My forty hours of volunteer work was done exclusively at Helping Hands of Midland, and as much as I told myself I did not want to go, each time I did go, I was surprised by both the people and what they do. Additionally, the few times that I was there when shoppers were there, each time it made me realize how lucky I am to have the opportunities that I have, and each moment I had that feeling, I was glad that I could give back a little bit by volunteering.

The first day I volunteered was in 2014, before my first semester of college. Upon entering the back door to sign in, I was greeted by a lovely woman named Shirley. She was an older lady, but as the time passed and the days went by, you could tell she had no intentions of stopping what she was doing. Shirley absolutely loved her job, and it showed through all the work she did. Her passion reminded me of the saying, “Do what you love, and you will never work a day in your life.” This woman inspired me and she didn’t even know it, all by just doing her job. Although my overall goals have not changed, Shirley has inspired me to help give back to our community throughout my journey to my goals, as it really does make a difference.

Throughout the experience, we had many jobs, whether it be sorting items, painting, cleaning, or other miscellaneous tasks. However, my absolute favorite job was using the forklift to move compressed clothes into an 18 wheeler. The man who usually did it, Joe (who worked there), didn’t enjoy doing the duty, so instead he always came to me! Every time he asked I was as thrilled as can be, and best believe I would do it all day every day. Furthermore, I also liked going to pick up the trucks full of donated items at St. Stephens church, because it gave me the opportunity to meet new people. Each day I met someone new, and although a lot of these people were doing community service for probation, some of them were genuinely sorry and maybe just
made a mistake. One man I met was helping to honor his deceased mother. His name was Price, and he had lost his mother in January of 2011. His mother was very big on giving back to the community, as she was once poor before becoming wealthy, and as a result, her son had vowed to do 100 hours of community service annually. People like him are one in a million, as he was a really great person, and had shown me what I want to be like when I get to his age.

If you’ve made it to this point, then you should clearly understand what a blessing my community service was. I would definitely recommend Helping Hands to anyone who is looking to volunteer, as the people who work there are just extraordinarily caring, and the owner, Miss Mary, puts in all of her time and effort in order to help provide the less fortunate with food, clothes, and accessories. People like Shirley really helped me understand that there is more to my life than just me, and because of her, I plan to go back to help more this summer.