

By Lindsay Hiller

NEVER

WAVER



I grew up in a city near Seattle, Washington, and was not a member of the Church. When I was 11, I joined a local ballroom dance team that several of my friends were on. The team had started as a youth activity for Latter-day Saints, but it was so popular the instructors kept it going. I didn't know much about the Church, but the instructors and other youth were so welcoming that I didn't care.

My friends invited me to Mutual activities and weekend Church dances. I began to notice something interesting about them: they were always smiling. They were positive, encouraging, and enthusiastic about any opportunity that arose. They had joy that I had never felt.

I wanted to know what made them so happy. During six years of careful observation I learned some interesting things. My friends jumped at the opportunity to help and serve those around them. They never judged their peers for the way they looked, talked, or acted—they accepted everyone. My friends believed in speaking cleanly, acting appropriately, and dressing modestly. They valued their parents and siblings as the most important people in their lives. And most important, my friends had firm testimonies of Jesus Christ that strengthened them in difficult times.

After high school graduation, I said good-bye to these

friends and started college in New York City. It took only two weeks for me to desperately miss what I now know was the Spirit I felt at Church activities and dance classes with my friends. I looked up the closest ward on LDS.org and then walked to the meetinghouse the following Sunday. I met the missionaries and began learning from them.

When the missionaries taught me about Joseph Smith, I knew instantly through the Spirit that his experience was true. Then, when they explained Jesus Christ's sacrifice and how He atoned for us, my heart was filled with gratitude for my Savior and His love for me. Six weeks later, I was baptized and confirmed a member of the Church.

I owe my introduction to the Church to my friends who were so kind and welcoming. They didn't allow their standards to slip when pressure was strong or their decisions were unpopular. Their testimonies were firm and unwavering. They held true to their faith and showed me what it meant to truly live the gospel of Jesus Christ.

I know the importance of always living my standards. Both members and nonmembers need strong examples of friends who refuse to lower their standards. Even when I think no one is paying attention, I will try to never waver. You never know who is looking at your example. **NE**