

Are you Proud of your Country?

All around me are examples of Americans showing their pride in their country. At every home sporting event, the crowd stands for the national anthem and most sing along or place their hand over their heart. Every morning the students in my school stand for the Pledge of Allegiance. Each week teenagers from my school go into the community and volunteer time to help the elderly or to make a non-profit organization reach toward its goals. Each day, the members of volunteer fire departments and emergency response units go into places of danger and pain. Even the smile on the face of a grandfather as he walks his grandchild home from kindergarten shows a pride in his family and in turn in his country. Americans are a proud people.

As a teenager I am proud to live in a nation where people come to seek the chance to live in freedom and to fulfill their potential. While they may bicker or disagree, they are proud of the US Constitution and the system that allows the majority to vote and to decide. I am proud of the choices I make to be my best in school and to take my freedoms seriously. I am proud of those Americans who will never be on the evening news, but quietly day in and out live their lives in ways that help others and strengthen our country. I am proud of those who serve in the military and those who keep us safe at home and overseas. I am proud of those who teach and those who create new inventions to keep America strong. Mostly, I am proud to live in a state and a place where people feel connected to their country and to each other.

It is the simplest of actions that make me the proudest of my country. It is the helping hand to nations in need. It is the promise of freedom and a better life to those

who suffer. It is the gift of fresh water, education or tools to a nation in need of the means to grow food. America gives and America leads because it chooses to. Since we are free to choose, we freely choose to help. As US Senator John McCain said, "We have to love our freedom, not just for the private opportunities it provides, but for the goodness it makes possible."