First Lady Karen Pence

Karen Pence is my Hoosier heroine because she is a strong, independent, and meek woman, and I admire her. She is a wife, mother, and a teacher to anyone she meets. She is a superb role model to everyone. She is much like her own Hoosier heroine, Ruth Lilly, who gave her prosperity to benefit the needs of others. Mrs. Pence is an example of a hero to young girls and boys all over Indiana.

She is creating a lively future for the state of Indiana and an even brighter future for the education of Hoosier children like myself. Being an elementary art teacher for 25 years and earning a B.S. and M.S. in Elementary Education from Butler University, Karen Pence is very focused on the education of Hoosier children and bringing art back to life all over Indiana.

Mrs. Pence is very dedicated to art. She is honorary chair of the Art Therapy Initiative at Riley Children's Hospital in Indianapolis and is a board member of Tracy's Kids, an art therapy program for several children's hospitals in Washington, D.C. She loves to fill her office with art work made by Hoosier children from all over Indiana. Although I'm not a great artist, I would be honored if someday my pastel drawing would be hung in her office.

Mrs. Pence has started the Indiana First Lady's Charitable Foundation. It is a nonprofit that benefits individuals, schools, communities, families, family support organizations, along with arts organizations. The board would like to put a spotlight on these types of individuals and organizations by offering rewards, grants, and scholarships. I'm a seventh grader at Southwestern Middle School, which is part of the Tippecanoe School Corporation in Tippecanoe County. I plan to be an active participant in our area's Twenty-First Century Scholars program and take advantage of all that it offers.

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I understand that I will have to have good grades in high school and stay out of trouble, but, if I do, the rewards will be tremendous. With the help of this program, I'll be able to go to Purdue University where I plan to study nursing or pre-medicine. With the financial support from this program, along with the support from the First Lady's Charitable Foundation, I will not have to pay off a lot of loans when I graduate, which I will appreciate very dearly.

Heroines come in all forms and figures, and some can be very famous. Mrs. Pence has quietly become a heroine to me because she has done a lot for many Hoosiers without expecting a lot of attention or recognition in return. Mrs. Pence has shown that there is a way that I can give back to my community and the state of Indiana. All that Mrs. Pence has done, has been a great help. She's giving many Hoosier students—elementary, middle school, high school, and college—a chance to make something of themselves. Mrs. Pence is giving students of all shapes and sizes an opportunity to follow their dreams and I just want to say, thank you, Mrs. Pence.