The DCU motto “People come first. Do the right thing. Make a difference.” is a great maxim to live by, and I have been doing so throughout my high school career. I try to focus on helping people, doing the right thing whenever possible, and making as much of a positive difference as I can. I do this through my Church, environmental club, robotics club, and personal volunteering at Special Olympics.

My church has a few days dedicated to volunteer work annually. Early this past year, we volunteered around a few community parks to help with cleanup and maintenance. The year before, we focused on helping a soup kitchen by volunteering to clean and serve the guests. At every volunteer opportunity, we focus on helping those who need it. We do the right thing by helping when nobody else will, and we try to make a difference in our community.

Another great opportunity to make a change is in our school’s environmental club. We have made quite a few environmentally healthy changes to our community. We collaborated with another club to set up compost bins to reuse organic waste. We also shined a light on our school’s poor recycling habits and had them changed them for the better. All the changes we make are focused on the students and staff of Merrimack High School. We are trying to make a safer, healthier, and more environmentally conscious school. Our most recent project has involved removing Styrofoam trays from our lunchroom. We learned about the negative effects of Styrofoam on both the environment and on the human body and decided that a change had to be made. We are currently working on meeting with district administrators to make the change. Our main goal is to make a positive difference in our high school, so we leave it better than it was when we were freshmen.

The school robotics team has also allowed me to make a difference in the community by helping to distribute no-touch-tools during the pandemic. Some members of the team own 3D printers and volunteered to print tools to do everyday tasks to prevent contact and slow the spread. I helped distribute these around during our team events. We decided that it would be important to make a positive difference by making everyday interactions like opening and closing doors and pressing elevator buttons safer.

One last volunteer opportunity I take advantage of is for special Olympics softball. A few of my friends and I had been umpiring our local softball games for a few years, and we had heard about a volunteer opening to umpire Special Olympics softball. This experience was tons of fun, and it was great seeing everybody play a game they love. I loved helping out, and I have continued to volunteer for 3 years. Sadly, it was canceled last year due to the pandemic, but I plan to continue volunteering once the tournament is brought back safely.

I am very thankful to have been given the chance to help my community over the past four years, and I hope to continue to live the DCU motto to prioritize people, do the right thing, and make a difference.