



Hannah, 18

So, what have you been doing this week?

Well, Sunday I went to church and I called my friend Shelby. I was going to go by myself, but she said her parents had left for church without her, so we went together. After church, we went to the store and got food and ate outside in the park, and that was really beautiful.

I've gone to school all week. After school I went to work a couple of days. I work at a retirement community.

Maybe you should explain what a retirement community is.

OK. It's like a big neighborhood with rich old people. It's a nice place to stay, and it has an assisted living section for people who need nurses. It's really fun, but it's hard work too. I work in the dining room. I really enjoy working with elderly people. Some of them are my friends. Not all the time, but sometimes you can tell you bless* them just by being there.

What else have you been doing?

I started track this week. The track season started two months ago, but two of the girls got hurt, so the coach asked if I would run. Everyone else was in shape,* so I was running and inside going "Uh ow!"

That was Friday, so then I went to my second job to waitress at a Japanese restaurant. It was really busy, so I pretty much worked my butt off,* 'cause* you have to clean and a lot of things. A friend

picked me up and we went to her house for a birthday party after work. We ate way too much ice cream and stayed up way too late because I had to get up early Saturday morning and go to school to help with landscaping* for community service.

At my school, a certain number of hours of community service are required each year, so I choose things I like. I had a really good time, as much fun as you can have weeding and mowing and potting flowers. I killed my back* because I had to go between the cracks of the bricks in the sidewalk and clean out moss. It was kind of hard. I went home, took a nap, and then I went to work again at the Japanese place.

So you are really busy. Do you enjoy your life?

Yeah, I do. Sometimes I don't like being so busy. Today I couldn't go to church because I had to go to work at 11:00. So I got a teaching tape* and some food and got back in bed and listened to the tape and ate breakfast in bed. I copied part of Psalm 146* onto a card and put it in my pocket when I went to work. Because it blessed me tons.* 'Cause everything is better when you're focused on God and not on yourself.

Is there anything that you would like to say to kids in other countries?

I hope the people who read this won't think I'm lazy or anything.

I really don't think they will.

A Few Words

Bless: In this sentence, *bless* means "make someone happy" or "show someone a little bit of God's love."

In shape: Here this means that a person is healthy and strong and can do hard work or sports.

Work your butt off: An idiom that means "work really, really hard." The word *butt* is short for *buttocks*. This is an informal phrase and should not be used in formal writing or speaking.

'Cause: Short for *because* and used in informal speech.

Landscaping: The job of arranging and taking care of flowers and bushes around a building.

Killed my back: Here this means "made my back hurt" or "used my muscles in a really hard way."

Teaching tape: A cassette tape with a talk from a teacher on it.

Psalm 146: This is a part of the Bible. Psalms are poems and are often read by Christians, Muslims, and Jews.

Tons: Here this means "a lot" or "much." A ton is 2,000 pounds of weight.

Discussion Questions

1. What do you think about the community service that students at Hannah's school must do? Have you done community service work? What kind of community service work would you like to do? Why?
2. If a group of girls, or a group of boys, gets together for a small party in your country, what do they usually do? (Hannah and her friends ate ice cream and stayed awake until very late.) When was your favorite party? What did you do?