

Alex Birdsall

F Period

### Project Hope Essay

Through the excellent guidance of Pope Francis, the Catholic Church has declared in 2016 that it shall be a year of Mercy. Project Hope has given me, Alex Birdsall, a perfect opportunity to express my thoughts and beliefs about hope and mercy. In my life, I have had countless amounts of experiences with mercy and how it has touched my heart so personally. The world is a beautiful and peaceful whenever everyone can present hope through their actions. The prompts for project hope are all significant and important, but I think that the second question speaks to me the most. There has definitely been a point in my life where everything stopped. Everything I knew had changed suddenly without any warning. Through no fault of anyone, I had this terrible experience where I truly wanted to restart.

On the exact date of August 22, 2008, I lost my house to a horrible fire. I can remember everything about that night. My mother, was in the kitchen making quiche. My father, was in the living room watching the Beijing Olympics. My brother, was in the living room also, but playing a video game on the computer. It is so weird that I can remember all of the details of a night that was so tragic. All of my possessions and belongings were brutally taken from me. The house that I grew up in, destroyed beyond repair. The cause of the fire was from a faulty stove. Somehow, the wire sparked setting my entire house on fire. I was in the process of taking a bath, so I soon found myself outside on the street with nothing but a towel to remember my wonderful house with. Feeling the heat of the house and seeing my entire life crumbling on the street, would make anyone burst into endless tears.

Whenever this event took place, my brother and I had just started another year of school at Holy Rosary Catholic School. The remainder of that night ended with us going to my grandparents and trying unsuccessfully to sleep. My house was located in a very rural warm part of Louisiana. Miraculously and almost instantaneous people from all over the community began to reach out to us. My father, a well known doctor in the area, had many patients who had been treated by him. Gave us everything when we had nothing. It was multiple acts of ultimate mercy. The most amazing of these acts was done by a person named Joey Adams. Joey and his wife had owned a vacation house that he used for hunting and fishing in the rural part of Louisiana that we were in. Graciously, he offered his second home to us. No rent, no cost, no strings attached for allowing us to use his extravagant wonderful home. He allowed me to finish my fifth grade year at my home, without being home. Joey Adams was our sign of hope that lent out a hand when it was truly needed.

I am so thankful and so grateful of the things people did for us after the fire. Now currently, I have come to the point in my life were I have accomplished so much. I am on my way to graduate a great high school and go out into society. I owe it all to the people who helped us when we had nothing. I regret losing my house so much. I miss the friends I had and the great community I lived in. There is no way for me to hit the reset button to have all of that back. Now, I don't need it. The perspective I see now is that because of the actions of others I have been given so much more opportunity. I am so lucky to be touched so closely by pure mercy. It is a beautiful thing that has only enhanced and improved my life. Thoroughly and genuinely, I wish that everyone has the opportunity to be another person's "Joey Adams" and true merciful friend.