

## 2010 Scholarship for Outstanding Service Recipient *Cara McFarlane of Coppell*

For Cara, service sits at the center of her life. “Whether it is throughout the school, classroom or my community, the rush I get when offering of myself is indescribable.” Her desire to not only impact the issue of homelessness but to offer an interactive service experience for the youth of Coppell led her to found Austin Street Youth, a project feeding the homeless in downtown Dallas.

Once a month Cara gathers a group of 30 or so young people together on a Friday evening to make 500 meals. At 4 am the group then heads to the Austin Street Shelter in downtown Dallas to distribute the meals to homeless men, woman and children who live on the streets of Dallas. “Four am is simply an unappealing number and yet 30 students continually arrive promptly, in order to touch lives beyond their own.”

“Each volunteer has an individual connection that continues to draw them back, and because of that, Austin Street Youth stands as more than just my biggest accomplishment, but also my fondest memory.” While founding Austin Street Youth is Cara’s greatest accomplishment, it didn’t happen without a lot of planning, hard work and patience. Cara admits to having to train herself to rely on others and places a high value on the work of volunteers. “Without the work of each and every volunteer, communities could never unite and change would not be possible.”

Cara’s service doesn’t end with Austin Street Youth, she also finds time to mentor younger students at her church and school and build homes with Habitat for Humanity. When most high school seniors are planning for their life after high school, Cara is working with a group of Coppell students to develop a welcome video and mentoring program for the new students who will enroll in her high school next year.

Cara feels that through her service to others she has become a better sister and more attentive to what she can do to encourage her siblings to lead lives full of service. “As the eldest of four children, I want my siblings to be fully aware of their world.”

Over the past four years Cara has surrounded herself with people who serve others for reasons other than just the chance to say they did something. For Cara, service is more. “Service is my therapy. Service is my anti-drug. Service is my Friday nights and Saturday mornings.”