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Erin is a senior in the Secondary English Education program with a minor in political science. She joined Tri Sigma as a sophomore and fell in love with it from the beginning. She went to Officer Academy last winter and currently serves as the Education Director for Beta Tau. She is a Presidential Ambassador for the University of Detroit Mercy, Editor of {sic} our Student Arts Journal, and a board member of Alpha Sigma Nu the Jesuit Honor Society. She also works at the campus library as a student assistant and assists with RX for Reading, an outreach program to help distribute books to children in Detroit.

Compassion.

What does it mean to be compassionate and how will compassion change the world?

Imagine you're driving down 8 mile, the notorious road that splits poverty from suburbia, and you see a man holding a sign that says, "Will Work for Food". You then see someone at the red light roll their window down and hand the homeless person what looks to be parts of their lunch and a few dollars. Although this is charity, this is also compassion.

Imagine you're out to lunch with some friends and you realize that you only have three dollars because you had to pay rent and tuition for the month and you're struggling more than you thought you were. Your friend slyly hands you a five dollar bill and you flash them a "thank-you-so-much-you're-the-best" look while anxiously paying your bill. Although this is just friendship, this is also compassion.

Imagine you're at the grocery store and you hold the door open for an elderly woman who wants to start up a conversation with you. After casually bantering back and forth a few times, the woman tells you that the conversation she just had with you made her day. She lives alone and doesn't get to talk as much as she used to. Although this is just being kind, this is also compassion.

Compassion can be doing works of charity such as feeding a homeless man, it can be spotting a struggling friend, and it can be chatting with a stranger. It can be relatively anything. Compassion can wear many hats and can be manifested in many ways; the most important thing is just that compassion is *happening*. Sometimes in bleak places, such as 8 mile, the light of compassion shines a little brighter than normal. All of the people in the cars behind the civil servant may stop and think and put their lives in perspective for just a moment before zooming off after the light turns green. Maybe that friend who got spotted at lunch will pay it forward and help another friend in deed or pay the customer's bill behind them the next time they are in the drive thru. Maybe that person who had the conversation with the elderly woman will volunteer at a nursing home or simply call their own grandparents. The key to compassion is having it spark and light a fire of other acts of compassion.

Little acts of compassion will spark and set the world in a blaze of love and kindness. Compassion is in every classroom, every hospital, and every supermarket. We just need to make it happen more often. Compassion will only change the world when we let it change ourselves. Once we let compassion in to our hearts, we can let it in our jobs, our politics, and our daily lives. Compassion just makes us more human, and lately with all that has been going on in the world and our country, I think we all need to be reminded that after all, we are all just humans who need a little love and compassion.