



*Voices reading the
audio version of the New Era
are teens just like you.*

LISTEN



Did you know that the Church has been recording publications and manuals for the blind since the late 1950s? Six years ago, David Shaw, the sound designer at LDS Motion Picture Studios thought visually-impaired children and youth should hear the *Friend* and *New Era* read by people their own ages. Now anyone can listen to these magazines read aloud online. The *New Era* spoke with Hayley (17), McKay (15), and Abby Newell (13) about their experiences recording articles each month.

How long have you been recording Church magazines?

Abby: Hayley was 10 and I was 6 when we started.

Hayley: At first it was kind of scary because we had to audition. McKay started a little while after Abby and I began recording. Then came our brother Jacob, who still just reads for the *Friend* because he's 10.

When my voice was younger I only used to read the *Friend*. Now I read both the *Friend* and *New Era*. We've all gotten better over time at enunciating things well and at making our voices go up and down to keep the sentences from all sounding the same.

UP!

By Heidi Lewis

Can you explain the process of recording?

Hayley: We get the script beforehand. It's just the words from the magazines and nothing else. We read through the articles and concentrate on any words or phrases we might stumble over.

McKay: When we get to the studio, Brother Shaw takes us to the recording booth. It's a small room with thick padding on the walls and ceiling so the sound doesn't get out. There is only room for a chair, a narrow desk with a computer monitor on it, and a huge microphone.

Abby: We also put on headphones so we can hear Brother Shaw's instructions from the other room.

McKay: We have to be very quiet in there. The microphone is extremely sensitive. It can pick up the turn of a page, a squeaky chair, or even a pencil writing on a piece of paper. First Brother Shaw takes our voice levels. Every voice has a different range, so it is important to adjust the volume for the sound to come through OK. After we do the voice level, a story will scroll up on the computer screen. Then we start to read.

What do you enjoy about recording?

Hayley: I like reading the longer articles about youth and the interesting things they do.

Abby: It's fun doing "Matt and Mandy" for the *Friend* with my younger brother Jacob. Once they switched it around and had me as Matt and Jacob as Mandy. That was pretty funny. We used to just read the articles, but now they are putting in more special sound effects.

Hayley: Sometimes the messages in the stories you read are really simple, but there is a truth to them that you need in your life.



NEmore

Recordings for the visually impaired are available in several formats, including half-speed cassettes and MP3 files downloadable from the Internet. The entire article, including sidebars, is recorded. To listen to a recording of this and other articles, visit newera.lds.org.

PHOTOGRAPHS BY HEIDI LEWIS AND COURTESY OF THE MORMON TABERNACLE CHOIR



Does everyone in your family record for the visually impaired?

Abby: Everyone but our mom records. Our dad began reading articles for the blind after Hayley, McKay, and I started.

Your dad, Lloyd Newell, is the announcer for *Music and the Spoken Word* with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir. What are some interesting experiences you have had with him?

Hayley: Sometimes we go with him on Sunday to the broadcast. Most of the time the broadcast is still held in the Tabernacle, but during the summer, Christmas, and General Conference it is held at the Conference Center. It's fun to go in the back rooms at the

Conference Center. They have an American Sign Language room. I like going there because I am taking ASL in school.

Abby: At Christmastime they have special guest artists. We get to meet interesting people like senators and famous musicians. Sometimes we get to meet General Authorities.

You have had a lot of great family experiences. What else do you like to do as a family?

Hayley: We all play tennis together. Everyone also plays the piano, and Abby clogs.

Abby: I belong to a clogging team. We do solo and team dances and go to competitions.

McKay: We all like to go skiing as a family, too.

Hayley: Every summer we go to southern Utah. My dad loves the hikes.

Abby: We have a lot of fun doing things together as a family.

How has recording the Church magazines influenced your lives?

Hayley: It's not always easy to take the time to record. I might be feeling bad about something in my life, but then I go to read and I realize I am doing something for someone else. I immediately feel better. It's uplifting.

McKay: There are times when I am recording that I really feel the Spirit. I even have to stop reading for a moment.

Abby: I like it because it's something we can do together. It is fun doing what my siblings and my dad are doing.

Hayley: Recording has strengthened our family because we are with each other. We are spending time together. And we love serving as a family. **NE**



Jacob, Abby, McKay, and Hayley Newell—along with their dad, Lloyd—all record Church magazine articles for the visually impaired.

