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### The Service Mechanic

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# The Service Mechanic

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“I’m a big fan of the saying, ‘To whom much is given, much is required.’”

Nolan Sponseller '18 is a man who lives by his words. Looking past his steady speech and subtly confident demeanor, you can tell Nolan doesn't just talk the talk. He has chosen a lifestyle that represents his commitment to be the hands and feet of Jesus.

Nolan, an accounting major, grew up in a small town of less than 100 people. He's used to tight-knit community and the unique quirks that come with it. His transition to the small town of Upland was smooth, but in the move from home to Taylor, he began to see a pattern.

Even small communities have serious problems.

“Upland is not exempt from the poverty and social issues that are prevalent among small towns,” he said. “There is class struggle, at-risk kids, and broken relationships.”

Nolan is passionate about serving his community, wherever he's at. And he wants other Taylor students to feel that they can easily integrate themselves in the Upland community, too.

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**“Only in a small town to a small town can that kind of thing**

# happen."

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At Taylor, Nolan is one of two students heading the [Community Outreach](#) cabinet within [Taylor World Outreach \(TWO\)](#). He organizes numerous service projects within the Upland community to help address problems. Ministries such as Basics, Red Barn, and ReaLife are all devoted to providing local kids a healthy space where they can have fun, build relationships, and learn about Jesus. Carpenter's Hands plans cleanup projects and home repairs. Community Outreach also plans Community Plunge, a day where incoming freshmen do different service projects in Upland and other parts of Grant County.

For each of these groups and events, Community Outreach is responsible for rallying volunteers, organizing logistics, and marketing toward the Upland community and Taylor students.

"I have to remember why I'm passionate about small communities and try to show that passion to other people," Nolan said. "I want to help students realize, 'Man, I really should get involved!'"

From the very start, at Community Plunge his freshman year, Nolan connected to service in Upland. He signed up to help clean Memorial Park on Upland's Main Street, where he worked with Jim Slater, who helped establish the park. Nolan and other volunteers trimmed trees and picked up trash. At the end of the day, Nolan gave Jim his number in case he needed help in the future.

Later, on his way to northern Indiana, Jim pulled off at an exit in what happened to be Nolan's hometown. He ran into Nolan's uncle and called to tell Nolan, "Hey, I met your family!"

"Only in a small town to a small town can that kind of thing happen," Nolan said.

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## **"When it comes down to it, not many people will get involved just because of what I say—I have to live it."**

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During his freshman year, Nolan started a mobile mechanic business on campus—doing detailing, fixing scratches, giving oil changes, and jumping dead batteries for students and faculty. When the owner of Upland's Best One Tire, Mike Pearson, caught wind, he hired Nolan as a part-time technician. Now, every week, Nolan works more than 15 hours at Best One (a.k.a. Upland Tire), serving the people of Upland through mechanical work.

"We can get so caught up in our own little community at Taylor, so it's good to get away and realize that there is a world outside of Taylor," Nolan said. "I have really appreciated getting to know the guys at Upland Tire."

Every Saturday morning, Nolan eats breakfast with the Best One staff and learns about life outside of Taylor.

“It’s good to hear what it’s like to live in Upland, raise kids, and perform on vehicles,” he said. “The opportunity to interact with those already living life in ‘the real world’ is something that’s priceless.”

There’s always more to say about community involvement and how good it is. Nolan could spend hours encouraging his wing-mates and friends to get involved in the community. But:

“When it comes down to it,” he said, “not many people will get involved just because of what I say—I have to live it.”



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