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*They couldn't serve full-time missions. But that didn't mean they couldn't serve.*

Jacob and Jeff Balls grew up on Cherokee Street in Pocatello, Idaho. And growing up on Cherokee Street means you're part of the unofficial "neighborhood club" that works together, plays together, and advances in the Aaronic Priesthood together. You remain worthy and you prepare to serve a full-time mission. That's just the way it is and has been for years. During the last decade, more than a dozen young men from Cherokee Street have



# DETERMINED *to Serve*





served or are serving full-time missions.

But Jacob and Jeff both were born with an intellectual disability—not so extensive that they can’t be helpful and involved, but enough that full-time missionary service isn’t possible for them.

Still, they wanted to serve. What to do?

### Plan in Advance

Robert Chambers, who was their bishop in the Indian Hills Ward at the time, explains what happened. “Everybody loved Jacob. His priesthood leaders and his quorum, as well as his family, were always interested in providing him with opportunities that were similar in nature to the other boys in the quorum. About the time he was ordained a priest, we started talking with his mom and dad and his priesthood leaders, looking forward to the time when the young men in the quorum would be going on missions. We wanted to find an alternative way for him to give service, too.

Jacob and Jeff’s father, Dan, continues. “We went to see the bishop to ask about alternatives to missionary service. We found out it was already on his mind, and he was working on it.”

When he turned 19, Jacob was called to



**T**he Balls brothers have found a lot of joy in giving service. Jacob loves to help teach children about baptism, both of them have regular meetings with the bishop of their home ward, and both serve as ushers in the singles ward in their stake. They share their experiences with their parents and with each other, and once a week Jeff serves in the Idaho Falls Temple.

**J**eff and Jacob study scriptures together, join their other brothers for a family dinner, talk to the full-time missionaries, and share in their family's legacy of missionary work—grandparents, brothers, and a sister-in-law have served, and younger brother Jesse is now on a full-time mission in New York. Jeff works well with his supervisor in the temple cafeteria.



serve with the ward mission leader, teaching each soon-to-be eight-year-old child in the stake a class about preparing for baptism and confirmation. He was told that part of his service was to study his scriptures regularly. He was also called to serve as an usher at sacrament meetings. Jacob served so faithfully that his calling was extended. He is still serving.

#### **Look for Opportunities**

By the time Jeff was missionary age, Bishop Chambers had been called as the stake president. But the new bishop, David Nye, had already heard from Jeff, who wanted his opportunity to serve, too. President Chambers and Bishop Nye arranged for Jeff to work one day each week in the cafeteria of the Idaho Falls Idaho Temple. In addition, Jeff was called to serve with his brother as an usher, and they were encouraged to study their scriptures together.

Both young men check in regularly with their bishop, and from time to time with their stake president, to report on their progress. That progress has been magnificent.

The young men are enthusiastic about their callings and greet everyone they meet with a handshake and a smile. In return, they are greeted with friendship and kindness. Everybody in their home ward, as well as in the Riverside Singles Branch, which meets in the same building—in fact, just about everybody in the stake—recognizes the Balls brothers and knows about their special assignments. Lots of children in the stake remember Jacob as one of the special teachers who helped them learn about baptism and confirmation. And every



Wednesday, Jeff's mother Denise makes the one-hour drive to the temple so Jeff can spend the afternoon working in the cafeteria.

There, Jeff has made friends with cafeteria workers and temple patrons alike. He gathers up dishes and helps serve food, and yes, he loves to eat the meal he is provided, especially the slice of pie. But his number-one accomplishment, he says, is to help people feel happy. It's something Jeff does in the house of the Lord, and something both Jacob and Jeff do in the ward, branch, and stake where they serve.

Since both Jacob and Jeff are living at home, they have been able to serve as home teachers with their father. They have also helped in the ward nursery and in the ward library. And they are also able to bless the sacrament regularly. "Jacob and Jeff take about three minutes longer to say the prayers," Bishop Nye observes, "but they are so sincere that the spirituality is augmented





## OTHER WAYS TO SERVE

Because of health problems or other circumstances, some people can't serve a regular full-time mission. If you have been excused from full-time missionary service but would like to serve the Lord in some extra way, ask your bishop to discuss the possibilities with you. He and the stake president may help you find other service opportunities in your area. Some places you might possibly serve include:

- **A seminary or institute**, working in an office, at a reception desk, or as computer support.
- **A welfare facility**, such as a bishops' storehouse, cannery, Deseret Industries, employment center, or other welfare facility.
- **A Church-owned farm or ranch**, doing chores or clerical work.
- **A temple**, working in the cafeteria, in the laundry, or on the temple grounds.
- **A visitors' center**, working in an office or at a reception desk (sisters only).
- **A missionary training center**, working in the referral center, in the mail room, in the cafeteria, or with building maintenance.
- **A meetinghouse**, helping with building maintenance.

By serving in the Church, you show the Lord your love for Him and your commitment to your baptismal covenant. And service helps to build the Lord's kingdom on the earth. As He said:

"Be not weary in well-doing, for ye are laying the foundation of a great work. And out of small things proceedeth that which is great.

"Behold, the Lord requireth the heart and a willing mind; and the willing and obedient shall eat the good of the land of Zion in these last days" (D&C 64:33–34).

immeasurably." With tears in his eyes, their father talks about the example older brother Jeremy set by walking Jacob and Jeff through their sacrament assignments as deacons until they understood how to pass, as teachers until they understood how to prepare, and as priests until they were comfortable saying the prayers and distributing the trays.

### Join in the Legacy

Just as Jacob and Jeff have looked to older brothers as an example, they are now passing on that same legacy of priesthood service to their younger brother, Jesse, 19, now serving in the New York Utica Mission, and their youngest brother Jason, 17, who is also preparing for a full-time mission.

"Without Jacob and Jeff, I wouldn't be who I am," Jesse says. "They prove that there's something good out there for every person to do."

And the neighborhood club?

Jacob and Jeff's service is their way of maintaining that tradition, too. "They know they can't do things that everyone else can do, but they know that in this way they are serving others," their father says. "Just because they are mentally limited doesn't change the fact that they have important things to achieve."

Ask Jacob and Jeff Balls if there is something that those who can't serve full-time mission *can* do, and there's no question what their answer will be. Both Jacob and Jeff now know there is always much to do about something, even when that something is close to home. **NE**

Service opportunities are listed under Other Resources at [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org).



"We recognize that it may not be wise for some of our young men and young women to face the rigors and challenges of a full-time mission. If priesthood leaders excuse any of you from full-time missionary service, we ask you and your families to accept the decision and move forward. You can prepare to participate in the saving ordinances of the temple and find other ways to be of service. And we ask all of our members to be supportive and to show great love and understanding in assisting all of our faithful youth in their various Church callings."

**Elder M. Russell Ballard of the Quorum of the Twelve Apostles, "One More," Ensign, May 2005, 69.**