

Through New Eyes

An exhausted sigh escaped me as I slumped against the doorframe. Behind me, in the house, the bossy nine-year-old was yelling at the grumpy two-year-old, while the sometimes difficult special needs seven-year-old was spilling the mac-and-cheese all over the table. In front of me, in the yard, the hyper five-year-old, no longer missing, was sitting contently in a mud pile covered from head to toe.

The Fosters had moved into the ward about a month ago, and already, Sister Foster was my young women's president. That first Friday night was something else. I walked home with the fighting over dinner and clamoring for the iPad still ringing in my ears. Yet when Sister Foster asked if I would be willing to return, I found myself saying “sure, anytime.”

Friday nights with “bawbysittor”, as I was known, fell into a rhythm. Not long after, the primary president asked me to sit by the Fosters during sacrament meeting to help. Soon after that, I began giving the oldest weekly piano lessons. My favorite question became “bawbysittor, can you come back tomorrow?” I would walk home physically exhausted, but over time, mentally and emotionally rejuvenated.

All too soon Sister Foster told me they were moving back to Idaho. Tears filled my eyes as I thought about what I was losing – my young women's president, a trusting 9-year-old, a darling special needs 7-year-old, a loving 5-year-old, and an adorably independent 2-year-old. I saw them now through new eyes – eyes washed through service. “You are the thing we will miss most,” Sister Foster told me.

Though my time with the Fosters was short, it was one of the most meaningful service experiences of my life – through it, I learned timeless lessons on service and love that have helped me ever since, be it in my family, neighborhood, or school community.