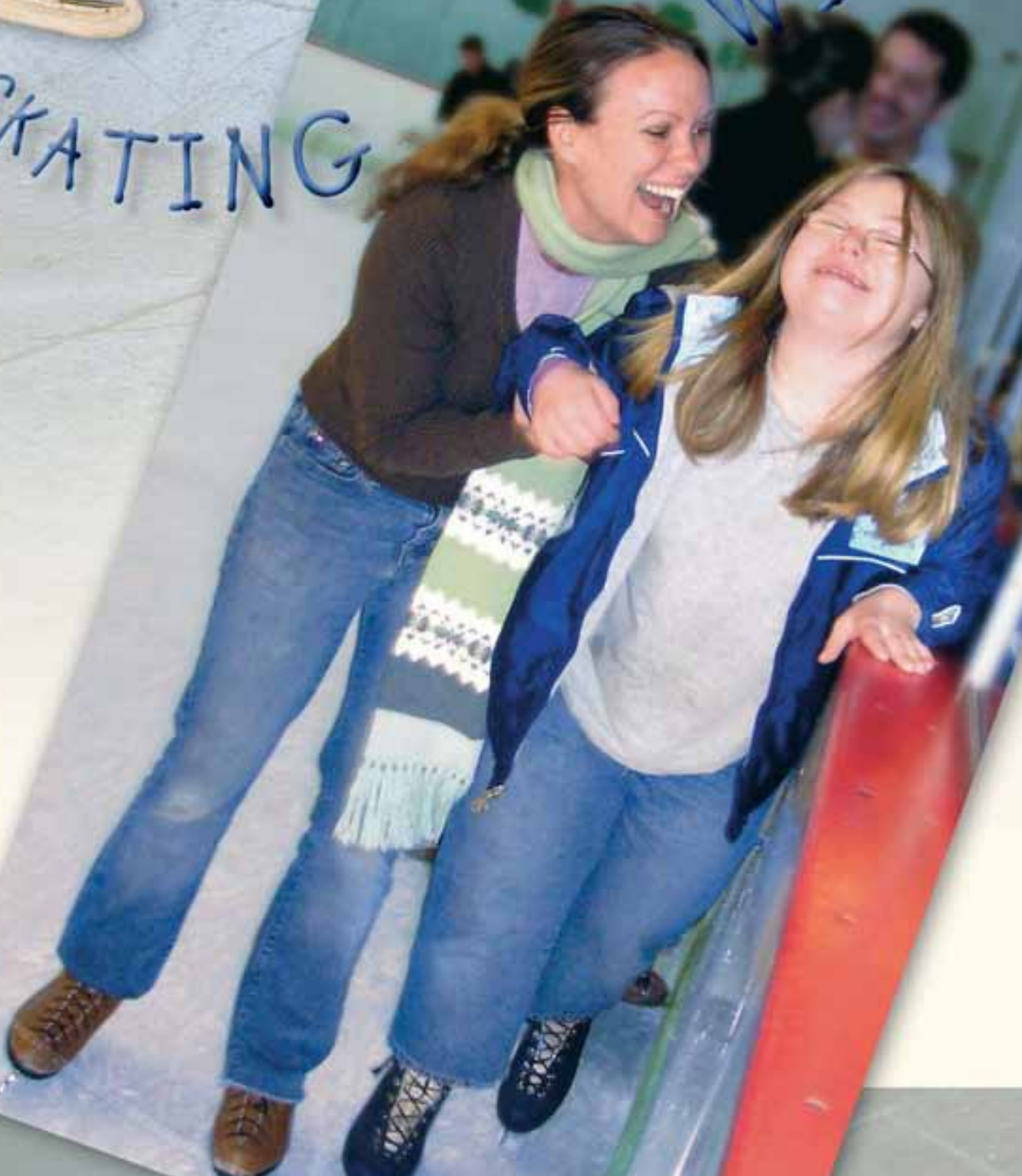




SKATING

WITH





# JENNIFER

BY LAURA KOHN  
AND SUSAN WINTERS

*Young women in California find that it's easy to adapt when you care enough to make progress personal.*



**I**t's not unusual to see two girls giggling as they try to stay up on ice skates.

But how often do they do it while working on Personal Progress?

In this case, it's one of many things young women in the Centerville

Ward of the Fremont Stake in northern California have done to help one of their own. The skating activity was tailor-made to fit the needs of Jennifer Beck, who has Down syndrome.

Motivated by the spiritual growth and blessings they had seen others receive through participation in Personal Progress, the stake Young Women presidency prayerfully sought guidance about how to help Jennifer, a Mia Maid. Their prayers were answered when they found the following instruction:

"Value Experiences and Value Projects may be modified according to personal or local circumstances, interests, and needs with the prior approval of parents and Young Women leaders. . . . After careful consideration by parents and leaders, modifications may be appropriate to meet the needs of young women with disabilities" (*Guidebook for Parents and Leaders of Youth* [pamphlet, 2001], 19–20).

That was how to bring Personal Progress to Jennifer!

The young women and their leaders were asked to read through the Value Experiences in the Personal Progress book and to select one that they felt they could help Jennifer complete. They were encouraged to modify the selected value experience to better suit Jennifer's abilities by asking themselves, "What is the intent of this Value Experience? What is it that Jennifer is supposed to learn from this experience?"

Each young woman made a written commitment to carry out the Value Experience they would share with Jennifer. All of the commitments were organized onto a calendar indicating who would meet with Jennifer each month and what experience would be completed. This commitment calendar ensured that Jennifer would experience Personal Progress on a regular basis without being overwhelmed. It also helped the Young Women presidency, Jennifer, and her parents to track what she had accomplished.

Since then, Jennifer has had regular Personal Progress experiences that have helped her feel the Spirit and better understand her own divine nature. "Suppose 23 girls took a special interest in you," her mother, Judy, says. "When people spend time with Jennifer, she feels a bond that makes her life much richer."

The young women and leaders who have partnered with Jennifer have also received

*Jennifer and Sister Laura Kohn (left) have fun ice skating while working on Jennifer's Individual Worth experience. These friends (above, left to right) Ashley Hess, Sister Kerri Laufer, Jennifer Beck, Jana Beck, and Sarah Topham enjoy a special friendship. Jennifer and Natalie Kirk (below) are working on her Integrity experience.*



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unexpected blessings. “When I met with Jennifer to complete the sixth Value Experience, in Choice and Accountability, I felt like I received more than I gave,” remembers one of the stake leaders. “Hearing her simple yet pure understanding of the Young Women theme and what it means to be a daughter of God taught me so much about His love for each one of us. I felt her testimony of Jesus Christ when I met with Jennifer to create a collection of pictures of the Savior for a sacrament picture book.”

Laura Dunford worked with Jennifer to teach her the principle of tithing. “We made a little box for savings, one for spending money, and most importantly, one for tithing,” Laura explains. “It was really fun. Jennifer is wonderful, and I love her.”

Emily Topham helped Jennifer perform service. “I knew she liked to cook, so I decided to help her make a pizza dinner for her family. We laughed a lot, and afterward she told me her family enjoyed the yummy food. We were both happy to make someone smile.”

At Christmastime Jennifer was able to participate in a hand-bell concert at an inter-stake pageant. This was a thrilling experience, one she remembers and often talks about.

Jennifer also recalls working in the ward nursery, learning about service by collecting donations for a humanitarian project, learning about listening to clean music and watching appropriate movies, and of course ice skating.

With diligent effort and some help from her friends, Jennifer Beck completed her Personal Progress goals and received her Young Women Medallion. The young women and their leaders in the Freemont Ward appreciated this opportunity to share spiritual experiences with Jennifer, and they continue to be blessed by her sweet testimony and loving spirit. They truly have become united. **NE**

**J**ennifer (right) makes progress on her goals by learning to lead music, creating a family tree with Charlotte Olsen, learning to play hand bells with Julie Seimbrenner, and delivering meals to the needy with Ashley Hess and Brittany Carlile.

