

# Small AND Simple ACTS OF SERVICE

*Relief Society sisters can become instruments in the hands of God by finding small and simple ways to serve.*

President Thomas S. Monson has reminded Relief Society sisters: “You are . . . surrounded by opportunities for service. . . . Often small acts of service are all that is required to lift and bless another.”<sup>1</sup> Lani Axman of Arizona, USA, has found this to be true (see her story on pages 48–49). “Making a difference in the world can happen in the day-to-day moments all around us,” she writes. “We don’t have to look far to find opportunities to lift others. Our service needs only love to make it powerful.”

Here four Latter-day Saints share experiences from their lives when sisters’ acts of service, both big and small, have comforted and helped them and others in their time of need.

## Welcome Home

In 2010, my wife, Jocelyn, and I faced a number of health problems. On one occasion Jocelyn was in one hospital while I was in another. During what was a difficult time for us physically and emotionally, the Relief Society sisters of our ward served us in very real ways.

When I returned home, I thought Jocelyn would soon be joining me, but instead she took a turn for the worse and was transported to



another hospital, where she was confined to bed for the next six months.

During that period, some of these same wonderful sisters made the 117-mile (188-km) trip to visit my wife at the hospital. Others took time to send her get-well cards. These visits and messages were a lifeline to Jocelyn and kept her feeling connected to the ward and to the Relief Society.

As Jocelyn's release neared, several sisters came to our home to help with cleaning in preparation for her arrival. On the day I brought her home, we pulled up to find a large yellow bow tied to the tree in the front yard and another tied to the carport. A large "Welcome Home!" banner hung above the carport.

These wonderful Relief Society sisters have continued to bless us with visits and meals, particularly during times when I have had to attend to some of Jocelyn's other physical and medical needs in her ongoing recovery. This spirit of compassion and helpfulness has filled our hearts with love and thanksgiving. These sisters not only profess to follow the Savior; their actions show that they truly do.

David G. Robertson,  
Alberta, Canada



### Kindness in a Cup

One of the first things I did after we settled into our new home was to secure services for our developmentally delayed three-year-old. He had qualified to enter a special education preschool. Even though we were pleased with the services offered, I was apprehensive. The thought of being away from my son for several hours was difficult for me.

The day finally came. I got my little guy ready for his new school. He clung to me tightly. I pried his

hands from around my neck and gave him a kiss good-bye. I prayed fervently for strength to follow through on our plans. How would I pass the time without going crazy with worry? Back in my house, I sat down and let the tears come.


Just then there was a knock at my door. Trying to get control of myself, I looked out the window to see my neighbor Louanne. She was a single mom I had met soon after our move. When I opened the door, Louanne smiled and gave me a warm hug. She said simply, "I knew this

day would be hard for you." She sat me down at the kitchen table, opened a small grocery bag, and pulled out a mug, some cocoa, sugar, and canned milk. "I'm going to make you a cup of hot cocoa," she said.

As she taught me how to make the cocoa, we talked and talked. I don't remember everything we said, but before I knew it, it was time for my son to come home. Louanne smiled and said, "See how fast the time will go by?" She gathered up her things, gave me another hug, and went home.

This became one of my most cherished memories, an act of kindness that taught me that service doesn't have to be big or complicated, just sincerely given—even perhaps in a cup.

Melissa Maxfield, Tennessee,  
USA



## More Than Quilts

**N**ot long after my mother moved into her new home in the Riverton 15th Ward in Utah, her cancer returned and she knew her time was short. Nevertheless she set a goal to make a unique quilt for each of her 11 grandchildren. This goal kept her focused and gave her hope. She spent hours designing each quilt, purchasing the fabric, and cutting out the

pieces. Mom was always so sure she would complete this project that she had everyone convinced she wouldn't die until it was done. And with so many quilts to do, we felt sure she had plenty of time left.

The first time I heard her admit she might not be able to finish the quilts was just two weeks before she died. Seeing her weakened condition, the sisters in her Relief Society came to help her finish what she could not. They gathered up the quilts and told Mom they would finish them.

I remember Mom calling me

to say how pleased she was that each grandchild would have a quilt and how much she appreciated the love of the sisters in her ward. She was so relieved. Speaking now took a lot of effort, but she never stopped praising the women who had come to her aid.

The day Mom passed away, the quilts were far from done. That evening about 50 sisters set up quilt frames all over the church cultural hall and lovingly tied and bound each of the quilts. By the day of the funeral, each quilt was finished and had the

name of one of Mom's grandchildren lovingly embroidered on it. In the end, our family was left with more than quilts to remember Mom by; we were left with the Christlike example of love, service, and compassion that these Relief Society sisters displayed. Shelly Griffin, Utah, USA

## Her Words Meant Everything to Me

**O**ne of my close friendships started with a "small and simple" thing (Alma 37:6). My husband and I moved to a new area for school a few months before our first baby was due. I was nervous about all the unknowns ahead of me, but the Lord knew what I needed—He sent me Tricia.

I remember her warm, friendly smile. Her husband had just started school with my husband, and she had recently had her first baby. It was comforting to know that I had a fellow sister going through the same experience I was, and we talked together often.

Soon thereafter I gave birth to our daughter, Annika. Her birth was a wonderful experience, but my husband and I went roughly 72 hours with



i wish you  
luck and  
peace  
little baby

almost no sleep before bringing our new baby home. Adjusting to the reality and exhaustion of caring for a newborn was shocking and difficult for me. I didn't know how I was going to find the energy to care for our infant daughter. Everything had changed so abruptly, and I was utterly overwhelmed.

With all of this weighing heavily on me, we walked

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up to our front door. There, inside the screen door, was a card. As I opened it, I saw Tricia's name signed at the bottom. Her words broke through all my fears, exhaustion, and despair:

"I wish you luck and peace with your little baby girl. Motherhood truly is the greatest thing in the world, and it only seems to get better and more fun as the children get older. If it seems really tough in the beginning (it did to me), just remember they eventually do sleep through the night, and there are few greater feelings than when your baby looks up at you and smiles for the first time."

I burst into tears as I read those words. They



could not have come at a more perfect moment. Tricia's love and friendship filled me with courage, peace, and hope. I was overcome by the power of her simple act of love. It meant everything to me in that moment.

Ultimately, she was absolutely right—caring for Annika got a little easier, and her first precious smiles made all the exhaustion of the previous weeks fade away. Tricia's kindness helped carry me through that difficult time of transition. ■

Lani R. Axman, Arizona, USA

#### NOTE

1. Thomas S. Monson, "Three Goals to Guide You," *Ensign*, Nov. 2007, 120.



## WE WILL BE INSTRUMENTS

"Through our organization the gospel has been preached, the needy have been looked after, the sick have been comforted, the downhearted have been cheered, a message of love and of blessing has ever emanated from Relief Society workers. . . . The greatest thing in the world is love. And if we keep that always in our hearts, and give it as a message to those about us, we will be blessed and will be instruments in blessing those with whom we associate."

Clarissa S. Williams, sixth Relief Society general president, quoted in *Daughters in My Kingdom: The History and Work of Relief Society* (2011), 74.