

Name: Madi Myers

Grade: 12th Grade

School: Wendell High School

State: Idaho

Always Give a Hand Up

Warm. I can feel the hot sun baking into my skin, coating every ounce of exposed land around me in its vicious glow. The water that once ran down my skin is slowly evaporating into the hot evening air. My little sister is jumping on the trampoline, giggling and slipping around as the hose pumps water through the sprinkler that is placed under the trampoline's base. I watch her as she begs me to come and play with her once more, her red coils of curly hair bouncing as she slides around like a train that has come off its tracks. I sit on the back deck and watch my dad grill hamburgers while my mom tends to my baby brother on his shade-covered play mat in the corner of the yard, this is true happiness.

My name is Madi Myers and these summer memories are baked into my mind. Moments of my sister being an innocent little girl jumping on the trampoline and my brother playing with toy trucks are the moments that drive me to be the best I can be. I have dedicated my whole life to protecting my little siblings. When I was eight years old I was abandoned by my mother who was a severe drug addict and shortly after my father became ill. My siblings were only five and one at the time that all of this happened. I knew then that I would do anything in my power to make sure that they were able to enjoy their childhoods, even if it meant giving up mine. I remember cooking them dinner, playing hide and seek outside, and teaching them how to climb

trees. I remember when my father passed away; I knew I had to step up and be the shoulder for them to cry on despite my own pain from losing him.

Years later, I'm now eighteen and my siblings are fourteen and ten. I am about to graduate high school and attend the University of Idaho this coming fall. I will graduate having taken almost every due credit class offered at my high school, given blood at every Red Cross blood drive, participated in four varsity sports, and volunteered as a youth counselor at my local church summer camp. I have worked hard not only for myself, but to show my siblings that despite everything that we have gone through, college and success are possible. I want to be the first one in my family to ever attend college. My goal is to get my master's degree in psychology and become a youth substance abuse counselor. I want to help kids that are dealing with substance abuse and make an impact on the other kids in my community that may be struggling.