

# Abby Tablonski

The door creaked open, as I walked in, there was little to no light, a couch and the kitchen space in the same area. I felt claustrophobic, with no space to go anywhere with three people standing in the room all at once.

I held back tears, I sucked them down into my throat while my eyes shined by the water I would not let out. My sister stared at me, with the look of sadness, and desperation. The look where you question life and ask yourself, "how did we end up here?" "Why is this happening?"

The rectangle-shaped apartment took the words right out of my mouth. Filled me with anger that people ended up in situations like this. But the little girl who lives in the room gave me hope.

Over the summer I was given the opportunity to be matched with a little sister from the Big Brothers and Sisters program located in Flint. I never knew this opportunity would change me completely as a person.

My little sister is seven. She has a very difficult time reading, her father is in prison for the rest of her life, and her mother had too many children to take care of. The playground, walking distance from her house, was set on fire and she can not play outside because of the violence.

I was able to form a unique relationship with with this little girl. Her Granny, [her legal guardian] welcomed me with open arms and supports her the best she can. The amount of unconditional love for her I witnessed is overwhelming.

Her Granny does not have much. In fact, her health issues took control of her body that no longer allow her to give her grand-



daughter a childhood full of play time and bike rides.

The little things like holding her hand when we cross the street, or caving into getting her McDonalds when I know we should just make sandwiches at home pull my heartstrings even closer together.

Yes, I know I am supposed to help her to the best of my ability, but I did not realize how much she would change me.

The joy I witnessed in her springs from the simplest things like creating bubbles out of glittery slime, and screaming the lyrics, "Ain't No Mountain High Enough" why she begs me to leave it on repeat for every car ride, change me.

