SMALL ACTS OF KINDNESS

Jena Huffman
Hometown: Tiffin, Ohio
Major: Exercise Science
Expected year of graduation: 2021

John Holmes once said, “There is no exercise better for the heart than reaching down and lifting people up.” Tiffin University junior, Jena Huffman, exemplifies this by giving back to the community with GlamourGals, a national organization that inspires volunteers to provide companionship and beauty makeovers to women living in senior homes.

In high school, Jena was a guest volunteer at a GlamourGals makeover during a Hugh O’Brian Youth Leadership Seminar. She fell in love with the idea and started her own Tiffin/Fostoria chapter with a friend. They ran the chapter together until high school graduation, and then Jena founded a chapter at TU. Once a month, GlamourGals visits Elmwood at the Shawhan, an assisted living facility in Tiffin, Ohio, providing residents with makeovers, manicures and crafts.
“It is heartbreaking knowing how many nursing home residents do not receive visitors,” said Jena. “The main purpose of this organization is to end elderly isolation. We want to form friendships and bring extra joy.”

Jena also founded the organization Guys and Games for male students who visit nursing homes and play board games with the male residents. Being involved with GlamourGals taught Jena that small acts of kindness go a long way. “Seeing the smiles on the residents’ faces is so rewarding. Some residents even refer to us as their grandchildren. I hope people learn that friendship has no age limit. Many of these men and women have extraordinary stories to tell, and they just need someone to listen.”

As Jena listens to their stories, she has a story of her own to share. In December of 2018, Jena lost her dad suddenly to esophageal cancer. “It is by far the biggest hardship I have ever faced. It is difficult not having him here to help me celebrate my victories throughout my college experience and life.”

Although he is gone, his legacy remains in Jena. “My dad was and still is my biggest inspiration. He dedicated his life to the well-being of others.” Jena’s father was a detective, FBI trained sniper, police officer, an Army veteran, served in the National Guard, was Director of Security and Campus Operations at Terra State Community College and he received the Medal of Valor during his time at the Fostoria Police department.

Today, Jena shares the same quality of selflessness by giving back to the community whenever she can, particularly with GlamourGals. “I learned that life is too short, and I have promised myself to live my life to the fullest every day. If there is an experience you have always wanted to have or somewhere you have always wanted to go, do it. You have the world at your fingertips. Take advantage of the time you have and accomplish the things you may have been too scared to take on.”

Jena will graduate in 2021 with a bachelor’s degree in exercise science. In addition to GlamourGals, she is involved in the women’s golf team, academic advisory board, is a peer mentor, President of the Science Club and Vice President of Women in Science Society. After graduation, Jena plans to attend dental school.