

20th Kindest Kansas Citian Essay Contest

Hank B.-Age 9

Nominated: Susanne Clements-Neighbor

My nominee for the Kindest Kansas Citian is my neighbor and friend, Susanne Clements. This is why. Susanne has lived close to me for eight years. For five of these years I have known she has existed. During the time we have been neighbors I have seen her do many kind deeds.

Susanne Clements offers a helping hand to neighbors. For example, she shovels the driveway of our older neighbors when they can't do it themselves. She helps catch pets when they run away from home. She has done this for me and many other friends. She is an animal lover and does not want to see any of them get hurt. I have even seen her plant flowers for neighbors who are sad.

Susanne Clements is also a kind friend to many people. For instance, she loves babies and always has a special gift for a new one. Another thing she does that is kind and friendly is that she supports fundraisers. She helps kids by buying what they sell. She has bought trash bags from me for scouts and has helped me and others by giving ten dollars to my hot chocolate stand for Haiti.

Susanne is not only helpful and kind but she is also great at sharing. She shares her kids outgrown toys with younger neighbors. In the spring she shares her garden plants with neighbors who like to garden.

When Susanne Clements goes to work she uses all of these good skills by teaching students at Roseland Elementary where she is an aide. She tries to make kids' day at school a good one. In the summer Susanne teaches swimming lessons. She wants kids to be strong swimmers and have fun. She always seems to have time to help others.

As you can see, Susanne Clements is a very kind Kansas Citian. If you were to meet her you would know right away by her kind voice and happy face.

20th Kindest Kansas Citian Essay Contest

Ana C.-Age 11

Nominated: Mrs. Linda Giacalone

To me, Mrs. Linda Giacalone is my Kindest Kansas Citian because she has taught me so much about love and caring about other people. She has made a huge impact on me and the way I treat other people. Mrs. Linda Giacalone is my sixth grade teacher at Prairie Elementary. She has our class say a pledge every day and that pledge is “I am the only person who can decide what I will do and be, I am in charge of my learning and behavior; today I pledge to do my best. I will practice kindness and love in all I say and do.” She is the only teacher I have ever had that teaches as much about kindness to others as learning about academics. Before I met Mrs. Linda Giacalone, I didn’t really think about how I treated other people and the way I said stuff to them. But now I can see how I can hurt people by saying rude stuff to them even if I thought it was a joke. Now I think before I act, and I ask myself “what will happen if I do this? Is this the right thing to do? What will people think of me if I do this?” Mrs. Giacalone is also super funny; she makes me laugh every day. She is one of the funniest people I have ever met. Mrs. Linda Giacalone always tells every student she loves them all in different ways. She believes and has taught me that there’s something unique about every single one of us. She has made a huge impact on my friends, me, and my family. I wish I could give something back to show her how much I appreciate all she has done. She is more than a friend, she is more than funny, she is my Kindest Kansas Citian.

20th Kindest Kansas Citian Essay Contest

Jameria C.-Age 16

Nominated: Debra Callaway-Teacher, Coach, and Friend

To me, Debra Callaway is my kindest Kansas Citian because she is the most generous person I've ever met. Not only is she my teacher but she is also my friend and my coach. Since the beginning of this year, of 2009, she has let me and some other students run charitable runs with her. She pays the admission for us, she picks us up and drops us off after the run. She also treats us to breakfast when we are out with her. Debra is just the sweetest soul. She makes me feel good about myself when I'm running a race or doing an assignment in class. She always wants to help someone. Did I mention that she donated a kidney to someone in need. I never had a true role model until I became to know Debra for who she really is. She is motivating, exciting, fun, gregarious and she is a Pollyanna. She always has new ideas or activities fro the kids at Horizon's to do. She is the Kindest Kansas Citian. I'm sure that every kid in my school would say the same.

20th Kindest Kansas Citian Essay Contest

Eric C.-Age 9

Nominated: Fran Wheeler-Adult

Fran Wheeler is the person who I have nominated for “Kindest Kansas Citian” because, she packs backpacks full of food for students that might not have food in the weekends. But that is not the only thing. When I was sick my dad had an interview, and my mom was at a meeting, Mrs. Fran let me stay at her house for a couple of hours so that I wouldn’t be home alone with a fever of 102.5 F.

Mrs. Fran shows me that there are people needy even in our neighborhoods. So why don’t we just be kind to everyone instead of those who look like they need it more? Everyone has their own small problems so just be kind. She donates time at church. She even drives elderly people to church. She brought the “Back Snack” program to the Olathe Schools. Every week 350 needy students are helped.

Small things can mean lots to anybody. Kindness is very important.

Thank you Mrs. Fran!

20th Kindest Kansas Citian Essay Contest

By: Hannah D.-Age 9

Nominated: Kelsey Shuman-Adult Friend through Youth Friends

Mill Valley High School in Shawnee has a program called Youth Friends. These kinds of programs are very popular and we even hear about them on TV. The advertisement usually asks “do you have an hour a week to spend with a child?” I’m sure you have seen this type of commercial or heard about a program similar to this one. Kelsey Schuman signed up with the Youth Friends program this year but there is no way she could have known how much she would influence my life.

First, let me tell you a little about myself. My name is Hannah Darling and I am 9 years old. I am in 4th grade at Clear Creek Elementary. I have lots of friends. I love dancing, singing and gymnastics. My favorite subjects are science and writing. As you can see, I am a very good speller. LOL.

When I heard I was going to be in Youth Friends I was so excited. I have not been involved in many activities so I was looking forward to meeting Kelsey. I was not disappointed. Kelsey is amazing! She made me feel at ease right away and became a very good friend to me. When we meet we do projects and talk. She has made me feel so special. I think Kelsey really cares about me. She doesn’t just do her job and leave. She has stayed with me after school to wait for my ride. She emails me and shares details about her life. But, most of all, she is very easy for me to talk to and gives me good advice.

I was going through a hard time and even though I don’t tell many people about my problems I decided to tell Kelsey. She made me feel so much better. She told me no matter what happened she would help me through it. She has made me feel so good about myself and has given me the confidence to face my situation and to do the best I can. I am so blessed to have Kelsey as a friend. When I told my aunt about Kelsey she said it reminded her of Eleanor Roosevelt’s famous quote “many people will walk in and out of your life, but only true friends will leave footprints in your heart.” I am not old enough to have many footprints but Kelsey sure has left some big footprints on my heart. Either she is a very good friend or she has very big feet!!

20th Kindest Kansas Citian Essay Contest

Grace F.-Age 10

Nominated: Ted Eve-Bus Driver

To me, Ted Eve is my Kindest Kansas Citian because he has a heart of gold. Every day he gives you a smile that will warm your heart and a hi five. It's not much, but in the past I've had bus drivers that can't even remember my name. Ted always puts the kids first and every Friday he does a drawing. He draws two names from the jar and the winners get a dollar. For Valentine's Day everyone gets one flower to give to their mom's and tell them they love them. For the people who didn't ride the bus that day, he gets a flower, rings their door bell, and gives it to them by hand. Another thing he did was came to my house and fixed an electric thing in our wall for no money. And every time you give him something even as little as a thank card he spends the time to write a long letter saying the nicest things and giving you the nicest thank you. He said he's only going to drive the bus next year because he loved the kids and me. He calls me his little angle and I take that straight to my heart. He's had some big challenges in his life and he would never want anyone to suffer like he did. Ted's not any old bus driver he's like part of the family for everyone. His little smile brightens up everyone's day. Have you ever heard of a bus driver do any of that coming straight from their heart? I know Ted's the Kindest Kansas Citian I've met.

(P.S.-I just couldn't fit ay more but there is tons more he's done!)

20th Kindest Kansas Citian Essay Contest

Maggie Gallaway

Nominated: Jason Kelley-Adult Friend to Family

I want to tell you about the person I think is the Kindest Kansas Citian. My friend Carl was in a bad car accident last year. There is a person that I think showed us what it is like to help other people. Jason Kelley is a paramedic who was at the place where Carl was in an accident. Jason and the other paramedics had to get Carl out of the car fast so they could get him to the hospital. He later told Carl that it was one of the worst accidents he had ever had to work. Jason helps save lives every day, but it was what he did after the accident that makes me think Jason is the Kindest Kansas Citian.

After Carl got to the hospital, Jason came up to Carl's mom, Angel, and helped comfort her and explain what was going on. Later Angel wanted to find out who the kind paramedic was, and she heard it was Jason. She called to thank him. Jason came up to the hospital several times while Carl was in the hospital in a coma during the next month. One time he even brought his whole family.

Jason helped Angel understand some of the big medical words and explained what Carl was going through. This was really good for Angel. When Jason learned they would be leaving to go to Nebraska for rehabilitation, he came to the hospital before he left. He gave Angel a book to help her understand about accidents and injuries. During the times he visited, Jason learned a lot about Carl from pictures on the wall. Carl is a big North Carolina basketball fan, and when they won the national championship, Jason sent Carl a t-shirt with all the years they won. He sent it to Nebraska for Carl.

Angel kept Jason informed about Carl's progress through text messages and email. When Carl and Angel returned from Nebraska a few months later, Jason came to visit, and helped find people that could work on Angel's house to make it better for Carl. Angel and Carl got to visit Jason at the fire station, and Jason showed Carl the ambulance he rode in the night of the accident. Now almost a year later, Jason is Facebook friends with Angel and Carl, which they really enjoy.

Jason went way beyond his job, because his job really ended a long time ago when he took Carl to the hospital in the ambulance. This friend showed me what a kind and compassionate person really is. I'm writing this because Jason Kelley is very important to me and my family because of what he did for Carl and Angel.

20th Kindest Kansas Citian Essay Contest

Brett G.-Age 11

Nominated: Mort Beck-Adult Friend

To me, Mort Beck is my Kindest Kansas Citian because he has spent his retirement volunteering to help our community and people all over the world. Mort Beck, a 91 year old man, has volunteered in my mom's first grade classroom and at her school for 18 years. Twice a week he spends the morning helping kids learn their math or learn how to read. He also acts as an assistant to my mom too. Besides volunteering at my mom's school he also spends time working with kids in the inner city. Also, he works weekly at the local food pantry. If that wasn't enough, every year he goes with a team of nurses and doctors to the Dominican Republic to help take care of ill and poor people there. Mr. Mort always remembers everyone's birthdays, anniversaries and all the kid's special days too. I think Mr. Mort inspires me and everyone to be kind and take care of others. This is why Mort Beck should be the 2010 Kindest Kansas Citian.

20th Kindest Kansas Citian Essay Contest

Stephanie H.-Age 18

Nominated: Shaunetta Ledbetter-Mentor

The person that I nominate for my role model of kindness is my mentor, Shaunetta Ledbetter. Shaunetta has been working with me ever since I was 15 years old. Netta took me into her home when my own mom gave up on me and put me on the streets. I was in a foster home out in Raytown when Netta started to work with me. Netta taught me what was good and what was bad. From the ages of 13 till 16, I used to steal and lie a lot, but when I was working with Netta, that was one of the main things that she had to work with me on. She loved me as if I was her own daughter; she didn't care about what other people said about her or the things that they asked her about why would you take in a little white girl and not a black girl? She told them that it's not about the color because we all are the same. She bought me anything that I wanted because she didn't like me to steal from the store when I was with her. Netta has been working with me for 3 years. Netta has made the perfect bond with me. I have never disrespected her or treated her bad. She gives me all the respect, love, caring, and kindness that a young child/adult should have in life. I am so lucky that I have her in my life. I do not know what I would do without her. Since Netta has been a good role model and an amazing god mother to me, she has set me straight where I'm on the track in my life for my future goals. She showed me the right way-the way that myself and others need to be treated. I am a blessed young woman that is grateful to have this beautiful, loving, caring, and most respectful woman in my life now. Even though she is not able to have kids of her own I am willing to be her daughter. Netta claims me as her own daughter even though I'm not and I claim her as my second hand mother who never gave up on me. I love the person the new me that Shaunetta Ledbetter helped me change into. For what it's worth, I am willing to do whatever it takes to make sure that she stays in my life forever.

20th Kindest Kansas Citian Essay Contest

Amani H.-Age 14

Nominated: Cicely Riley-Adult Friend

Cicely Riley deserves to be recognized for who she is and what she does. She's a well rounded person who exudes strength, intelligence, and compassion. She's one of the biggest influences in my life. I don't know how I could ever repay her for what she's done for me. She has a really big impact on my life.

Cicely is a single mom with twins. Her and my mom have been best friends since high school.. She works two jobs and is very educated. She graduated from Central Missouri State University (CMSU) with two degrees in Criminal Justice and Psychology. One of the places Cicely works at is Spofford, which is a place that helps wand houses troubled kids. She also works at the Missouri Department of Corrections as a supervisor and she runs two halfway houses.

When Cicely has free time she volunteers as a big sister. She works with children who have mental disabilities and teen mothers. For the children with mental disabilities she helps them adapt in normal circumstances and teaches them different things. With the teen mothers, Cicely helps them take care of their babies and teaches them how to become more responsible mothers.

Cicely is like an aunt to me. I have a really close relationship with her. My dad died when I was four years old and my mom became a single mom and needed help so she's always been there. Even though she's really busy she finds time to still hang out with me. If my mom needs anything or she needs help cicely is always there. She always tells me stories about her community services and what it does to better the community.

Honestly, I don't think Cicely realizes all the things that she does. She loves to help other people and she never puts herself first. Cicely will do anything just to help someone. I hope to be that kind of a person and more when I get older. When I first heard about this award Cicely was the first person who I thought of. This is my way of acknowledging her. To me cicely Riley is the Kindest Kansas Citian.

20th Kindest Kansas Citian Essay Contest

Lindsey H.-Age 16

Nominated: Wendy Tschirhart-Adult Friend

I would nominate Wendy Tschirhart for a person that has made a difference in my life. She is more like a best friend to me. She was a former neighbor of mine when I lived in an apartment with my mom. I have been through a lot in life. Not only has she given me her full attention when I pour my heart out and needed somebody to listen, she has given me a helping hand. Wendy showed me that I was never alone. Being a 15 year old, to have an adult friend who cared, she was everything to me. I appreciate her to the fullest. My destiny is to sing. I enjoy singing. She supported that and still, today, encourages me everyday to chase my dreams. This wonderful woman has made a major impact on my life. Due to things happening in my life, I began to stop going to school, and my parents could no longer force me to. She made me realize that school is everything today. One day she told me, "Lindsey, never will I down grade you for what you are doing, but I want you to know that you are not taking the right path. Look where I am now." And she would tell me, "I do not have any children today because of all the smoking and drugging I did, the same things you are doing; it will not help you through life." I have learned a lot from her and will never forget her, for she helped me stay on track, when nobody else would. I think this woman should be recognized for her kindness to a young child and helped me turn my life around.

20th Kindest Kansas Citian Essay Contest

Natalie H.-Age 11

Nominated: Marcia Merrick-Adult Friend

To me, Marcia Merrick is my Kindest Kansas Citian because she is helping others less fortunate than herself every single day of her life. Everyday, Marcia gets up around 4:30am. She then makes about four hundred peanut butter sandwiches for the homeless people. She drives to the inner city, looking under bridges, and such, wherever the homeless may live. Marcia distributes the sandwiches in a bag with a bottle of water and some sort of fruit among these people. But she doesn't only help the homeless; she will help anyone who needs it. For example, my family's stove was broken. We were going through a rough time where we just couldn't afford a new stove. Only one of the three burners worked. Marcia had organized a group called, "Reaching Out," for helping people in need. They helped us and bought us a new stove. My family didn't have to pay one penny? It was a blessing to us, to know that so many people are there to help. There was this family, a father and two girls; they had no food, no nothing. The only thing they had in the whole refrigerator was half of a can of tomato soup, that was it. Marcia went to them and asked if they needed anything, anything at all, if they wanting something special. Normally a regular kid will say, "I want a toy, or a book." After Marcia asked that, one of the girls replied that she wanted one bar of soap, that was it, no toys, no books just a bar of soap. Imagine, being so poor that a girl just wants a bar of soap. Marcia helped them so so much, than anyone I know. Marcia has helped so many people that she was voted one of the top three in the entire nation for the "Ultimate Volunteer." There were over 2000 entries submitted to that contest. I've never really had a personal relationship with Marcia. I've seen her around my church almost always doing some sort of community work. She is mainly mom mom's friend which is one of the way's I know her. But the way I know her best is as "The Mother of The Streets" as some say. She cares for those who need it. She spreads love around the world on her own watch. When Marcia works, it's about the people on the streets, not her. All the people on the streets were loved one time or another and Marcia reminds those that God still cares, no matter what. She inspires me in a way that I can't quite describe. If there is a burden on my heart, or my family's, Marcia prays. She prays for all who need it. Her life is inspiring, knowing that she is always ready to listen for those who needs someone to hear it. She listens, she prays, and she loves one another. She goes on doing what she does everyday no matter what people think. She is definitely the Kindest Kansas Citian.

20th Kindest Kansas Citian Essay Contest

Elizabeth J.-Age 9

Nominated: Mrs. Gasiorowski

To me Mrs. Gasiorowski is my Kindest Kansas Citian because she always listens to our concerns and deep thoughts. Mrs. Gasiorowski thinks about us. She is currently teaching about bullying; how to report, recognize, and to make sure we or anyone else will not bully. She makes me feel safe in the classroom like nothing can harm me. Mrs. Gasiorowski left an impact on me to always be kind, considerate, and remember the character traits. Mrs. Gasiorowski helps us, like she showers with kindness and makes me feel happy and good when she visits. We have raindrops in our classroom that our classmates can give when one gives an act of kindness, if Mrs. Gasiorowski had one of the buckets, I wouldn't give a raindrop to her at all, I would give a rainstorm! Even her office is comfy and cozy like herself. On the side of the room she has a leather couch, next to that there is a table with chairs and a jar of candy on the table. Near the corner is her desk with other teachery (is that a word?) things. I feel like I am in my own wonderful world, and I never want to go back to class. She is rich with love and warmth for us and she is always there to lend a hug to me when I am down. Mrs. Gasiorowski has a mailbox outside her office with slips which we can fill out to talk to her if we want to. She is my role model. Why? Because she is inspiring me to be kind even though I know that. She has always been there for me and other school mates. I have never felt alone when she is there. I love to have her around. She continually visits us in our classroom. She always says hi, is never in a bad mood, and would always cheer us up when we feel bad. We (all of us, I think) love Mrs. Gasiorowski. I really like all of the lessons she gives and I can't wait till she visits our classroom again. I hope one day I'll be a counselor just like her? (The end)

20th Kindest Kansas Citizen Essay Contest

Coleman M.-Age 13

Nominated: David Vogt-Adult Friend

There are many reasons to pick the Kindest Kansas Citizen. Some people are chosen for their charitable and generous donations to charities. Some people volunteer their time by helping out around the community. Some people choose a career in life that revolves around doing good things like, doctors, nurses, or priests. The citizen I chose is David Vogt because he is hardworking, kind and always has a positive attitude.

David Vogt is our trash man and is hard-working. He does his job right with dedication and pride. He provides many people with a service that is vital to our city. He starts early every morning and completes his job everyday. It is a job that many of us wouldn't want to do for a living. He is also hard-working because he never just throws our barrels on the ground, he puts them back straight up. But those are just minor things that he does. The main reason he is hardworking is a couple of years ago his partner was injured on the job and broke his foot. David, hoping his friend would return, did all of the routes by himself; driving the truck and putting the trash in the back. This makes his day longer without anyone to help him. Now, David does the route by himself and probably won't get a replacement.

The kindness and positive attitude that David shows is amazing. He always has a smile on his face. The day could be below zero or 100 degrees, it wouldn't change the grin you see on his face. He always stops what he is doing and waves to us as we drive by him. I see him on my block picking up trash and he always takes the time to say, "Hi, how are you?" At Christmas time he says Merry Christmas by brining the barrels up the driveway for us and gives us a Christmas card. Most people complain about this jobs, but not David. His attitude and kind face can change my mood in a moment.

David's attributes of a hardworking, kind person with a positive attitude led me to choose David as my Kindest Kansas Citizen. He is one of the kindest people I know. He probably doesn't realize the way he does his job has impacted me. This is why I choose David Vogt as the Kindest Kansas Citizen.

20th Kindest Kansas Citian Essay Contest

Christina P.-Age 15

Nominated: Tina Willis-Adult Friend

To me, Ms. Tina Willis is my Kindest Kansas Citian because she always helps people in need and always does it with a kind heart. Ms. Tina works at a food pantry in Blue Springs. When people need food, they go to her and she gives them food. Ms. Tina is a very hard worker and as she works, she does what she needs to get done with a loving attitude.

Ms. Tina has helped my family many times in the past year. For awhile now, we have been struggling financially. We sometimes don't have enough money to pay the bills or other things. Ms. Tina is very kind to us. She always tells us that if we ever need food, just call her and she would help us in anyway she can. Recently our car broke down, the transmission was completely messed up. We couldn't go anywhere for a week. One day we really needed food. When we called her, she came over right away and gave us what she had. As she did this, I could tell that she was happy to be helping us.

Back in October, she helped my mom get us medical insurance. My brother was in a condition which required surgery to fix what he had. At the time, we couldn't afford to pay for the medical attention that he needed one day. Ms. Tina asked my mom how we were doing. My mom described to her the situation we were in and was told to call a person to apply for medical insurance. A month later, we were able to get my brother into the doctor's office and he was able to have the surgery he needed.

I am very grateful for Ms. Tina and all the help she gives us. I consider her my Kindest Kansas Citian because she is selfless and always serves with a smile. She is an amazing person and I want her to know that I look up to her and want to help others the way she helps my family. I am glad that she came into my life.

20th Kindest Kansas Citian Essay Contest

Christina R.-Age 14

Nominated: Donna Katz-Adult Friend

There's a lady I haven't known for very long but in the time that I've gotten to know her, we've gotten very close. This lady's name is Mrs. Donna Katz and I think she is the Kindest Kansas Citian. She works at Trailwood Elementary School as a special needs teacher. Everyone knows her and loves her. I can trust her with anything. She's a very good special needs teacher, loves dogs, and is a great mother.

When I went to Trailwood, a girl in my class was known as the class joke. I wish I could say I stood up for her, but I didn't. I went with the wrong crowd and teased her. When I teased her it didn't make me feel good at all. So why did I do it? Well, when I felt bad, taking it out on her was my refuge. One day at recess, Mrs. Katz came up to me and asked, "Why don't you like this student? She likes you." When she said this to me I stopped teasing this girl. We became good friends. Mrs. Katz was always nice to me. Even after what I did to this girl. She must be really forgiving to be nice to me after what I did. I said "hi" to her in the halls and talked to her if I needed to, and she listened with an open heart. I began to realize that she was very special and tolerant of how people act towards someone different.

Mrs. Katz helped me understand important life lessons. The things she taught me I will never forget. Those things are, don't let others judge others for you; you make your own judgments after you meet that person, you need more friends than enemies, and most important, we are all special in some way. Those are the things I will never forget. These are very important life lessons. She taught me so many other important things.

20th Kindest Kansas Citian Essay Contest

Shaun S.-Age 17

Nominated: Chris Wagner-Adult Friend

I would like to nominate Chris Wagner, for his kindness, and caring for me and my family, and others. He demonstrates kindness everyday by being like family to me. Whenever me and my girlfriend split up, he was like an older brother to me and helped me move past it. Every time I felt sad and all alone he was always there to cheer me up. There has been many incidents that have happened to me in my life that has made me a hard person to get along with and trust, but he was always there for me, he never once gave up on me and our friendship. I treated him really badly, but he never left me alone, he has always had my back. I have never fully been able to trust anyone or let people get close to me since my mom left me and my brother's and sister. I treated him like he was less than me for two years but he never once told me to leave him alone, because he understands that I had a rough childhood. A lot of people in this world are not lucky enough to have a friend that you can run to about anything, but I can. I have someone in my life that no matter how hard or complicated things get, he will never give up on you and that makes you feel really good about yourself. Him and I have been through a lot together and he has always had my back, he has never been too busy to listen, he is like family to me, and I to find someone like that is very rare. I know I can count on him to always be there for me. Whenever everybody else is gone he will still be there to help me make my life better.

20th Kindest Kansas Citian Essay Contest

Cedric T.-Age 14

Nominated: Sean McClain-Adult Friend, Youth Advisor and Role Model

Sean McClain is the kindest, most welcoming, and outgoing person I know. He is the kind of person who can always be relied on for anything having to do with a positive effect, no matter how over his head the situation is.

One reason why I think he is the kindest Kansas Citian is because he is always helping someone. When I was ten years of age I was shot in a drive by shooting. The doctors said I would have a disability called drop foot for the rest of my life, which meant I would have to stop playing the drum set which I really enjoyed. Sean told me that with prayer, exercise, and self-determination there would be no telling what shape my foot would be in the future. He also told me that he would help me strengthen my foot, and give me drum lessons for no cost, and as hard as that is to believe he did just that three times a week.

Another reason is because he always looking for a way to make someone else happy. From the age of six up until I was 12 years of age, my grandfather would take me to see the Harlem Globe Trotter's, but on my 12th birthday he got really sick and wasn't able to take me. Sean heard about the situation and him being the kind person he is, decided he would be the one to take me being that my grandfather wasn't able to. Sean didn't ask for anything in return except for me to have a good time, and that I did. After the event he even took me out to eat to a place of my choice. I said McDonalds because I didn't want to make him go bankrupt, but he insisted that I pick a more elegant place, and he assured me that it wouldn't be a problem.

The last example is when I was in the 7th grade I didn't have the best behavior and my grades weren't so great either. Sean stayed on my case, not by yelling at me or anything like that, but he would repeatedly ask me "how are your grades" and, or "how is your behavior." If I would say anything but great to him and my mother, they would always give me the speech on how important it is to do your best in school, and although I didn't always feel like hearing it I always listened because I knew what he was saying was the truth. He also helped me get a better understanding of things I didn't quite get.

Sean McClain has been a great influence on my life and has showed me the true meaning of a friend. He has also showed me and proved to me that loyalty is everything. He means a lot to me and my family and I couldn't imagine a friend who would do as much as him. I know that besides my family if I ever need anything he will be there.

20th Kindest Kansas Citian Essay Contest

Gabriele V.-Age 14

Nominated: Barb Lisher-Adult Friend

Barb Lisher has been a constant part of my life for quite awhile, she is a positive, bubbly person. I will be eternally grateful for her love and help during a hard time in my life. I would always recommend that when someone goes through a hard time in their life they should find someone like Barb to help them through it. Barb Lisher is the kindest Kansas Citian.

Barb came into my life on a Sunday, my family was all at church and my dad, who is a pastor, was very busy. My mom, Danette, was in the hospital with an unknown sickness and my whole family was under a lot of stress. Barb went to my church and she came up to my dad, Victor, on this particular Sunday and asked if she could come over to my house after church and do laundry for us. My dad gratefully said yes and gave her the house key. That was the start of my siblings and me adopting her into our family.

A few months and a dozen tests later, my family and I learned that my mom had a rare form of cancer called Gestational Trophoblastic Disease. When my mom would go to the hospital to get radiation and chemotherapy, Barb was at our home taking care of me and my brother and sisters. She helped to make our lives fun by taking us to Science City, to the pool, and over to her house for sleepovers. One time, when my family and I weren't able to go down to Oklahoma, to be with our family for Thanksgiving, Barb invited us to have dinner with her family instead.

In September of 2007 our family learned that my mom had a tumor in her brain and she wasn't going to live much longer. That was an extremely hard time for me and my family, but Barb was there every single day. To love and take care of us, she also took care of my mom during those last few days she was here with us on Earth. Barb was so amazingly helpful, and I don't know what I would have done without her love, compassion, and affection to help me get through each of those difficult days.

Barb was completely selfless with her time when we needed her, we never asked for her help, but she saw my family's needs and nominated herself for the job of filling those needs. Barb has now been a part of my family for six years. And during those few difficult years she was so wonderfully generous with her love. These are just a few examples of what Barb has done for me. Barb Lisher is the Kindest Kansas Citian. I love her with all my heart and I will never forget what she has done for me and my family.

20th Kindest Kansas Citian

Emily W.-Age 14

Nominated: Carolyn Shandrowski-Previous Teacher

The reason I chose Carolyn Shandrowski is because of her courage, determination, service, and love for others. I first met her when she was my older sister's third grade teacher at St. Charles Catholic School. That year, we found out that Mrs. Shandrowski had ovarian cancer. Although she was going through chemotherapy, she continued to come to school even on the days when she wasn't feeling well. I thought she was always upbeat and positive about the whole thing. My sister and I would always look forward to her different colored wigs. She took the next year off due to her health declining but miraculously, her cancer disappeared. She returned to St. Charles the year I was in third grade. That year, she made a big impact on me. The way she read books out loud (with enthusiasm), the way she made math fun, the way she made special classes (on her own time) for the advanced learners, and the way she came up with creative projects for the kids were all ways she inspired me to love school. She always made each student feel special and encouraged them to accomplish their goals. The year after my third grade year, she retired from teaching.

In early 2009, Mrs. Shandrowski started an organization called "Carolyn's Pennies" that was created to help raise money for ovarian cancer research and increase awareness of ovarian cancer. In August of 2009, she organized an event called "Knock Out Ovarian Cancer." It helped raise money for free ovarian cancer screenings for women needing financial assistance. I am so proud to know Mrs. Shandrowski. She wanted to make a difference in her community so she started her own organization. She spent so much time and energy organizing "Carolyn's Pennies" and working at St. Charles. Today she works part-time as a secretary at the school. I enjoy seeing her around and talking to her. When my mom's cousin was diagnosed with ovarian cancer, Mrs. Shandrowski gladly volunteered to send her some information and she even wrote a personal card giving her encouragement. Mrs. Shandrowski is my favorite teacher and one of my role models. Her courage to fight cancer, her determination to battle the disease, her service to the community, her enthusiasm for teaching, and her love for all of her students and friends are all reasons that Carolyn Shandrowski is the Kindest Kansas Citian.