

## Volunteer of the Month – Akeva Koulla

Akeva's path to volunteering is both interesting and telling. She lives in Asylum Hill, very near West Middle School, but her schooling began at Jumoke Academy and then after 4<sup>th</sup> grade, through the Open Choice Program continued in the Avon Schools where she is now a high school sophomore. She first tutored at West Middle School last year as part of the "Youth on Fire" program through Emmanuel Lutheran Church, where she was the only young student tutor. She had a total of 8 students ranging from grades 4 - 8.

Now she is a part of a program called Tutoring in The City. She is one of nearly 30 volunteers from Avon High School, and has just one student, a first grader. She is also the only tutor volunteer from Hartford.



It's more than a little ironic that she leaves Hartford each morning to attend school in Avon, only to return with many of her classmates to tutor so near her home.

Tutoring isn't the only volunteering that she does, but perhaps the most regular. She also participates in a UNICEF sponsored program at Avon High School called "Shots for Shots." It's a fundraiser for immunizations, where sponsors donate money based on the number of baskets a student can complete in 30 seconds. Kind of like a walk-a-thon, only more intense. Akeva isn't a basketball player, but she helps to organize the program. When I asked her what she got from volunteering she said, "I don't really GET any THING, out of it, I just do it because I like helping others. If I get anything, I get happiness, and pleasure [just] from doing it."

Last year's students were older, but this year her first grader is a bit different. When she first gets there she wants to go home, and when it's time to go, she wants to stay longer.

As for recommending volunteering to others she said, "In my opinion I feel you should help out others who can't really help out themselves. So if you have an opportunity to do something and you know you're good at it, or you have the capability of doing it, [to] better someone's life and help them out in the long run, [you should]."

Certainly words to live by.