

Connor Librandi - Archbishop Stepinac High School

"We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give" — Winston Churchill. Over the course of four years of community service, the place where I have dedicated the most time is the Our Lady of Mount Carmel Food Pantry, located at Our Lady of Mount Carmel Church in Elmsford, New York.

I've spent a total of forty-two hours there, assisting with packing and distributing food during major holidays and the monthly food handouts. The most impactful moments for me have been witnessing the faces of those who come to receive food—seeing the relief and gratitude in their expressions as they leave is truly eye-opening. It's a humbling reminder of how much of a difference a simple act of service can make in someone's life.

The next place I volunteered at was the Million Meal Project. This project was started by Matt Bloomberg, to create a Million Meals to hand out to those in need worldwide. I volunteered for 6 hours over two years. My job the first time was to make the bags which were filled with the food. It entailed us filling the bags with rice, dried vegetables, and soy, then seal the bags. This job, while repetitive, means a lot because at the beginning of the day, we were told each meal could feed a person for a day, and each box for 3 months. So each bag is extremely important. The second job I had was to refill each station with rice, dried vegetables and soy. This job was impactful because refilling each station made me realize that while each bag may seem small the overall total of food being packed is large.

These two organizations follow St. Vincent's mission by being very committed to the community. OLMC and Million Meal Project feels like a family that helps the ones who need it most by sacrificing something for those who can.