% from what they began as. Sometimes it's for the better, sometimes it isn't, but Franklin has successfully figured out a way to make a town grow without losing its original small town vibes. I'm very lucky to call Franklin my home.

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"Franklin, My Second Hometown" by Heather M. Grantham

I moved to Johnson County from Fort Wayne in May 1995. Greenwood was my home until August 1996 when I moved to Franklin. Greenwood reminded me of Fort Wayne. I enjoyed spending money at Half-Price Book Store, the movie theaters, the mall, and thrift shops. The day after Thanksgiving I got a big kick watching the local news live video from a helicopter on the Greenwood Mall parking lot. I could see the helicopter from my window and watch what the helicopter was filming on TV! The snow and ice storms that winter made the decision to buy a house in Franklin easy; I would be seven minutes from work, the Franklin Branch Library.

I remember taking weaving classes from Kathy Carlson in the basement of the Johnson County Museum of History and watching houses moved down State Street, past the library. Ritter's Frozen Custard is still a treat in summer and autumn brings my favorite flavor: persimmon. Before they franchised I remember names of Ritter's specialties: the Boilermaker, Hoosier Delight and they still have Cubby Paws. The Mexican restaurant, Mi Pueblo used to be behind Ritter's before they moved to Northwood Plaza. I always enjoy the fajitas and arroz con pollo. The Flying Kite sandwich and sticky buns at Benjamin's Coffee House is still a favorite as well as the beef manhattans at Ann's Restaurant. I miss the restaurant on the square called Barrister's, owned by Arlene Andrews. They had the best salmon croquettes, chocolate sodas and triple layer German chocolate cake. I enjoy visiting the Hoosier Cupboard Candy, Snacks and Ice Cream Store. The root beer floats and dark chocolate turtles are my favorite treats.

I remember when Dave's mom, Mrs. Letterman, came to town to sign her cookbook at the Franklin Lion's Club Fish Fry. The Heartland Film Festival brought actor Jim Caviezel to Franklin College for the world premiere of the 2005 movie "Madison." In 1995 I was thrilled to be invited to Franklin College for a dinner for the Cherokee Nation's Principle Chief Wilma Mankiller. She gave a speech and I was later introduced to her. Who can remember over the past 28 years driving by a Franklin College parking lot and seeing Mr. Basketball 1983, Steve Alford, a Bobby Knight protégé, teaching basketball drills to kids?

A very exciting time for me was being on the set of the movie "Gila!" that was filmed in Johnson County and the surrounding area and produced by Franklin resident Bill Dever and Polyscope Media Group. Many Franklin residents are in it. "Gila!" a 2012 science fiction film, is a remake of "The Giant Gila Monster," 1959. A giant lizard terrorizes a rural Midwest community and creates a path of destruction and death. A group of heroic young people led by local hot rodder and mechanic Chase Winstead comes forward to battle the creature. Johnson County Public Library has copies of the movie to borrow. I was an extra in the movie for fifteen seconds in the last five minutes at the Ashley Drake Inn Historical Inn and Gardens on Jefferson Street. I'm in the background wearing a red shirt and black-rimmed cat eyeglasses.

The actor who played the garage owner, Rich Komenich, stood opposite me in the scene. I was given a clean drinking glass half filled with warm eggnog that had been sitting on a table for several hours. Rich was a big guy with a booming voice and carried a flask filled with what he called apple juice. For his scenes he had been sipping from the flask most of the afternoon. Rich and I were told by the director of the movie, Jim Wynorski, to silently chat. Rich was to pour a little of the flask contents into my glass and I was to drink it. We did the scene three times, each time my glass getting fuller and fuller. I did not drink the mixture of warm eggnog and apple juice. I did, however, put my lips on the glass and tip it as if I were drinking. I was afraid Jim wouldn't yell "cut" (stop acting) in time. I tried sending telepathic messages to him to yell "cut." I finally realized he didn't want me to drink the nasty liquid in my glass, either. Jim always yelled "cut" just as the warm concoction rolled to my lips. I had so much fun!

Something has baffled me since moving to Johnson County. I am astonished by the number of haunted places in Franklin and I have even witnessed strange occurrences and sounds. There are residents in Franklin who have told me they have also seen strange occurrences. Franklin College, The Willard, Artcraft Theatre, Province Park, and a few houses and businesses on Jefferson Street have been called haunted. I know several people who say their house is haunted. Even a few employees at the Franklin Branch Library (including me) say the library is haunted. Next time you visit the library ask me for a tour of the where the strange occurrences and noises happened. I guarantee you'll laugh when I tell you about the flushing toilet.

"Home Is Where Your Heart Is" by Grace Gregory

Many people believe a sense of community can only be achieved through enormous acts of union, valor, and compassion. Although that is somewhat true, it is also very false. Community is in the simple acts of kindness in everyday life. Holding the door for a stranger walking into the local grocery store, offering to shovel an elderly person's driveway, attending the high school football game just to support your classmates, or your neighbors little boy, or your cousin. Community is all around us, we breathe the same air and celebrate the same triumphs and mourn the same deaths. Although I am now in college, and have moved away from home, I can still feel the bond I share with all of my friends and family in the small town of Whiteland, Indiana. When I was in eighth grade, there was a tragic car accident killing two of my brother's junior classmates. In a US headlining story, this would be the part where I say Johnson County came together and raised one million dollars for the families, but that is not true. Instead, we did something worth far more. Everyone came together to support one another, to buy t-shirts and mourn the deaths together. There is still a saying passed around at Whiteland High School, "Give the gift of you, slow down and buckle up." We showed our support daily, and still do. Years later, it is still almost impossible to drive the road where the tragedy occurred, and not pay a silent tribute.

But, even that is an extreme example of community. It is the day-to-day events that make Whiteland my home. My brother played football all throughout high school, and my mom never missed a game. But even four years after he graduated, and months after I did, it isn't uncommon to see her sitting in the stands, cheering on boys she barely knows. It isn't the nachos, or the halftime show, or even her love of the game that compels her to attend these games. It is her sense of pride, and love for Whiteland and all that it encompasses. Her love of the people she barely knows that fill the stands colored head to toe in blue and orange. I know that this isn't just a trait of my hometown, either. It is all over Johnson County, all over Indiana, all over the US.

Sometimes when I find myself feeling lonely at Purdue, I think of my home. Home is a place that you are always welcomed with open arms. Home is a place of comfort, a place for family and friends, cookouts in the summer and sledding in the winter. Home is a place where you are never alone. Home is where you can walk into Shell gas station and see three people you know. It is where you have the menu at Kacey's memorized. It is where you know every single person that works at Rascal's Fun Zone, Kroger, and McDonald's. As cliché as it sounds, home is where your heart is. That is community, and Whiteland, Indiana has it by the truckload.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Orrel Jenkins

When I arrived, bag and baggage, at the Indiana Masonic Home, I felt I was merely changing my address. I left a one bedroom apartment in Greenwood and I moved into the same. It was December and Christmas decorations were in abundance both inside and on the grounds. What a beautiful welcome, I thought. I was completely alone and only knew one other person who lived here but I quickly made new friends and within the next year I came to realize I had done much more than change my address.

As in all communities, there are pluses and minuses but I must say in my case the pluses far outweigh the minuses. The so-called "little things" which are freely done here by the staff are greatly appreciated. For example, both our housekeeping and maintenance personnel are always eager to be of assistance when problems arise in our apartments and houses, even to the point of repairing worn furniture items or TV problems, which are more detailed than we can understand. You get the idea. Also friends help friends in many ways. I personally needed a car to replace one I had sold thinking I wouldn't be driving anymore. After a few short weeks of looking, I got just what I wanted from a friend of a friend, problem solved.

So, living here is definitely a give and take proposition. It's not all give and not all take. I have found a common bond here at the Indiana Masonic Home with friends of all ages and backgrounds. My love for music has given me a path to follow and be with others of like interest. Also my love of handcraft items has made a similar path to follow. Personal interests are encouraged by our activities directors, making our lives more enjoyable. All of this matters along with the peace of mind that we are secure and protected, living comfortably for the rest of our time here on earth. I truly love living here at the Indiana Masonic Home.

"The Disaster That Brought Us Together" by Elizabeth Muir

My community of Franklin means a lot to me. You can learn a lot from your community. Franklin has taught me that when a natural disaster strikes the whole community will come together to help one another. My community also taught me that it didn't matter who you are, where you come from, when you need help my community will come together and help.

In the year of 2008 when the flooding happened, my house and most of the houses around me had gotten water damaged. I was 14 when it happened; my house was one of the more fortunate ones. Our basement was the only thing that got flooded. It was bad because that was where all of our water was controlled from. My dad started to bail it out with a little bucket by around ten o'clock in the morning. I could remember most of my male neighbors coming over with buckets to bail out my basement. When I saw them I could not help but think why were they helping? Didn't they have their own houses to worry about and take care of?

One of the neighbors had the idea to make a line up the basement stairs and passed the buckets up the line to be dumped,

a job that would have taken all day if my dad would have had to bail all the water out by himself. It took less time because my neighbors were willing to help. After we finished bailing the water we moved on to the next house that needed help.

As we moved from house to house, helping, I realized many of these houses were not going to be safe to live in. So many families were now homeless and with most of their property destroyed. I can remember helping a lot of people that day. I realized while I was helping all those people that it didn't matter that I knew none of the people I was helping. All that mattered was that we as a community could come together when the time called for it. The feeling I got from helping all those people has stuck with me into adulthood. That is the reason my community of Franklin means so much to me.

"What My Community Means To Me" by Carol Ogborne

I am a resident of the Indiana Masonic Home and I feel that it is a community all its own and I would like to tell you a little bit about it. It is a campus of many buildings that provides living quarters for hundreds of people in different forms of decline in their lives. It meets the needs of everyone who is a resident in that community. It provides a home, food, entertainment, medical care, counseling, friendship, anything that is needed, that need is met. Most of the people employed in this community are very caring people. They are patient, kind, hard working and loving. That goes for the nurses, the aides, the administration, the housekeeping staff and the maintenance people.

My community means so much to me because it provides me a home, doctor and nursing care, church and Bible study, activities every day (all day), friendships, three meals a day (good meals a day) and any need I have is met. Not only are my physical needs met, but we do lots of fun things. We have ridden a hot air balloon, we have milked goats, we go to different restaurants all the time for lunch and evening outings, we do crafts. We play Euchre, all kinds of board games and other card games, we do exercise games, we have a huge family dinner at Thanksgiving, we have big parties at other holidays, and we are always busy. My community means love, laughter, good care, and happiness.

"What My Community Means to Me" by Marvin Reed

When it became time to retire there was only one choice which was available to me. So I contacted the Indiana Masonic Home located in the Franklin, Indiana community to find out what the requirements for admission were. After finding this information I came here on a visit where the staff along with the residents told everything was wonderful and that moving here would provide me with a wonderful place for my retirement years.

I asked about what were some of the negative aspects of moving here, but unfortunately no individual person (either staff or resident) were willing to discuss anything negative about residing here. This seemed strange to me because there are negative aspects to any place where one lives and I wanted to obtain an idea what these were before moving here. Because of financial and health problems, I decided the only option was for me to move to the Indiana Masonic Home. Because of personal quirks I thought there would definitely be a period of adjustment.

In order to facilitate this decision I made a list of pros and cons in moving. Some of these were very simple while others were more complicated. Simple decisions such as no shoveling snow and lawn care were considered along with no more upkeep on the house, paying property taxes were pros. While leaving the area where I grew up meant losing contact with family and friends, along with not being able to do whatever I wanted in decorating the house, burning incense and candles were considered negative aspects by me. Residents having no say in regards to the rules and regulations under which one lives was also considered to be a negative aspect because I feel as though anyone should have a right to have input on any decisions affecting their lives and welfare.

Having to sell the house where I had lived over half my life was also a very hard decision to make even though it needed repairs which I was unable to afford. It was also heartache for me because of the memories (both good and bad) which were connected with it. After consulting with both family and friends we decided the only logical choice I had in order to have a longer, enjoyable, satisfactory life in retirement was to sell and move to the Indiana Masonic Home Retirement Community.

This was indeed a trying time for me. I'm certain the reader will understand that after a lifetime of over sixty years when I left my former city of residence, I cried every mile when traveling here to my new home. Even though there are many staff and residents who have tried their best to help me overcome the loss of those "back home" there are many whom I miss. There were three very close friends whom I considered my family who have since left this Plane of Existence; I miss more than words can ever state.

Receiving the news they had passed on were very sad days indeed. However, each reader will understand how this feeling of loss affects those who are left behind. In a sense I think this is a sad situation but I am thankful the memory of the

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last words said to and by these three very special Lodge Sisters and Brothers were "I Love You." This knowledge has brought comfort to me many times and it always will.

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The Indiana Masonic Home also provides its residents to go on various outings and activities which are very enjoyable. As an example after moving here, I had the privilege to take part in an outing to see The Glenn Miller Band at the Murat Theatre. This was a "once in a lifetime" opportunity which many of us enjoyed. I grew up listening to Big Band music so this outing remains a significant memory which will never be forgotten. If I hadn't moved here this opportunity would never have occurred. Trips to local Civic theatres where plays and musicals are performed by local talent are also available for those wishing to attend. Personally, I feel that local talent is just as good – sometimes even better – than some professionals which are on television.

There are certain very enjoyable activities for Masonic Home residents to enjoy which is part of the Franklin Indiana community. One of my personal favorites is the Franklin Community Band concerts. I personally enjoy band music and this band has many members who are able to provide "top notch" entertainment. I would suggest to anyone who enjoys good band music and who have not heard any of the Franklin Community Band performances, please give them a try. You will be in for an evening of great music. One other community activity which is very enjoyable is the Fourth of July, Independence Day celebration. As U.S. citizens it seems very important to celebrate the freedom which our forefathers fought so hard for. Veterans Day celebrations are also needed to honor those ladies and gentlemen who have, are and will continue to defend our freedoms that we enjoy. All gave some and some gave all, so thanking along with respecting any veteran is the proper thing to do.

Attending Franklin College sporting events (especially basketball) provides a great opportunity to see and enjoy live games. There is a much different atmosphere in watching a basketball game live than on television. I think the residents of Franklin, Indiana should be proud of their local Franklin College. Not just for their sports but for allowing college students to receive a great education.

To you, the reader of my story, I want to say a "Thank you very much" for taking the time spent to hopefully gain a little information about what insignificant memories of my adventures here at The Indiana Masonic Home which is a part of the Franklin, Indiana Community. May your life be filled with Hope, Health, Happiness, Peace and Joy. May you always be Blessed, Protected along with receiving Comfort from The Deity.

"Just Another Life in Franklin" by Sarah Ryker

For some people it is easy to fit in; but not for me. Ever since I was in elementary school I had never really fit in with the other kids. I was shy and didn't talk to anyone. I always had my nose stuck in a book. The place where I could be myself and not care what others thought was when I went to the fair grounds.

Every summer since I can remember I have been in 4-H, and unlike most kids I didn't like being cooped up inside sitting on a couch doing nothing. So I would be involved in many 4-H projects. Every year I would complete well over 10 projects and I enjoyed them all. 4-H taught me that there was more to life than just TV and that I could actually fit in somewhere. Through Junior Leaders I made many friends from all over the county. That is what started my love for helping people and doing what I could to help the community.

My Girl Scout Troop also would help by making hats and scarves for the United Way and also running a canned food drive for the food pantry. When I got into high school I became more involved. I joined the National Honors Society my junior year, and I am still in it today. The community of Franklin has helped me find my place where I belong. It has been one of the best things in my life.

"My Community" by Maggie Sluder

I call my apartment home. When I leave any activity, I say "I'm going home." That's the way I feel about the I.M.H. The day I came to look I.M.H. over, I immediately got a soft feeling all over. That's the only way I can describe this place, I am home.

I'm looked after by people who care. I'm fed good food most of the time. It's like any place you would go to eat. I don't have to cook, do laundry, wash dishes or clean my place. So why wouldn't anyone say home? Come by and look it over. I would be glad to show you around.

What My Community Means To Me? Living in a place with other friendly people, that's the main thing. Like others are, having a big yard, tall trees and flowers everywhere. It's like living in a hotel.

The help schedules trips to movies, shopping, sightseeing, ball games, fishing trips and others we ask to get together. This is a community that helps each other when the help is needed. We have volunteers that work in Reception Rooms, and Supply Rooms. They sort mail and put mail in each one's mailbox and see that outgoing mail is sent out each day.

My paper is short but I said in few words what my community means to me. I'm happy to be living in the Indiana Masonic Home.

"If You Are a Retiree Like Me" by Alice Young

If you are a retiree like me you would enjoy the Active Adult Center in Franklin. Activities galore, whatever you are searching for, most likely you will find it here. Traveling is what I like to do best and they have numerous trips for seniors each season of the year. Some of these trips are only a few hours; others are 4-5 hours long. Some trips include lunch in the cost, but most of the time, you are responsible for your own lunch costs. Some of the out of town trips can be 2-4 days in length. One particular trip I took with the group was to Washington, D.C. in May, 2013. It was awesome. We traveled on a tour bus with an experienced driver. The trip was well planned and we had a great time.

The Active Adult Center has numerous activities for us to enjoy. A pool table is located here for those who enjoy this game. Exercise, walking, quilting, computers, cards, Bingo, board games, silk flower design classes, craft classes such as jewelry making, Easter and other holiday crafts. Computer classes are available for a fee but are one hour in length. Mornings are energetic with coffee and chat time. There are Birthday celebrations with cake and ice cream, Valentine's Day get-togethers, a Spring Fling with lunch provided and fun activities, dances occasionally, a stage for performances, storytelling, a piano for sing-a-longs, a well-stocked book lending library and so much more.

There is a small charge for some of the classes, but most are free to members. A licensed driver transports members to activities for a small charge. Some of the places we have visited are: Oldenburg, Indiana (famous for their fried chicken), Madison, Indiana for lunch and sightseeing, Savannah, Georgia, Shipshewana, Indiana, Branson, Missouri, and Indoor Flea Market in Louisville, Kentucky and many others.

Some of the trips in Spring 2014 were: Culvers then a free movie at "Yes" cinema in Columbus, a history tour at the Scottish Rite Cathedral followed by lunch at their "Double Eagle Cafe." Local attractions such as the Johnson County Historical Museum have much to offer if you want to do research on family connections. Blood pressure checks are available at certain times each month and representatives from local health organizations come in periodically to talk and answer questions about health issues for seniors.

The center has a pitch-in luncheon once a month. If you bring a dish, you do not have to pay. Otherwise, it costs \$3.00 per person. The staff takes care of getting it all together in the kitchen unless the food is provided by one of our local merchants. Many of the luncheons are provided for the center at no charge to the members. Many items are donated by our local business people. Some of those include Christmas decorations, silk flowers for design classes, bread and food items. The center also has a small raised garden where tomatoes and other foods are grown for our enjoyment and use. If you are a Franklin City Resident, the cost of membership is very low. Other Johnson County residents are welcome, but will pay a little extra for membership. A fellowship hall/kitchen is available for rental for receptions, parties or showers.

The center is staffed with knowledgeable people who enjoy working with seniors: In 2014, Pam Gibson, Director; Bev Bonsett, Office Manager. Program Coordinators: Rusty Hughes, Linda Hougland, Camille Humbles, and Cathy Bailey.

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