

Wearing My Heart on

The patch on my jacket helps me share what I care about.

By Ashley Toher

For the past three years I have been very active in the different sports and programs in high school. Last year I lettered in swimming, so for Christmas I asked my parents for a letterman's jacket. They took me and my brother to go pick out the patches we wanted on our jackets to represent our high school years.

While looking at all the patches, I noticed a CTR patch and pointed it out to my mom. She was surprised that there was even that option. I picked out a swimmer, basketball hoop with my number, dance shoes, and the CTR patch, all of these representing my life in high school. The CTR patch would represent the four years of waking up to attend early morning seminary.

As time went on there was not a day when I went without wearing my jacket to school. In seminary, my teacher, Sister Sawtelle, was impressed with it and told me she had never seen a CTR patch out of all the athletic kids to pass through her class with jackets in nine years. As I wore it around campus, my friends stopped me and asked about my different patches. I received many raised eyebrows because I wanted something Church-related on my jacket. I was teased, but there were also good comments.

One friend stopped me on the way to class and asked me the meaning of the three letters. I told her it means "Choose the Right and Return to Christ." She smiled and replied that she loved the fact that it was reversible and said she was proud of me for standing up for what I believe in.

When speaking with the missionaries about the CTR patch, they asked me about the reactions I had from my peers. I told them about all the questions I had been asked and the different reactions I had received when my friends realized I am a Mormon. They told me not to worry about what people think, because I had provided myself with the best missionary experiences possible.

At lunch it became a common event to have discussions about what my friends had heard about the Church and what was true. Each day there are new questions. Now, one friend is taking the missionary lessons, while another has been reading the Book of Mormon. Another friend asked to come to seminary with me sometime. He even told me that he had noticed how different I acted from our other friends—happy in the morning, helpful to others, didn't cheat in class on the tests. And most noticeably, he had never heard me cuss.

I realized that no matter what, the way a person acts is always noticed, therefore I was glad to know that by living the way my parents and Church leaders had taught me, I became an example to my friends around me. This CTR patch has caused many changes among my friends, most of which I am grateful for. It has brought my religion and my beliefs to the attention of the people I am with and see every day. It seemed a small thing at the time, but it has truly changed my life for the better.

Many of my friends called me a goody-goody for a long time, but by discussing with me what I believe, they have come to accept it. I love being able to be an example, and now my friends really have come to understand why I live the way I do, which is a very big blessing. **NE**

My Sleeve

