

Lending A HAND

Junior spends her summer attending to women awaiting labor and NICU babies

by Madelyn Augustine

When picturing how their summer will be spent, many students imagined days lying by the pool with their friends or strolling along a tropical beach. However, in junior ANASTASIA ORTMAN's case, she viewed her summer as a chance to give back to others by volunteering at Methodist Women's Hospital.

Ortman and her sister always had a desire to be part of something that allowed them to help others. When her sister's friend recommended volunteering at Methodist Women's Hospital, Ortman decided to give it a shot.

Some students view volunteering as a chore or punishment, but Ortman looked forward to volunteering each week. At least one day a week, Ortman delivered newspapers and DVDs to women awaiting labor and decorated the doors of the NICU babies' rooms.

Ortman's favorite part of being a volunteer was being able to connect with patients and meeting several new people. One of the new people Ortman met was junior LYNSAY HUNTER.

"I met Ana through volunteering, and we quickly became really good friends," Hunter said. "Ana is super sweet and creates an upbeat atmosphere to work in. Whenever I'm volunteering with her I know it will be a lot of fun because of her positivity towards our tasks and just her fun personality in general."

Ortman didn't expect volunteering to be as rewarding as it was for her. After being a volunteer, Ortman realized just how strong doctors and women in labor are and she gained more respect for what they do.

"I would definitely recommend this to others," Ortman said. "It's a really good way to make new friends and be a part of something that's bigger than you."

For Ortman, volunteering started out as something small and a way for her to get involved and try something new. Ortman never thought that it would have such a positive effect on her and influence her view of hospital employees after seeing how hard they work.



photo by Madelyn Augustine

PUSHING PLAY Helping make a hospital stay more enjoyable for a mother-to-be, junior ANASTASIA ORTMAN searches for the correct DVD for a movie request from one of the patients. Ortman spent most of her volunteering hours going room to room, bringing cookies and movies to the mothers and their families. "I love interacting with all the new mothers and seeing all of the newborn babies," Ortman said. "When I deliver movies and cookies to the mothers and families I feel like I'm helping them be more comfortable throughout their hospital stay and it makes me feel like I'm making a difference."



photo by Madelyn Augustine

BOOSTING THE SPIRITS Placing decorations on NICU babies' doors, junior ANASTASIA ORTMAN's heart aches for the unhealthy babies. Trying to make the stay more comfortable and personable for the families and babies, Ortman and other volunteers create name stickers and cartoons to put on the NICU doors. "I think it brings joy for parents while they are going through a tough time," Ortman said. "Every time a parent sees us putting up their baby's name on the door, they are so grateful and you can tell it just warms their heart. The names show that we are thinking about them and want to make their experience here just a little bit more colorful."

NEW FURRY FRIENDS

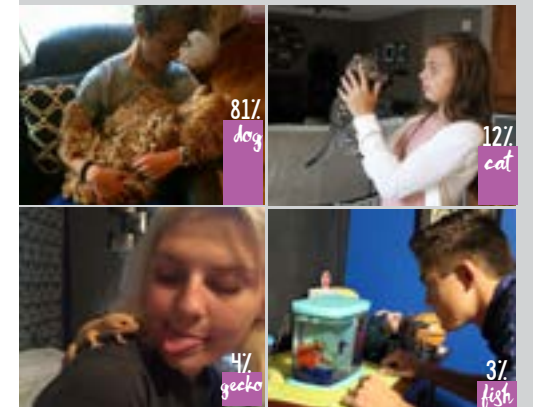
photo courtesy of Morgan McCarthy



"I love my dog, he's so sweet. I got him this past summer and my family and I named him Wallace. My favorite thing is going on long runs with him."
- Morgan McCarthy '19

WILDCAT FAVORITES

334 students polled



"My sister and I found FIG on the side of the road and we wanted a new pet so we decided to take it home with us. My parents didn't know at first, but when they found out I was surprised they let us keep it since he's a snapping turtle."
- Jade McClain '20

"After my friend got one I really wanted one too. I kept asking my parents about it. They eventually gave in and surprised me one day with a baby gecko. He is so cute, and I named him GREG."
- Emma Schertz '21

"I got home from work and saw a little husky puppy sitting on the floor. I was so surprised because I didn't think we would ever get another dog after our old one died. We named it Aja, but then we found out it was a boy, so we changed it to AJE."
- Ava Bonner '19

"I got two new kittens, DEXTER and OLIVER because my old cat died and my family wanted a new kitten. Dexter is my favorite because he is polydactyl, which means he has six toes on every paw instead of four."
- Mateo Miceli '21

"This summer my parents surprised my sisters and I with four CHICKENS. My family loves pets, but I never thought we would get chickens. They're really funny to watch run around and chase each other. Now we use their eggs instead of store bought ones."
- Riley Atkinson '20



photo courtesy of Grace Dirks

GRACEFUL TEACHINGS Doing flips and practicing balance, junior GRACE DIRKS spent her summer with young students hoping to improve their gymnastics skills. Dirks guided them in learning tricks to help them perform gymnastics like professionals. "My favorite part is teaching the kids how to jump from the high bar to the pit because it's scary, and when they finally do it I can see their faces light up with joy," Dirks said. "During the school year I just work birthday parties because I'm really busy. During the parties I teach the kids gymnastic skills and play games."



photo by Ethan McClure

TROPICAL FLAVOR Cooling off the summer heat with tropical shaved ice, senior JOEL MONTELEAGRE brings icy cheer to customers from his Kona Ice truck. For the past two summers, Monteleagre has sold flavored shaved ice to customers almost every day in neighborhoods and sometimes at private events. "It's the dream job being able to just drive around in a truck selling snow cones all day," Monteleagre said. "Sometimes I get to throw snowballs at the kids. I like messing around with the customers because I work the truck alone and I get bored easily."



photo by Ethan McClure

COURTESY CALL As a courtesy clerk at Hy-Vee, senior JUSTIN BEHRENS spends his summer being helpful for others. Behrens spent his time pushing carts in from outside and assisting customers with their bags. "I bag groceries, help people out with carts if needed, return items back to their proper place or get replacements, bring carts in and put baskets away," Behrens said. "My favorite part of my job is being able to talk and work with incredibly friendly customers and co-workers who are always pleased to see me. Overall, it's an incredible experience and a great starting job."

All work NO PLAY

Millard West students work during the summer months

by Ethan McClure