

When I joined G.R.O.W in 7th grade, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I was a new student, and I think half the reason I joined was because my advisor buddy was a member and, who didn't want to help people? Looking back though, it was this random decision that largely shaped my Hathaway Brown experience. It was one of those lucky life moments where you end up exactly where you need to be. My time in G.R.O.W instilled in me a sense of purpose, leadership, and a love for giving back to the community. I was an officer in 8th grade, was inspired to become active in the Center for Civic Engagement in Upper school, and I jumped at the chance to be part of the committee starting a branch of G.R.O.W in the Upper School. Being involved in student philanthropy has fundamentally changed how I view the world and what I can do in it. It has been one of my most rewarding experiences this year to spread awareness of philanthropy in the HB community and beyond.

Student philanthropy most amazes me in that it gives students the ability to make a meaningful and tangible impact on the world and community around them. When presenting at the Ohio Grantmakers Forum this fall, I was really once again struck by why I love the concept of philanthropy and community involvement. There were hundreds of people there from all types of foundations; corporations, families, and communities who had put an effort into investing in other people. There was so much great work done in that room, and hearing about it, really inspired me to put even more energy in our work at HB.

These last two years of being on the Grants and Fundraising Committee with Ms. Hiedemann and five other HB girls has been a lot of work, but also immensely enjoyable and rewarding. I have learned skills from how to make a handmade holiday card to how to edit a recruitment video on iMovie. We met with a representative from the Cleveland Foundation to learn about structuring a foundation and had various retreats to create a vision and mission. There were details and editing and a lot of being flexible as things didn't go as planned, but there was also an unbelievable amount of laughing and teamwork and problem solving. We all sat around my house listening to Christmas music making the cards, and there was always various ideas to collaborate, combine, and choose from throughout the entire process. I overcame my fear of public speaking, presenting at the Ohio Grantmakers Forum with Ms. Hiedemann and the Middle School G.R.O.W leaders, but also got to laugh as a group during our many planning sessions, phone conference with "The Wizard", event director, and rehearsals. There is so much to be said for the technical skills I have learned, but the most valuable skill of all in philanthropy is working and communicating with other people to accomplish something amazing.

As much as philanthropy helps the organizations it donates too, I think it in many ways gives more to those making the grants. It is a thoughtful and fun process one, which requires you to think about what you value and where your money will make the most of a difference. There are funny videos, friends, presentations, and 80 hand made holiday cards along the way, but also a driving sense of purpose that you are doing something that will make a difference.