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## Farmington-FarmingtonHillsPatch

### Farmington 7th Grader's Nonprofit Brings 'Blessed Birthdays', Smiles to Detroit Children

Anika Jane Beamer creates parties for 1st-3rd graders served by the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center, which once operated in Farmington Hills.

By [Joni Hubred-Golden](#)

Anika Jane Beamer, a Farmington 7th grader, makes birthday cakes that delight children at the St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center in Detroit.

#### Photos



Credit courtesy St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center

A thought came to Anika Jane Beamer more than a year ago, as she sat folding clothes on the couch in her family's Farmington home.

Today, her idea is a non-profit organization that is making life a little brighter for children at [St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center](#) in Detroit, an education center for at-risk children.

"I thought it would be cool if kids could do birthday parties for other kids," said Beamer, whose 14-year-old twin brothers were adopted from the Center when it operated as an orphanage in Farmington Hills.

With a \$600 grant through her church, Hope Lutheran, and more than \$1,000 raised during the church's Alternative Christmas Fair, Anika Jane launched "Blessed Birthdays" for 1st through 3rd graders enrolled in St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center programs. The home-schooled 7th grader held her first party in February; numbers four and five are happening this week.

"I didn't know what to expect at all," she said of the first party. "The kids whose birthdays it was were surprised. They were very smiley."

The parties are tailored for each child and include treats, games and decorations. Honorees receive a home-made birthday cake and toy, based on information they provide about their interests. Cakes go home with the children; cupcakes are served at the party.

One of the recipients told Anika Jane that she didn't have a cake when her family celebrated her birthday, so she was happy to be able to take one home to share with them.

With help from her mother, Jessica Beamer, Anika Jane hunts down bargains, to stay within her budget of about \$35 per birthday child. Each party serves about three children, who are all part of The Education Experience, a Center program that offers basic skill-building and academic enhancement for at-risk children and GED assistance for adults.

"Giving has no age requirement," said Diane Renaud, Executive Director and CEO at St. Vincent and Sarah Fisher Center. Ms. Beamer is mature beyond her years, in understanding what many adults don't realize, that something as simple as giving a birthday cake can make an at-risk child feel special on their birthday and can change that child's entire outlook."

After her first "Blessed Birthdays" party, Anika Jane admits, she was a little overwhelmed.

"On the car ride home, I didn't say anything for a long time," she recalled. "I couldn't believe it happened."

She has made a year-long commitment and expects to hold parties for about 60 children. In the fall, Anika Jane will begin to focus again on fund raising, so she can do another year's worth of parties.

"I like making people smile," she said. "It's fun to make people feel special."