SERVICE — From left, Katie Wilson, Randleman Middle School (RMS) Media Specialist; Parker Sterling and Tracy Dawes, RMS principal, pose outside the school.

RMS student has a heart to serve

Editor’s note: The Courier-Tribune’s popular “Trailblazer” showcases the positive things young people are doing. If you know someone who fits that description, email name, phone number/email address and a brief description of accomplishments to ajordan@courier-tribune.com.

By Terrence Jeffries tjjefferies@courier-tribune.com

RANDELEMAN — Parker Sterling, a seventh-grader at Randleman Middle School, has dreams of one day becoming an Emergency Room and trauma surgeon.

“Last year my brother was playing

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THE BEAUTY OF GIVING — Parker Sterling volunteerism runs the gamut, from the medical community to the Salvation Army to helping elderly friends. She first became involved in community service through participating in beauty pageants.
Trailblazer

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basketball and he fell, and his knee completely fell apart and an ambulance rushed him to a hospital nearby... where they had a surgeon help him," she said. "It took about six months to where my brother could play sports again."

It was then — witnessing the aftermath of Conner's injury — that Parker knew what her future career would be. The 12-year-old's compassion extends beyond family, to the surrounding community, and to many organizations.

She first became involved in community service through participating in beauty pageants with the Randleman Lions Club, which she began taking part in at the age of 3. "Coming up through pageants, they really stress the importance of community service. We're there to win something that opens up a platform to do community service."

High on that list is Special Olympics. She volunteers for many Special Olympics events, many of them held at Randleman elementary and middle schools. "I think it's awesome (that) they get all of their awards and they win," Parker said of the sports organization that provides children and adults with intellectual disabilities the opportunity to train and compete. "I've met some of the kids when I volunteered at the elementary school. They are so adorable, and some of the kids at the middle school, they're so sweet."

Her service is wide ranging and varied. She made door posters/door greetings for residents of the Randleman Commons, volunteered with the Salvation Army and worked to raise money for St. Jude Children's Research Hospital in Memphis, Tenn., "because I know three people in my life who had cancer."

BIG SPLASH — Parker Sterling is an avid volunteer for Special Olympics events, many of them held at Randleman elementary and middle schools. "I think it's awesome (that) they get all of their awards and they win."

“A lot of times I choose (organizations) that are personal to myself. Like I've chosen St. Jude’s, because I know three people in my life who had cancer," she explained. "My friend, Dillon, passed away due to cancer. He was 12." St. Jude also figures into one of her closely-held future goals, that again centers around volunteering and community service.

"I want to start a foundation, which raises money to get red wagons for St. Jude’s," she said. "Instead of using wheelchairs to transport kids (patients at St. Jude’s), they will use red wagons and will pull them and sometimes they don’t have enough, so I would like to raise money... for them." With such a heart for service, one could see why Parker has such strong aspirations to work in the medical field.

Although Parker's love for serving others stretches far and wide, she still manages to find time for herself. Recently inducted into the Beta Club at RMS, she maintains straight A's. She is a four-time clogging champion, and when time permits, enjoys a number of hobbies, reading, drawing, hanging out with her friends and playing with her five pets — two cats, Calliope and Calypso; a rabbit, Lily; and two lizards, Phoenix and Draco.

Parker describes her mother as the biggest inspiration in her acts of service, saying her mother has taught her “to not conform to what others think she should be... and to help others as much as she can.”