

# Kathleen's Story



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**B**efore becoming a volunteer, Kathleen was hesitant to speak up and lacked self-confidence. Her reluctance to take risks left her disconnected from her peers and her community.

“I used to be nervous to speak to people, but then one day I realized I would have to open up if I was truly going to connect with others,” recalls Kathleen.

That day came when Kathleen saw a poster advertising for “Volunteens” at the Faribault library. An avid reader, Kathleen decided she would give volunteering a chance and signed up to help with the summer reading program.

“There may have been a bit of hesitation when she first came here, but it didn’t last long,” remembers Deni Buendorf, Children’s Librarian. “She is always willing to step up and help out. Kathleen is a fantastic human being! I love her energy and her enthusiasm. She strikes me as resilient.”

Kathleen now serves on the Teen Advisory Board where she helps design special projects and oversees activities offered to teens and children at the library.

“Ms. Deni really takes us into consideration,” said Kathleen. “It is fun to share our ideas.”

Kathleen contributes to the library by creating digital book reviews and encourages her friends to do the same.

“Kathleen is a natural leader and I can tell her friends and younger children look up to her. I fully expect she’ll continue to do great things as she gets older.”

“I hope to see more people enjoying the library and becoming more connected to the community,” said Kathleen. “Volunteering can keep youth on a good path and avoid making bad choices. When volunteering, it’s important to have a good attitude and choose to do it. Then it’s rewarding.”

Kathleen’s story reminds us that youth who serve their community benefit greatly. In Faribault, only 50% of young people report actively serving their community. Providing opportunities for youth to use their time and talents bolsters their connection to the community and reinforces positive values.

## Connecting youth to their community!



\*Data gathered by Faribault area schools and the Rice County Chemical Health Coalition via the 2016 Developmental Asset Profile.