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# Relief Society PRESIDENT?

BY JADE SWARTZBERG

Imagine graduating from Young Women and a few months later being called as Relief Society president. Impossible, you say? Mallory Higginson and Macie Murphy could tell you otherwise.

Both 18-year-old freshmen at BYU–Idaho, Macie and Mallory are serving as presidents of the Relief Society groups in their student wards. They had hardly even attended Relief Society before they were each called to serve as president.

They smile confidently as they talk about their callings, but each admits being surprised and overwhelmed after her first meeting with the bishop. Neither of them had been attending Relief Society for very long before arriving at school. Now all of a sudden they were in charge. Despite their initial doubts and fears, Macie and Mallory have quickly come to see that they are not on their own. Their mothers, who have both served as Relief Society presidents, are only a phone call away with comfort and advice. Their bishop is also there to support them, and, of course, so is the Lord.

Although from very different parts of the country—Macie is from Columbus, Georgia, and Mallory is from Mesa, Arizona—they are both learning together that Relief Society is about women being united in the gospel.

*At age 18, neither Macie nor Mallory expected this calling.*

## Sisters in the Gospel

Macie and Mallory are each responsible for about 60 young women, and they have learned a lot from it. Living in the dorms at BYU–Idaho as they experience being away from home, the girls in each Relief Society

group have become especially close-knit.

From her apartment Macie can see all the apartments in her Relief Society, which she likes because she can see the people she's looking after. When they come back from dates, she likes to go chat with them, or if she notices that someone is sad or lonely, she invites her over to talk and have fun.

This dorm setting helps to foster a sisterhood, and Macie has learned that sisterhood is what Relief Society is about. "I think it's really important to rely on each other," she says. "I know lots of these girls come from places where they don't have LDS friends, and it's cool that we can all be one, united in the gospel."

That is why things like visiting teaching are so important. Just before Mallory left for college, her mom asked her if she wanted to go visiting teaching. Mallory brushed off the offer by rolling her eyes and asking, "How hard could it be?" She admits that she didn't take it very seriously, but now she understands what a wonderful support system it is. "It is so important for women to check up on each other and to support each other," she says.

**M**acie Murphy and Mallory Higginson were just starting to attend Relief Society at college when, to their amazement, they were called as Relief Society presidents. They discovered that along with the calling came a great love for the young women in their charge.



**M**allory goes the extra mile and has learned sign language to communicate more effectively with one Relief Society sister, Abby Brimhall.

*Macie learned firsthand the reasons for Relief Society programs like home, family, and personal enrichment and visiting teaching.*

Macie agrees and says she is encouraging her Relief Society sisters to reach out and serve each other, even if it's as simple as talking to someone who seems to be having a bad day. "It makes you feel better about yourself if you're serving others," she says. "We're all a little homesick and lonely, and this is a great strength." Away from their homes, the girls have become like family and look after each other, sharing cookies and conversations with neighbors.

**Instruments in His Hands**

"The moment I got this calling, I had this great love for the girls, and I didn't even know them," says Macie. She had heard other people say similar things about their callings but had never experienced it before. She compares this feeling to a small taste of what the Lord feels for us all. "He loves us all; we're His children," she says. "I feel a responsibility to help take care of the Lord's children."

Their bishop encourages this feeling of responsibility, and although he helps them and gives them guidelines, he encourages Macie and Mallory to pray for inspiration.

One way in particular that Mallory and Macie had to rely on the Lord was in recommending their counselors and others for callings in Relief Society. It was a rather daunting task at first, considering they were as new to the ward as they were to the calling and thus hardly knew anyone. Each of them prayed and then went door-to-door trying to get to know the girls in her Relief Society. Mallory

says, "I asked the Lord to help me seek those who would be able to grow in the callings and also be able to help the other girls grow." After that it was a matter of being in tune with the Spirit to know who felt right for the position. She was grateful to be able to counsel with her bishop, who holds the keys to approve callings in the ward.

Through her prayers, Macie has been able to touch the life of at least one girl through inspiration. "One of the girls I had recommended for a calling came up to me and was in tears. She told me that she had been praying for something and felt like she needed to get involved. This calling was what she needed. I know the Lord was the

one who called her, but it made me feel good that I could help her out."



**A New Perspective**

"One of my favorite things to do during Relief Society is to sit up at the front during the opening hymn and look at

each girl's face," says Mallory. "It's a different perspective. You see them all as equal—they are all great people. And I've learned that everyone has something to offer, which is a perspective that I have often prayed for."

Mallory considers being able to see the girls through the Lord's eyes as one of the biggest blessings of her calling. But she says that you don't need to be the Relief Society president to feel that. Anyone can pray and ask Heavenly Father for the ability to see people as children of God and appreciate what they have to offer.

"It's been really humbling," says Mallory of receiving this calling. "I look around and see so many great girls, and I realize any of

them could be a Relief Society president with the Lord's help, because we are instruments in His hands."

After all, you never know just when the Lord might call on you to lead, whether it be in your Young Women class presidency or as president of the Relief Society. Macie and Mallory admit they were surprised, but that hasn't stopped them from accepting the opportunity to serve.

And now both of them also have a new perspective on Relief Society.

When she first moved into Relief Society at home, Macie thought it was a challenge to fit in with the older women. Mallory's home ward tried to ease the transition by periodically inviting the Laurels to Relief Society lessons and activities, so she had a taste of what it was like, but in the back of her mind

she still had a fear that they were going to spend a lot of time sewing. However, both Mallory and Macie now understand the reasons for programs like home, family, and personal enrichment and are able to gear them toward the women their age.

"I have a greater appreciation for Relief Society now," Macie says. "I don't think it's just an old ladies society anymore."

And just as both girls turned to their mothers for words of advice and comfort in their new callings, Mallory says that with the right attitude, the younger women can learn from the older women. Then, that sisterhood she and Macie have come to embrace can be extended across the generations. **NE**

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For help with the transition to Relief Society, go to [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org) and click on Serving in the Church, Relief Society, and then Transitioning into Womanhood.

**M**acie and Mallory pose here with some of their beloved Relief Society sisters from BYU-Idaho.

