



Photo Credit by David Jensen

Jacob Yates

A junior at Bartlett High School, Jacob Yates has a zeal for life that inspires those around him. At age 16, Jacob longs to make a difference in the world. While cognizant of the fact he can't change the world single handedly, he strives to make positive change.

Jacob's participation in extracurricular activities includes varsity football, varsity track & field, and a lead role in the school play South Pacific. Despite his busy schedule, Jacob makes it a priority to help those around him. Participating in Partners Club has allowed Jacob to help students at Bartlett who face everyday challenges. Never having missed a meeting, Jacob doesn't take his involvement lightly. Volunteering his time with Partners Club allows him to do what he loves most—making people smile. "I volunteer because it's my way of helping make [the students] feel like everyone else," Jacob said.

While Jacob's excitement for helping others is inspiring in itself, it is even more so when you consider the obstacles he's faced in his young life. At age 8, Jacob's parents were divorced and he was left to care for his mother who was seriously injured in a snow machine accident. Since then, Jacob has provided care for his grandmother through cancer and a brain tumor, and his mother through serious thyroid problems. In addition to all of this, Jacob has had to witness many of his family members suffer with substance abuse.

Rather than harboring resentment for his hardships, Jacob has turned his adversity into the driving force behind his decision to help others. As teacher Val Barber would put it, "Jacob is the epitome of community service." His desire to be involved is truly a testament to his character—a thoughtful and humble young man who continually put others before himself.

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*A salute to the youth of Anchorage from the Office of the Mayor,
the Anchorage Daily News, AT&T and University of Alaska*