

Rory J. Weichbrod Scholarship

As I enter my teenage years, I am more aware of peer pressure from friends and other people. I sometimes worry about what other people think of me and it affects how I feel about myself. The results of peer pressure usually have negative outcomes as I am making decisions based upon those bad feelings. As a seventh grader, I have already experienced how peer pressure can be a bad thing. I have seen my classmates behave differently because they feel pressure from others. I have seen them treat others badly. This should not happen. I realize that my classmates and I are at the age where we can make a difference if we are not negatively influenced by peer pressure. When faced with peer pressure, I need to focus on better decision making rather than following what others are doing.

In order for me not to be negatively influenced by peer pressure, I recognize several things that I can do to avoid a bad decision. First, I need to be independent. I need to make a decision based upon my upbringing and parent's guidance. My parents have always provided me with the knowledge to make good decisions. They have taught me the importance of considering other's feelings in all my actions. I have found that if I place other's feelings first, the outcome is usually positive. Second, in addition to my parents, I have found several teachers here at St. John the Baptist as good examples and mentors for me as I finish my seventh grade year. Mrs. Smith and Mrs. Salkeld make the subjects of science and pre-algebra fun and enjoyable. Both teachers push me to think critically and think "outside of the box." I know that if I went to them with a problem, they would give me great advice. Last, to avoid peer pressure, I can always follow the example of my baseball coach Steve Lake. Even when we lost games, he always made us reflect on the good things that happened in the game. This has taught me that I need to have a positive

Scott Toves
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outlook on life and not focus on the bad things. Focusing on the bad things sometimes encourages bad behavior, which is why Coach Lake makes us say one good thing about our teammates at the end of the game on the bench.

The good examples from my mentors have made me realize that actions speak louder than words. I realize that peer pressure can make me do things that I would not normally do and alter my decisions. All of my mentors have shown me great examples of how to behave. None of the examples have involved drugs, alcohol, and violence. This is why I know that when pressured to do something involving drugs, alcohol, or violence, I need to do some self reflection first. I find that if I stop and think, it helps me to make the right decision because I consider all of the people who have given me good examples in my life so far. I find that the examples from my mentors have shown me how to consider others. I realize that if I focus on others, I can do good things for myself and my community. This type of reflection will help me serve my community in the future because I will take their feelings into account.

In conclusion, I know that I will have challenges becoming a teenager. It is sometimes scary to think that I will have to make decisions on my own soon. I am confident that the examples from my parents, teachers, and mentors will set me on the right path in life.