

# THANK YOU, BROTHER JAY

By Kristine Purcell

*How grateful I am for the spirit, commitment, preparation, and love of countless earnest servants throughout the Church.*



Tomorrow is Sunday,” I told my five-year-old daughter as she snuggled on my lap. A smile spread over her face.

“Oh, goody,” she said. “Then I get to see Brother Jay.”

Gratitude filled my heart. How thankful I felt for a loving, caring Primary teacher who had eased our transition to a new ward following a move. Leaving our home in the U.S. Midwest and relocating 1,350 miles (2,173 km) away had been traumatic for the whole family but especially for our preschooler, Season. Shy by nature, she feared new situations and was apprehensive about attending church our first week in a new ward.

Brother Jay, a gentle, dedicated man, blended just the right touch of humor and affection to win Season’s trust. On that first Sunday he crouched down, took hold of her hand, looked into her eyes, and said, “C’mon, sweetheart. You’ll have fun in our class.”

As the weeks passed, Season looked forward to Sunday more than any other day of the week. As soon as we arrived at church, she scanned

the congregation for her teacher. He would smile in greeting.

Throughout the years Brother Jay remembered each student with little gifts for holidays and birthdays. When Season’s birthday approached, the most important guest she wanted to invite to her party was Brother Jay.

Could he have any idea how influential he had become in our little girl’s life? Would he ever guess how much his words and actions were internalized by his group of five-year-old Primary students? Could he possibly know how much it meant to me, as a mother, to have him be part of my daughter’s life?

Later, Season advanced to Brother Edward’s class, and her wonderful Primary experience continued. How thankful I am for all the conscientious, well-prepared, humble men and women who had a positive spiritual influence on Season’s life.

Our entire family has been blessed by dedicated individuals who have served us on our path of spiritual progression. I recall an outstanding Scoutmaster, a long-suffering priests

quorum adviser, a patient Seminary teacher, an extraordinary Young Women presidency, and a caring bishop.

As blessed as our family has been, I know we are not unique. “Brother Jay” could be many people, for there are many dedicated brothers and sisters whose service has touched the lives of families just like ours. How grateful we are for their spirit, commitment, preparation, and love.

Thank you to the countless earnest servants throughout the Church who have assisted our family. ■

*The author lives in Nevada, USA.*



## STRIVE TO CHANGE LIVES

“May we focus on the simple ways we can serve in the kingdom of God, always striving to change lives, including our own.”

Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, “O Be Wise,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2006, 20.