

Strength in Service

Brooke Harward shares the speech that helped earn her new title.

by **Brooke Harward**, 2012 Miss American Angus



PHOTO BY JENA THOMPSON, AMERICAN ANGUS ASSOCIATION

► **Brooke Harward**, Richfield, N.C., was crowned the 2012 Miss American Angus at the 2011 North American International Livestock Exposition (NAILE) Nov. 14 in Louisville, Ky. Brooke, who is the 44th Miss American Angus, will represent the Angus breed at numerous beef industry events during her reign. The American Angus Auxiliary sponsors the Miss American Angus contest, which includes a written quiz, an interview and public speaking before a panel of three judges.

A man was walking along the beach one day when he saw a young boy throwing washed up starfish back into the ocean. When he asked the boy what he was doing, the boy said he was throwing the starfish back into the water or else they would die. The man told him that there was no way he could save the thousands of starfish on the beach, so he could not make a difference; however, the young boy just bent down and picked up another starfish. As he threw it back in the ocean, he replied optimistically, "Well, at least I made a difference to that one!"

I believe that this young boy embodies the true meaning of service. As defined by inspirational speaker Mr. Brian Parsley, service is "the act of giving value to someone with their best interest in mind — not your own." The young boy gave value back to the starfish that day simply by taking a little extra time to throw them back into the water. Through small actions such as this young boy's, we can see that our strength in service is how we dedicate our daily lives to serve others. My daily service can be split into three distinct categories: family, community and self.

Family

Family is an important part of many people's lives, and I am no exception. Growing up in a household with two parents and five sisters, I learned early in life the importance of helping one another. Being one of the oldest, it always seemed like I was the one elected to help with homework, babysitting, and, once I turned 16, be the chauffeur for my sisters to their activities.

In the beginning, I thought of these actions as tiresome chores. As I got older, though, I realized the life lesson that my parents were trying to teach me: Serving others is not about what you can get from your actions, rather, what you can give. My parents showed me that no matter how small or insignificant these actions seemed to me, my time and energy were valuable to someone.

The American Angus Association is also a type of family that I personally hold dear to my heart. When the Association was formed in 1883, the main purpose was to act as a breed registry for the growing number of Aberdeen-Angus cattle. Now, 128 years later, the Association is the world's largest single beef breed organization because of its dedicated service to not only the cattle, but also the people of the Angus breed. Our Association provides an unprecedented amount of services and programs, including conferences, scholarships, and my personal favorite, Angus shows. Just as important, the people of our Association form a family who can depend on one another.

Community

Service also encompasses helping those in our community. For the past 20 years, my family has owned and operated livestock market operations in our community and region. We believe our strength in these businesses is the quality of service we provide our customers. From the beginning, our motto has always been "Working Hard for You" and this is exactly what we strive to do each day.

In 2010, my family and I began a new marketing venture. With the formation of Mid-Atlantic Cattle Sales, we hosted our first livestock video auction. Since that day we have hosted 23 video auctions and, for every one of these sales, I have created and edited all of our videos and catalogs. This has given me the opportunity to work side by side with more than 50 customers developing relationships and growing friendships. By dedicating my time and strengths to our customers, I am able to give greater value to their cattle and to the cattlemen and women of our community.

The *Certified Angus Beef*[®] (CAB[®]) brand has also been focused on serving communities around the world since 1978. Due to many people's passionate service to the CAB brand, communities in more than 45 countries now have the opportunity to experience superior-tasting *Certified Angus Beef*.

Self

The final component of my daily service is self. In today's competitive world, we are often tempted to measure our own success by the purple banners we win or the plaques we mount on our walls. As a junior Angus breeder and showman, I, too, am often tempted to determine my success by what I may or may not win in the showing. However, my personal growth has shown me that success should truly be measured by our dedication to service and the impacts we have on others.

I am proud to say that I and all four of my younger sisters were privileged to receive gold "Angus Star" badges at the 2011 National Junior Angus Show (NJAS). We received this honor not because of our

success in the showing, but because we were seen helping others throughout the week.

Serving others though is not only about how we serve, but that our actions show us our strengths and make us stronger as individuals. This past year, I, myself, discovered a new personal strength. At the beginning of the year I started helping Justin, a young junior member in our North Carolina Junior Angus Association who was originally a little shy around the rest of us, but wanted to get more involved. Justin is now our new North Carolina Junior Angus

Central Director. While I was able to assist Justin in discovering a passion for Angus cattle, through the process I found that I had a personal strength in leading our junior members to be the best that they can be.

Just like the young boy at the beach, we have opportunities every day to serve others. A simple smile might heal a hurting heart, and a helping hand may be the encouragement that a person needs to continue their day.

We do not always know the results of our actions, but I do know that serving others is a

strength we all can use to impact our family, community and self. Through our service we can also continue to build and strengthen our commitment to the largest breed in the world — Angus. My challenge to you today is to think about how you can use your strengths in your daily service. So be like the young boy, and take some time to throw a starfish back in the sea and, as William James said, “Act as if what you do makes a difference. It does.”

