

By Teg McBride
(Based on a true story)

RUNNING



"I'm very glad that he's my dad, and I know he loves me too" (Children's Songbook, 211).

TJ shivered. Even with the warm air blasting through his bedroom vent, he was still cold! He missed Hawaii more than ever.

TJ missed surfing in the ocean and hiking in the mountains. He missed his friends. Ohio was OK, and it was fun to see snow again, but he still felt pretty lonely.

And cold.

TJ heard a soft knock on his door, and Dad stuck his head into the room. "Hey, buddy," Dad said.

TJ smiled. "Hey, Dad." Right before they moved, Dad had come home from military deployment in Afghanistan. Moving was hard, but having Dad home was awesome!

Dad sat next to TJ on the bed.

"I just had an idea," Dad said. "Let's run a half-marathon together. We'll make our own training plan. We can even start running tomorrow. What do you think?"

TJ looked out the window. It would take a lot of work to get ready for a 13-mile (21-km) race. "How can we run in the snow?"

"Why not? We can do anything together. It'll be an adventure!"

It was still dark the next morning when they left the house, TJ with a pocket full of jellybeans and Dad with a bottle of water strapped to his belt. They both wore long-sleeved shirts, sweatpants, hats, and gloves, but every muscle in TJ's body still clenched against the freezing wind.

I can't believe I let Dad talk me into this, he thought.

It was hard at first, but as he and Dad ran and talked together, TJ almost forgot to notice the cold. Dad told TJ about his adventures as a kid and how serving a mission had changed his life. They talked about their favorite movies and cars and how Dad met Mom in Texas. TJ tried to convince Dad that ham and

with Dad

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pineapple pizza was way better than pepperoni.

Before TJ knew it, they were back home.

We did it! he thought. He gave Dad a high five. Then they went inside for hot chocolate.

Together Dad and TJ mapped out a four-month training plan. They would train inside on a treadmill during the week, and every Saturday morning they would go for a long run outside. On Friday and Sunday they would rest.

One Saturday, TJ skipped and stayed in bed, but as soon as he heard the front door shut, he wished he'd gone with Dad. When TJ asked Dad how the run was, Dad said, "It was OK, but I missed you. It wasn't the same without my running partner."

After that TJ never missed a run. Soon he was looking forward to their Saturday runs all week! While they ran, TJ told Dad about his new school and Dad talked about military training and some of his adventures around the world. TJ's favorite stories were from Dad's mission. He hoped he

could go on a mission someday, just like Dad.

By the time the snow melted, TJ decided he kind of liked Ohio. He still missed his friends in Hawaii, and he still didn't like the cold, but he noticed his loneliness fading away. He was glad he'd done something challenging and stuck to their plan. He was part of an awesome two-man running team, and together they could do anything. He couldn't wait to run their race! ♦

The author lives in Ohio, USA.



This year, I started cross-country. I was afraid I'd be the slowest on the team. I prayed for help. The next morning, I read the August 2015 *Friend*. One quote caught my attention: "And [they] shall run and not be weary, and shall walk and not faint" (D&C 89:20). Now whenever I'm not the fastest, I think of this quote to keep me going. I knew it was an answer to my prayers.

Samantha W., age 11, Washington, USA