

4/16/12

Mom,

You are so welcome for the victory scriptures! They have been a source of comfort to me this year.

Thank YOU for giving US your entire day on Thursday! I enjoyed it all and it went too fast! I always love talking with you, you are a woman of wisdom and insight and I feel we are kindred spirits in many ways! Please know you are always welcome here!

Thank you for having Damon over so much! I know it's his home away from home and he draws strength and encouragement from you! You are such a blessing to all the grandchildren!

I am glad you made it back home safe! Have a wonderful week and a special Passover!

Love you!

---

4/16/12

Hello all my wonderful children!

I'm not sure how it triggered, but yesterday I found myself with our dear Janis Family Herald 'newspapers' on my lap and I read lots and lots of them. It was so much fun and I thought you all would enjoy reading some of the stuff you creative people came up with! It was always a miracle to me each month to see the final product! Heather, I never worried about your contributions, yet consistently they exceeded expectations. The boys I worried about every month, but you always surprised and pleased me.:) These newspapers are going to be a source of enjoyment for the rest of our lives! I want to share a few just for fun! I really liked these poems! They are metaphor poems. Your assignment was to take our family and compare it to something else. Your personalities come out and your honesty too. They are precious!

### **Our Family, the Refrigerator By Spencer**

**Dad** is the refrigerator, protecting us from harm,

**Mom** is the freezer, helping Dad,

**Heather** is the picture, showing things to Mom and Dad,

**Damon** is the ham, always hamming things up and making a delicious ham sandwich,

I am the cheese, making up cheesy jokes and making a delicious cheese sandwich,

**Taylor** is the bread, always related to me,

**Emily** is the cookie, making the family sweet.

### **Our Family, the Plant By Heather**

**Dad** is the root, giving the family life,  
**Mom** is the pot, keeping us together,  
I am the stem, stabilizing the family,  
**Damon** is water, refreshing us with his lively personality,  
**Spencer** is the sunlight, giving warmth and helping us grow,  
**Taylor** is the leaves, adding color and beauty to our family,  
**Emily** is the flower bud, beautiful and sweet.

### **Our Family, the Skateboard By Damon**

**Dad** is the bearing, keeping the family rolling,  
**Mom** is the trucks, keeping us together and taking all the stress,  
**Heather** is the grip-tape, applying the friction so we won't slip,  
I am the deck, to keep us stable,  
**Spencer** is the riser pads, just allowing flexibility and absorbing shock,  
**Taylor** is the hardware, connecting us and staying firm,  
**Emily** is the wheels, rolling us on smoothly.

### **Our Family, the Car By Taylor**

**Dad** is the gas tank, providing for the family,  
**Mom** is the engine, working all the time,  
**Emily** is the radio, at full BLAST singing,  
I am the horn always yelling at Emily.  
**Damon** is the steering wheel pushing you left and right,  
**Heather** is the wheels, helping Mom and Dad,  
**Spencer** is the windows, always coming UP with ideas.

One of the reasons I like these poems is that it shows how you all see each member of the family as an important, necessary part to making it work. Each of you ARE important and necessary! And I know how much each of you loves each other and that is so wonderful to me!

### **The Pokemon, Shellder**

There is a little shell,  
It has two spikes on top,  
It points at something with  
its tongue,

It doesn't like to stop.

-Spencer

### **Pinewood Derby Fun**

While cars are zooming down the track,  
Cub scouts hope their cars won't crack.

The biggest pack meeting of the year,  
All the families tend to cheer.

Dad builds car with his Cub Scout son,  
It makes the Pinewood Derby fun!

-Damon Jr.

### **Jaguars**

Away from the jaguar you should stay,  
Even if he wants you to play.

'Cause if you're with him and he wants to  
eat,

You'd be his meal, your feet a treat.

-Heather



### **Tigers**

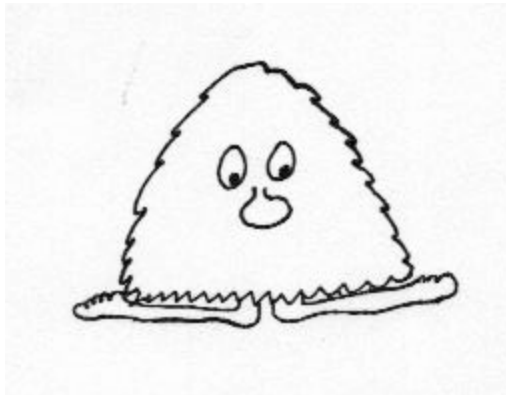
If tigers are hungry when you are near,  
You run to your house and get your spear,  
And run at the tiger fast and fierce,  
And keep your spear high until you  
pierce.

When he is dead you take him home,  
Take off the skin and take off the bones,  
Sew the skin and make some clothes,  
Then eat the meat and save the nose.

-Taylor



These next poems were created with this picture for inspiration:



### **Fickadoodle**

This cute and fluffy Fickadoodle,  
Has feet as big as swimming noodles!  
He can't walk with feet so big,  
He ate but one round little fig.  
The fur is not fur at all,  
Through spring and summer, winter, fall,  
The dust collects upon his head,  
And will do so till he is dead.

-Heather

### **Fuzzy**

You cannot see his stomach,  
His head looks like a tree,  
He's very small and chubby,  
He likes to eat a pea.

-Taylor

It's a guy.  
That guy eat my bread a long time.  
I like him.  
He can go bye-bye.

To a monkey house.

-Emily

**Mr. Sad**

Mr. Sad has to cry,

'Cause he can't fly.

Tears are coming out of his eyes.

-Spencer

**The Quiet Wiffle**

Can you hear it coming?

A soft sound brushing by,

Ruffling your thoughts and

Awakening long forgotten,

Smiling, gentle

Memories.

-Tiffany

**Stuffy Weirdo**

This quiet, unattractive beast

Has no arms or legs...just feet!

-Damon Jr.



-Spencer



-Damon



-Taylor



-Heather

Halloween Limericks:

There once was a jolly good witch  
Who had a black cat named Pitch.  
She cast a good spell  
To make Pitch well  
Because he had a bad itch.

-Spencer

There once was a gross old bumpkin.  
(It's the top of a pumpkin.)  
It lived in a shack,  
On top of a Jack (o-lantern),  
This black, moldy, crinkly bumpkin.

-Taylor

There once was a hungry ghost  
Whose favorite food was toast.  
He found some candy,  
It was so dandy,  
Spread on pieces of toast.

-Damon

Lickity splickity rhymes  
Are made out of spooky old chimes  
They swing and they sway  
So there's something to say  
And sung with a tune many times.  
-Heather

### **Dinner at CiCi's**

By Taylor Janis (Feb. 2000 issue)  
The Janis family went to CiCi's Pizza  
on Thursday, February 24th . CiCi's is a  
place where you can watch TV, play  
video games and eat pizza.  
Spencer let me play a video game  
with his own money. It was fun playing  
the video game.  
Damon Jr. likes the desserts.  
"They've got chocolate-fudge pizzas and  
they've got apple-cinnamon-topped pizzas,"  
he said.  
Heather kind-of likes CiCi's. "I like  
the alfredo pizza and the pepperoni, but I  
don't like the restaurant because it's always  
really loud," she said.  
Spencer likes CiCi's because he likes  
the desserts and video games.  
Mom said, "It's nice not to have to  
make dinner once in a while."  
CiCi's is a fun place to be!

### **Ride the Waves!**

By Spencer Janis  
On July 3, 2000, we went to the beach  
on the Gulf. We would get on our boogie  
boards when we found a big wave (like a  
tidal wave) and we'd ride the waves! For  
some reason, Dad did something that was  
so fun! He would find a big wave and then  
he'd push us on the boogie board and  
we'd kick and we'd go really fast.  
We saw lots of pelicans and lots of

other birds. We saw some fish jump out of the water. And once when I stuck my hand in the water I touched a jellyfish.

We had some snacks like Oreo cookies and muffins and we had lots of fun.

"I liked it because we could try out the new boogie boards, and the water was just right for the heat, and we were able to stay there all day," said Damon.

Taylor said he liked the ocean because we could surf on the boogie boards.

"Going swimming. I swim so good in the ocean," said Emily.

Heather liked going out to the big waves with Damon.

I liked the ocean because we got to eat snacks and because we could swim and because we could ride the waves on the boogie boards.

### **John the Fish**

By Emily

John the Fish died. I'm sad about John the Fish going down the toilet. We didn't flush him. If we flush him, I will be really sad. If we bury him, I will be really happy! And then John the Fish got into the strawberries where the strawberries were. And John the fish likes to be in his bowl. I prayed. I love John the Fish. And that John the Fish is our special fish.

### **The Taming of the Shrew**

By Damon (2002)

On May 3rd, our homeschool group held its annual Shakespeare play. This year, it was "The Taming of the Shrew". We had been practicing for months. We started the play and everything was going well. Unfortunately, some people hadn't memorized their lines and their scripts were very visible. I was Grumio, who is the head servant to Petruchio. And who is



Petruchio? Read the play and find out. Just kidding, he is a suitor that had come out of Verona in search of a wife. He hears of a wealthy woman named Catherine, who has a very hot temper. He marries her against her will and then proceeds to tame her.

The play went well. Heather was a tailor; Spencer was Curtis, the servant just below me in rank; and Taylor was Nathaniel, another servant.

I enjoyed the play because it had humor and it was fun to see the crowd laugh at the jokes.

## **Damon Gets Braces**

**By Damon**

On October 7th, I got my braces on my top teeth. It was scary thinking that I was about to get THINGS on my teeth that I couldn't take off for two years!! The lady came to the door, called my name and led me to my fate. Luckily my mom was there to help me through it. The lady put this big red thing in my mouth that sucked the saliva OUT of my tongue, and pulled my lips apart sideways. Then she said to bite down, that it wouldn't hurt (it hurt badly) and told me that if I didn't keep biting down they might accidentally put the braces on wrong. Then she left, saying the ortho would be in in about ten minutes. That was the worst part. That and the awful glue (and I can't put it in words how disgusting that glue tasted). Then I got to go home, but I couldn't eat because my teeth were too sore. But after my inner-lip stopped getting cut up, I got used to it, and so now I hardly feel them. Help braces on my bottom teeth.

## **Dad Gets Big TV For Birthday**

**By Heather**

The night before Dad's birthday we were sitting on the couch watching TV. As my family squinted ten feet away from the TV, brilliance struck my mom as lightning struck the lightning rod outside. The next day, we made a trek through the pouring rain to Circuit City. You know how they have a tape they play on all the hundreds of TVs over and over again? It is probably an hour long. We saw the whole thing four times while goggling at plasmas and other impossibles. Finally though, we did find the TV we wanted. The 27 inches of screen made our eyes pop and the best thing was that it cost less than our first TV which we have given the nickname of Midget. (as a side note, we also got a DVD/VHS player.)

When we got home, we cleaned up the house and lit a candle. Then Dad came home. We had him open the DVD player first. He expected it and acted surprised for our sakes. Then we sent him out to the car to "go get a DVD. (it was from the library) It's in the back." I grabbed the camera and we flocked around Dad as he opened the car and found his almost dream TV. (What he really wants is a plasma, but hey. Anything is better than the Midget.) I took a wonderful black and white picture. Immediately the guys in this house set about the task of setting it up. Then they watched a movie. I came up part way through it. Mom was making a delicious dinner called sticky chicken. Poor mom. She spent two hours on that thing. But it was **so** yummy! We tried to convince the parents that it wasn't too late to watch another movie, mom hadn't seen anything

on it yet, but they sent us to bed anyway. We fell asleep the proud owners of two remote controls. It was a happy day.



-Heather (caption:"Oh no! Jacob, a spider! Help! Save me Jacob!")



-Spencer



-Emily

### **Chocolate Flakes**

Chocolate drizzled from the sky,  
The soft brown flakes were swirling round  
And everywhere that I could spy,  
They covered almost all the ground.  
Three days later it was done,  
I chewed a tunnel from our home,  
To get outside and have some fun,  
I chewed to the street, then started to roam.  
I looked about as I walked down the road,  
A snow shoveler had come, I could tell,  
It looked like a giant had dropped a big load  
Of chocolate that in separate clumps fell.  
I grabbed a handful of that powdery treat,  
And shoved it in my mouth.  
It melted on the spot and I savored all that sweet,  
That lasted till I reached my house.

-By Heather

### **It's Raining Chocolate Chunks**

Once when a boy was looking outside,  
It started raining chocolate chunks.  
He ran outside, but ran back in,  
Cause his head had gotten clunked.  
He put a helmet on his head,  
And ran outside to catch some,  
He shoved some chocolate in his mouth,  
And then he danced and thought, "Yum, Yum!"

-By Spencer

### **What If It Rained Chocolate?**

I would get a big cup and fill it up.  
I would eat all day, I would eat all  
night.  
And on that night I would have a  
fright  
That I would die.  
But I did not die so I got a pet fly.  
But it ate up my floor, so I ran  
through my door,  
When it started to rain chocolate.

-By Taylor

### **A Chocolate Christmas**

Last night I had a dream,  
Chocolate snow had covered everything!  
Then I remembered the night before,  
I'd asked Santa for buckets and more  
Of powdery chocolate flakes!  
I opened my eyes,  
To a terrific surprise,  
Snowflakes were falling down,  
But the ones that I saw were brown,  
So we flew to grab our rakes.

-By Damon

### **Hao Ming Humpty Dumpty**

**By Taylor**

My name is Charles Chew, King Charles the Fifth of China. One of my peasant's names is Hao Ming Humpty Dumpty. Hao is peculiar because he is an egg head. He also raises chickens, and when the chickens lay eggs, Humpty Dumpty gives them to my cook who cooks them for me in my egg drop soup. They are scrumptious!

One day, Humpty Dumpty was sitting on my Great Wall eating a sandwich. He fell off. PLOP! My cook found out because he was not getting eggs. I sent my horses and my men to try to put Hao Ming Humpty together again. The men failed. My men wanted to try again. They failed again. I said, "The horses want to go." They tried. They did it, but Hao Ming Humpty decided to sail to Texas and he changed his name to Yao Ming and became a pro basketball player.

### **The Little Old Lady Who Lived In A Shoe**

**By Damon**

We have a fifteen-seater van, and our family and all our *Stuff* take up every square inch of it. We had just gotten home from the beach, and as Mom stepped out of the car, she slipped and fell on the driveway. She broke an arm, and few fingers. So, the day this story takes place is in an old broken down shoe. We were being babysat by an old hag, whose house the broken down old shoe is. So, anyway, Dad called an ambulance, and then he called a babysitter, the first one he could find. Dad dropped us off, and then went to the hospital with Mom.

Let me describe the babysitter for you. A Lean Mean Kid-Hating Machine. I guessed her to be about 62, so it was probable that she had experience with kids. We were surprised when she sat down on her computer, and started making Christmas cards for her relatives. She screeched at us to go outside and play on the trampoline. We obeyed, but we were being loud, so she took us in the shoe, gave us chicken-noodle-soup *cold from the can, without bread*, and then, to add injury to insult, she spanked us all one by one, all 13 of us, and sent us to bed. After Dad had come to pick us up, we told him what the old lady had done to us, and so Dad called the police. The little old lady was arrested later that evening, and is now in jail. *Moral of the story: Always have bread with chicken-noodle-soup.*

## The Three Billy Goats Gruff

By Spencer

My name is Bob. I'm a troll. A very good looking troll, if I do say so myself. I live under a bridge. It's very peaceful. But one summer day it was not very peaceful. I heard a tiny little sound: clump, clump, clump, clump on my bridge. So I jumped up to see who it was. I found a tiny little Billy goat who was very frightened, and said, "Oh please don't eat me. Wait for my brother, he's much bigger than me."

I thought, "How rude! Who would sacrifice their brother for themselves? He must be one mighty selfish goat." So I picked the selfish little hog up and chucked him across the bridge. He landed in the full splits, staggered up and ran to the far end of the valley.

I went back under the bridge, still upset at the little goat, when I heard, CLUMP, CLUMP, CLUMP. "Oh, this must be the brother of the little goat," I thought. So I poked my head up and just for fun I said, "Ha, ha, ha. I'm going to eat you."

He looked pretty frightened too. He said, "Oh please don't eat me, you can have my older brother, he's much bigger than me."

I thought, "I wonder if their last name is Selfish?" So I kicked him across to where his little brother was. Then I went under my bridge just to hear **CLUMP, CLUMP, CLUMP, CLUMP.**

So I jumped up on the bridge to meet this GIGANTIC goat! He didn't even say hello. He just put his head down, charged, and I found myself in a river being washed down the current.

I saw a rock and held on to it for dear life. While on the rock I saw an island. I swam over to it and found that it had a power outlet, a TV plugged into it and a cable hook up. There was even a refrigerator under a palm tree! The Billy goats got fat, I got better looking, and we all lived happily ever after.

## Cinderella

### By Heather

Once upon a time there was a girl. She was my stepsister and her name was Cinderella. We met when we were ten, and my mother married her father. At first I thought she was nice, the kind of girl adults love, the material teachers pets are made of. And then, my new stepfather died!

It wasn't as though I cared. I hardly knew him. But then mother forced me to share a room with her. What a sloppy pig! She would sneak cookies and crackers, bread, cake, anything, up to our room in the middle of the night, then throw what she didn't eat under my bed. In the morning, she would throw her clothes on the floor, and she never picked anything up.

Years passed, and we turned 17. I finally had my own room. Our older sister never had to share a room. Isabel always got her way. The maids were growing sick of picking up after Cinderella, and finally, they went on strike. Mother was angry and dismissed them all, so there was nobody to clean up after or cook for the Royal Highness Cinderella.

After three days of living in her mess, Mother made her clean. She cracked the whip and Cinderella had to clean the whole place from top to bottom. And she pretended to be happy, singing and all, but I knew the real reason. The Royal prince, had caught her eye and every Tuesday and Thursday would ride past our home on his way to the hunting grounds. He fancied Cinderella, and she sang through the window to him.

The problem was, if she went off and got married, Mother would make me do all of her work (we can't have Isabel spoil her smooth hands, can we dear?) and so I made sure that whenever there was a ball, Cinderella had so much work to do that she couldn't possibly go. So the only time she saw the prince was through a window twice a week.

However, one night, we left for a ball, and somehow she got there too and was the most beautiful girl there. The prince proposed to her the next day with a glass shoe (I prefer rings) and they got married the next month. We weren't invited. And now I get to work.



-Emily



-Heather

I hope you all enjoyed this little bit of the fun! You are all creative and talented and smart and it was a remarkable thing to watch you grow up! I love you all! Have a wonderful week!

Love,  
Mom

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5/7/12  
Hello!

The last email got a lot of buzz and I thought I'd send out some more of your fabulous writings! (Not as long, though.:)) You are all brilliant and beautiful, amazing and awesome! I love you for who you were, who you are, and who you will yet become! I believe in you and pray for you and your happiness and success!

Love,  
Mom

## **Lego Pod Race**

By Taylor Janis

4-28-00



Me, Spencer and Damon have been making pod racers out of Lego's. We race them on the driveway 10 minutes after we make them. We run with our feet racing and we hold the pod racers in our hands in the perfect spot. We put tons of pieces on our pod racers. I keep throwing mine on the ground and making new ones. Our races are doing good, but sometimes I don't like them because my pod racer keeps blowing up in my hand. I like racing with pod racers.







**F**roggies bounce all around.  
**R**ibbit, Ribbit they say.  
**O**utside we find them and they hide,  
**G**rabbing them is pretty hard.  
-Spencer

### **Emily's Musings**

July 2000

I can swim to the back of  
the pool. I play in the water  
and sit down in the water.  
The bottle is at my house.  
Spencer and Taylor and my  
doll and my other doll and  
my other doll are in my house. I like  
watching movies. I want to have cheese  
burrito. And I like to have the other dinner  
that I have. My other dinner.

**A** battlefield.

**L**oud cannons, people yelling, "Remember the  
**A**lamo!"

**M**ounts of people died.

**O**nly the women and children survived.

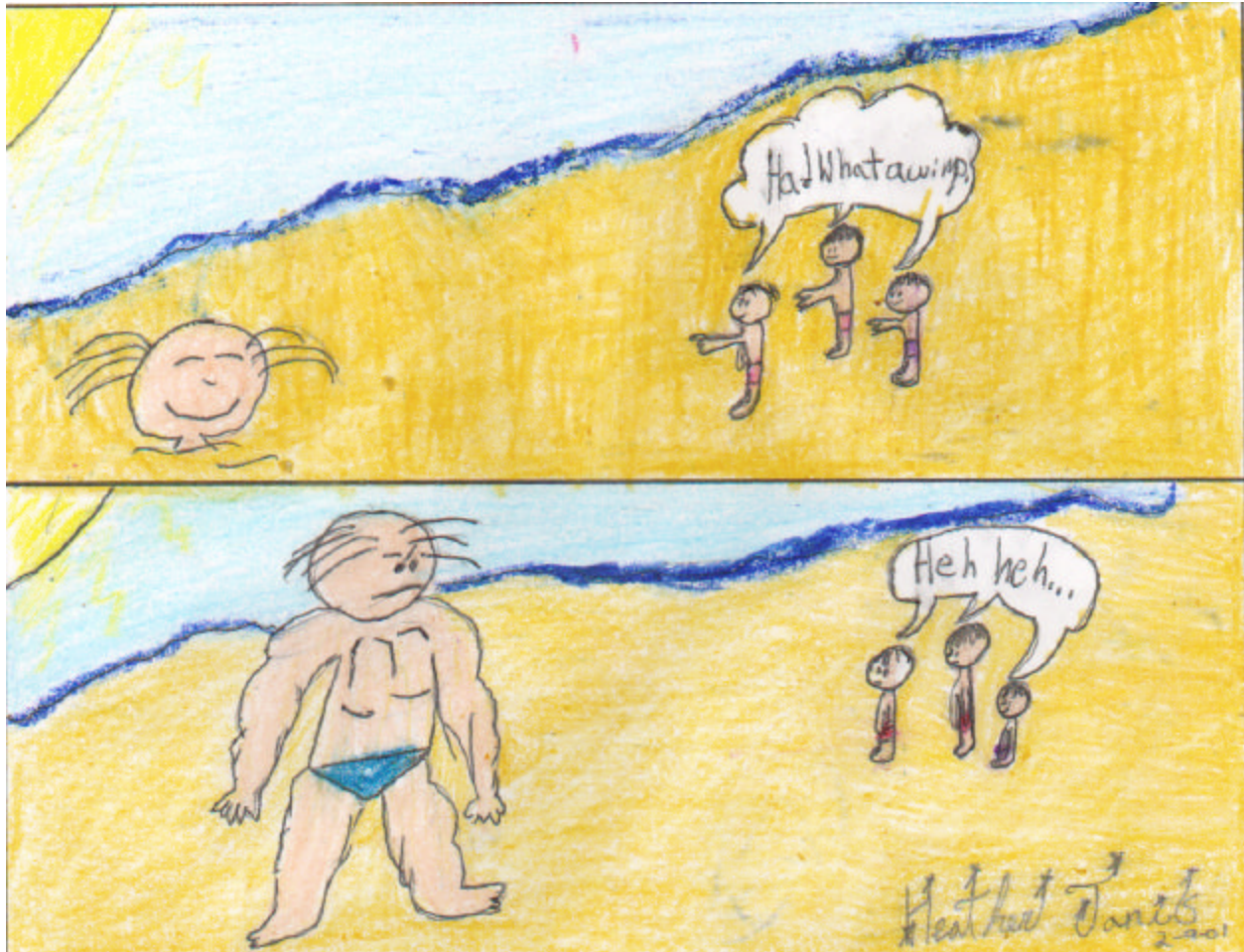
-Taylor

There once was a turkey so old,  
He was killed by a farmer and sold,  
They ate him so fast,  
That he did not last,  
And now his bones are so cold.  
-Spencer  
Limerick

### Turkey

Colors of autumn  
Feathers spread out in a fan  
Impressive turkeys  
-Damon Jr.  
Haiku





Thunder is cozy when I'm in my  
House.  
Under my covers I listen at  
Night to its percussion band, exploding like  
Dynamite, shaking  
Each  
Room as it roars.  
Heather

Farewell to a Pizza  
You're so tasty I can't resist  
So farewell my dear pizza,  
You have nothing left to gain.  
You have saved me from hunger,  
starvation and pain.

So thank you dear pizza,  
I'm in your debt again.  
-Ode by Damon

### **Emily's Musings**

Aug. 2000

Once upon a time there was  
a little girl that had a stomachache.  
And so she went to  
her house. But I left her  
home. And so she ever had  
her home. She got hurt on  
her stomach. She cried. She  
had a table. And she ever had she ever had  
a table. And she hit her head on the table.  
And she cried like "hmm hmm hmm," like  
that. But she ever knowd. And she got in  
her bed. And she hopped in her truck and  
she drived to Old MacDonalds. She ever  
had a chair at Old MacDonalds. She had a  
ice cream cone. She ever had a yummy  
food. And then she had a stomachache.

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5/12/12

Greg, John, John, James, Shelby, Whitney,

California, here we come,  
Right back where we started from,  
Open up those Golden Gates  
California here we come!

The reunion is a go for July 4-6! We'll be gathering Tuesday night. Details will be coming soon as I get plans arranged.

Love,  
Tiffany

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5/13/12

Dear Heather,

You are so dear and precious! I love you because you are YOU and my daughter. On top of that you are gorgeously beautiful, deliriously talented, thoughtfully intelligent, contagiously

funny, compassionately kind, and unbelievably strong. I have been so blessed because you are my daughter! You have taught me through your example over the years of service, patience, courage, faith, hope and charity, long suffering, humility, and determination. You have had a profound effect on me and everywhere you go you bless others lives.

This has been a different year for you, one of intense struggle and challenge in many ways. You have a wonderful support system and I'm so grateful. Even though I'm not there, my thoughts are *always* with you, cheering you on and giving you hugs of joy, hugs of comfort, hugs of contentment. I wish there was more that I can do. Please let me know if there is.

I know things are going to get better and better and that some day all that you have gone through will be compensated a hundred fold. I truly believe that. And I also know that this next year will be so much better and brighter than last year and that is something to look forward to and mark the progress. Like climbing a difficult mountain, you have to look back sometimes to see the progress of where you started and how far you've come, and that brings a brighter perspective. Like the sun rising and filling the world with light, your life will have lots of sunshine. I'm sure it's already started.

I love you so much Heather and I am deeply grateful you are a part of my life! I hope you have a wonderful day!

Love, Mom

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5/13/12

Dear Damon,

I can't tell you enough how proud I am of you, of how deeply I feel gratitude for who you are. I am so blessed that you are my son! In the past year you have completed a most beautiful and worthy mission, successfully taught 2 semesters at the MTC, ROCKED 2 semesters at BYU, and have still found time to keep in touch with me! I have "seen" you struggle and grow spiritually, learn to follow the Spirit, and learn patience at a deeper level. I am so grateful you turn towards Heavenly Father in your trials rather than away.

You are a precious, precious son! And a wonderful brother. Thank you for all you do to keep in touch with your brothers and sisters. Your love and example has its affects and blesses their lives.

Since coming home from your mission I can sense a richer, fuller spirit about you. You were an amazing person before you left, but there is a difference that I can't quite put into words. I guess it's like the analogy of the rock in the river that you gave at that FHE before your mission. You are smoother and brighter and purer. I can sense your spirit more now than before. It is definitely a JACKED, gigantic spirit!:)

Thank you for making motherhood a joy for me! I love you so so much!

Happy Mother's Day!

Love, Mom

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7/17/12

Hi Mom,

I just want to send you a note to tell you what a wonderful woman you are!! You are very strong, physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. I am amazed and strengthened by you. You are courageous, and compassionate, sensitive and hard working. You are such an example to me.

I don't know how to adequately thank you for being there for Heather, for visiting her and taking her in. For talking to her, loving her, and all that you did. I just can't express my deep gratitude fully.

Thank you also for being so generous to Damon and letting him stay all summer with you. I hope it has not been a burden. Thank you for the time you take to listen to him and care about him. I know it helps him and comforts him.

Thank you for taking Spencer in earlier this year. And for your constant concern and care for our children. I just can't say enough.

You are incredible and I feel so blessed that you are my mother-in-law!!!! I know you are carrying heavy burdens and yet you help carry ours. I hope there is something I can do that in even a small way helps you.

Thank you, thank you!!!

Love,

Tiffany

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1/17/13

Hello Heather!

I already miss you! It was a beautiful week we had. I hope I was able to pour my love into you enough for you to tangibly feel your own individual worth. Remember I love you unconditionally. I will pray for you to have an increase in peace inside. I felt it in the short time we were together. Today I am grateful that you felt gratitude and relief, and were welcomed in with open arms. What are you grateful for today?

Here was Elder Holland's quote of the day: When we speak of those who are instruments in the hand of God, we are reminded that not all angels are from the other side of the veil. Some of them we walk with and talk with—here, now, every day. Some of them reside in our own neighborhoods. Some of them gave birth to us, and in my case, one of them consented to marry me. Indeed heaven never seems closer than when we see [the love of God](#) manifested in the kindness and devotion of people so good and so pure that *angelic* is the only word that comes to mind.

You are an angel to many! I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you!

Love, Mom

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1/18/13

Hi Heather!

Ughh! I hit the send button on accident, (as you probably read up above:)) anyway, I hope your day has been a good one. I think about you throughout the day. Today I am grateful for email so that I can send my love to you from so far away! And blankets on cold airplanes.

Here is another thought from Elder Holland:

"I believe we have all been created for greater things than we can comprehend. The times call for greater things, but great things in the noblest and most redemptive sense are predicated upon tolerance, love, respect, understanding, dignity, prayer, God."

I think this is really good! If each attribute is looked at separately in relation to our relationship with others it is very important, but I think if we look at each of those things in relation to our relationship with ourselves it is powerful! Be sure to cultivate those qualities in yourself for yourself sweetie! You need them and you deserve them!

You are my sweet, kind, beautiful, artistic, insightful daughter! I am loving you all the way across the country!!!!

Big bear hugs and kisses!!!

Love, Mom

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1/18/13

Hi Heather!!!

Dad and I got home this afternoon. Emily had it all clean. It was nice! Dad already got the goats milk soap he ordered.:)

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1/19/13



Hi Heather!!

I hope your day is going well and you are having some peaceful moments. Last night me, Dad, Taylor and Emily watched two episodes of The Biggest Loser which started a few weeks ago. :) This season looks like it will be good. The people last season had so much drama, it wasn't as inspiring, but the people this season all seem to be getting along well. Have you been able to start any knitting or crocheting yet? I asked Danae to pick up your mug. She said she would. Hopefully she'll get it to you soon!

Here's a quote from Elder Holland:

“If we constantly focus only on the stones in our mortal path, we will almost surely miss the beautiful flower or cool stream provided by the loving Father who outlined our journey. Each day can bring more joy than sorrow when our mortal and spiritual eyes are open to God's goodness. We must never allow our burdens to obscure our blessings. There will always be more blessings than burdens--even if some days it doesn't seem so. Jesus said, "I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly." Enjoy those blessings right now. They are yours and always will be.”

I think you are a good example of this. You have some mighty big burdens, yet you continue to see the blessings. I am so proud of you! Today I am grateful for a sunny sky in January. I hope you have something wonderful to be grateful for! I'm sure you do! I love you so much! You are in a special, deep, and beautiful spot in my heart. And always in my thoughts.

With lots of love and hugs and tight squeezes!

Mom

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1/21/13

Hi Heather!!

I hope today is as terrific as yesterday was for you! It was good to hear your voice and know you got your mug and had already knit a hat!

I started looking at kitchen designs online today. Maybe this year is the year to get rid of the formica countertops and white grout! You know me, though. I have a hard time making such a big decision. I know it's not earth shaking, but somehow I don't feel confident. Hopefully I will get over that and figure out how to do this project. I think I just need to know where to start.

Here's an Elder Holland quote for the day:

“Your Father in heaven knows your name and knows your circumstance. He hears your prayers. He knows your hopes and dreams, including your fears and frustrations. And He knows what you can become through faith in Him.”

I believe that. It's like you were saying the other day, that with Him as our partner, we can do awesome things! And you blogged that picture of the two ladies giving each other a high five.:)

Well, today I am grateful for a piano that I can sit and play on. It really is a blessing in my life! And so are YOU!!! I love you so much, and I hope you are feeling that love and letting it wrap around you like a hug. You know I'm praying for you!

Loves and kisses,  
Mom

---

1/22/13

Hi Heather!

Hope you feel some sunshine from Texas in this letter! I hope you are nice and warm and cozy and making some cozy things with the yarn for others. You are my sunshine, and have always been. I will be your sunshine too!:) )

Here is the quote from the book that was my favorite: (And the picture was the not a cat picture:))

“Jesus has chosen, even in a resurrected, otherwise perfected body, to retain for the benefit of His disciples the wounds in His hands and in His feet and in His side-signs, if you will, that painful things happen even to the pure and the perfect; signs, if you will, that pain in this world is not evidence that God doesn't love you; signs, if you will, that problems pass and happiness can be ours.”

Today I am grateful for friends. I have quite a few and I know they care about me even if I don't see them often or even at all, or even talk with them. Just knowing them has blessed my life. You are one of my dearest friends and I believe will be one of my life long closest friends. I am so grateful for you, for your love and caring and laughter. For lots of great memories. I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you!

Love,  
Mom

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1/23/13

Hi Heather!

I hope this week is going well for you! I truly do. Today was piano lessons and I am preparing for my Suzuki 2 party. It will be Feb. 8th. I played the first half of the songs in the lesson today and did pretty well, I might say.:) It will be good to get on with the 3rd book. Sister Johnson said that the 2nd Suzuki book is usually the longest to get through than any of the others. I

was very glad to hear that, because it has taken me soooo long on this book! I thought I'd be 80 years old by the time I reached the 5th book or something!:)

Here's the Elder Holland quote for the day:

“Even if you cannot always see that silver lining on your clouds, God can, for He is the very source of the light you seek. He does love you, and He knows your fears. He hears your prayers. He is your Heavenly Father, and surely He matches with His own the tears His children shed.”

I'm glad we are not alone. God is there, and I go to him multiple times each day and I feel his strength and see his tender mercies. Today I am grateful for a headache-free "time of the month." Yea!:) What are you grateful for?

I am here in Texas rooting for you. I am always a phone call away. I am loving you and praying for you. You are my sweet, precious daughter, and I'm so grateful for you!

Love,  
Mom

---

1/24/13

Hi Heather!

I love you and am thinking about you! Emily is going through all our digicam folders and creating a folder of all her favorite pictures of herself throughout the years. It's been fun seeing all the pictures you took of her and all the photos of our family that you actually took! Seeing your style change and all the fun photo tricks you tried out really added a lot of color and personality to our family album!! I think we looked at pictures for two hours this morning. Today I am thankful for all the pictures you and I took over the years (because it was mostly the two of us doing the picture taking). Those pictures are worth more to me than almost any other possession I own.

Here's the quote for today:

“When you are confronted with challenges that are difficult to conquer or you have questions arise, the answers to which you do not know, hold fast to the things you do know. Hang on to your firmest foundation, however limited that may be, and from that position of strength face the unknown.”

That was the quote that had the rock climber hanging on to the mountain.:) I love you sweetie and hope you have an awesome day and that you are hanging on to those things you know! You are an AMAZING person!!!

Love and lots of big hugs!  
Mom

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1/25/13

Hi Heather!!

You are so great! I am so proud of you for all your good desires and hard work and effort you are doing! You are an incredible person with so much to give! You have a very generous heart and as you give, you will receive multiple times over. I am proud of you for all that you are accomplishing! And I know that the more you put your hand in the Lord's, the more you will accomplish!

Here's the quote for the day:

"Whoever you are and wherever you find yourself as you seek your way in life, I offer you "the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6). Wherever else you think you may be going, I ask you to "come unto Him" as the imperative first step in getting there, in finding your individual happiness and strength and success."

I love you so much! I believe in you, and I am cheering for you! Today I am grateful for fresh oranges and apples! They are the best! And so are you! Consider yourself hugged by me!!

Love you with all my heart!

Mom

---

1/26/13

Hi Heather!

Today Dad, Taylor, Emily and I went to the beach. It was a beautiful day. Too warm for January, but not for the beach. We didn't get in the water, but we collected shells and played in the sand. It was Taylor's idea and I'm glad we went. It was nice and relaxing. Today I am thankful for beaches and the sound of the waves.

I hope your week has been good!

Hi Heather!

Ughh! I did it again!

Well, here is the quote for today:

"Christ walked the path every mortal is called to walk so that he would know how to succor and strengthen us in our most difficult times. He knows the deepest and most personal burdens we carry. He knows the most public and poignant pains we bear. He descended below all such grief in order that he might lift us above it. There is no anguish or sorrow or

sadness in life that he has not suffered in our behalf and borne away upon his own valiant and compassionate shoulders.”

I love you Heather! And so does Heavenly Father and The Savior. And so does Dad and your brothers and your sister, and your extended family, and your friends. You are a very important and wonderful person!!

Love, Mom

---

1/27/13

Hi Heather!

Today, Taylor, Emily and I went to Beaumont to see Brian give his talk in church before he goes on his mission. It was fun to see everyone. Dad couldn't go because we found out about it just two days ago and he had put himself down for giving a talk in church. Brian leaves in a week.

Funny story in Sunday School today. We were talking about Martin Harris and the 160 pages of translation that he lost. And the teacher was explaining how Martin's wife and parents were putting a lot of pressure on him to see some legitimate proof of what he was doing. Well, there's this older lady with a thick Texas accent who just pipes up, "why didn't he just tell them to shut up and mind their own business?" Haha!:)

Here is a quote for today from Elder Neal A. Maxwell:

"If there is any imagery upon which I would focus as I close, it is two scriptures from the Book of Mormon. The one in which we are reminded that Jesus himself is the gatekeeper and that 'he employeth no servant there.' (2 Nephi 9:41.) . . . I will tell you . . . out of the conviction of my soul . . . what I think the major reason is [why he 'employeth no servant there'], as contained in another Book of Mormon scripture which says he waits for you 'with open arms.' (Mormon 6:17.) That's why he's there! He waits for you 'with open arms.' That imagery is too powerful to brush aside. . . . It is imagery that should work itself into the very center core of one's mind—a rendezvous impending, a moment in time and space, the likes of which there is none other. And that rendezvous is a reality. I certify that to you. He does wait for us with open arms, because his love of us is perfect."11

I read that today and it was so powerful to me, so I wanted to share that.

I love you so much Heather! I pray for you every day, many times. There is so much good you have done, so much good you do now, and so much good you will do, so much insight and caring and compassion. You are TRMENDOUS!

Lots of love and hugs!!

Mom

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1/28/13

Hi Heather!!

How are you my amazing girl?!! You rock! You are a winner! You are my daughter, and you are a daughter of God. And we love you soooo much!!!!

This week Daenon is staying with us because Brandon and Mindy are on a cruise. He is fun to have around. He likes to talk and philosophize. I don't think he gets the chance to talk much at home. I think he is excited to be here.:)

So Dad gave a talk in sacrament meeting yesterday and we weren't there so he recorded it. We listened to it tonight for family home evening and it really was good. He felt like he should send it out to the Janis Family so he did. I don't know if you could get permission to listen to it, I think it would be in your email if you get Janis family emails. It's about 18 minutes long. It's about opposition. Very insightful!

Today I'm thankful for crockpots! They make making dinner a pleasure!:) I throw stuff in it in no time, and do it early in the day when I have energy. Then we get to smell it cooking all day! Mmmm!

The quote of the day I'm going to take from the scriptures. From Alma speaking to his son, Shiblon. He said, "And now my son, Shiblon, I would that Ye should remember, that as much as ye shall put your trust in God even so much ye shall be delivered out of your trials, and your troubles, and your afflictions, and ye shall be lifted up at the last day."

It is a victory scripture and I really like it! I feel it is saying that whatever faith and surrender we put on the table, we will have a compensatory deliverance. I believe the deliverance outweighs our efforts, but the promise is powerful and comforting.

I love you so much!! I am cheering you on! I believe in you! You are of infinite worth!!! To me, and to the Savior, who accomplished the infinite atonement, that gives us the strength, ability and power to overcome. You are my precious girl!!

Loves!

Mom

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1/29/13

Hi Heather!

I really hope you are doing well. I know you are working hard. Today I've been working on New Beginnings invitations. The girls wanted to do a Dr. Seuss theme, so I came up with an invitation. The background

paper is white with big red polka dots. Then there is some light blue scalloped paper behind white paper that has the words:

Oh, The Places You'll Stand  
Oh, the WOMEN you'll be  
With Personal Progress  
Guiding your destiny!  
Come to NEW BEGINNINGS,  
Eat truffula trees,  
Welcome the new beehives,  
Be reverent, Fold your KNEES!  
It's on Wed., February 20th  
At 7, don't miss it!  
Bring your parents,  
And get excited to  
SIT, SIT, SIT SIT!  
(and you WILL like it! One little bit!)

and there is a picture of the Cat in the Hat. The truffula trees are going to be green rice krispie treats for the base, with black and white paper straws sticking out and a plop of pink cotton candy on top. :) I get to make them. I will send you one. (or two!)

So I've been having fun creating today. And today I am grateful for the ability to create! It truly brings joy! So here is a quote about creating by Pres. Uchtdorf:

"The desire to create is one of the deepest yearnings of the human soul. No matter our talents, education, backgrounds, or abilities, we each have an inherent wish to create something that did not exist before.

Everyone can create. You don't need money, position, or influence in order to create something of substance or beauty.

Creation brings deep satisfaction and fulfillment. We develop ourselves and others when we take unorganized matter into our hands and mold it into something of beauty."

You are such a creative person!! I think you create something beautiful every single day. And you have your whole life! I remember you would paint with watercolors in the morning and in the afternoon you were wanting to do paper mache. I was blown away by the energy you

had for creating! It seemed effortless for you. And I still remember going boating with Uncle Roark's family and listening to your conversation with Ethan, Elaine, and Damon and how you were making up limericks. The others were struggling to think of any line, and you would just rattle off 3 limericks off the top of your head in a row. I was really amazed.:) I remember reading that Mozart once said that composing music was easier to him than breathing. I think you have that same gift in creating.

I love you so much! You have a divine nature and as President Uchtdorf also said in the same talk, "Creating and being compassionate are two objectives that contribute to our Heavenly Father's perfect happiness." I believe that you were given an abundant creative divine gift! I hope you have and create a beautiful day!

Loves and big bear hugs!  
Mom

---

1/30/13

Hi Heather!

I hear it's been storming in Utah. It has been unusually warm here this last week. Not what January should be. Today it was a little colder again though. Have you made any more hats? Is it still fun? Have you learned any crochet? Grandma Erma was a very good and fast crocheter. And so was great grandma Harris. I have an afghan from each of them that they crocheted. I put the invitations to New Beginnings together today and they turned out pretty cute if I do say so myself.:) Oh, we got Dad's mug and my bowl. They are really cool! I have pictures, but I'm not sure how to transfer them. Maybe I can figure it out tomorrow.

Today I am grateful for my pillow that makes sleeping in the car during seminary almost as good as sleeping in my bed.:) What are you thankful for? Here is the quote for the day. It is Elder Holland again:

"My concern is that you will face some delays and disappointments at this formative time in your life and feel that no one else in the history of mankind has ever had your problems or faced those difficulties. And when some of those challenges come, you will have the temptation common to us all to say, "This task is too hard. The burden is too heavy. The path is too long." And so you decide to quit, simply to give up. Now to terminate certain kinds of tasks is not only acceptable but often very wise. If you are, for example, a flagpole sitter then I say, "Come on down." But in life's most crucial and telling tasks, my plea is to stick with it, to persevere, to hang in and hang on, and to reap your reward."



I love you my cherished daughter! Keep hanging in and hanging on! I hope it's getting easier. I hope your load is lifting a little or even a lot. You are a super star in my life! Please know I love you and so does God! I'm so proud of you!

Love, Mom

---

1/31/13

Hi Heather!

So a few weeks ago, Jen Hansen invited me to go to Dallas with her next weekend to run in a 15K (9 miles!). So I thought it sounded cool and then didn't do any training. So today I finally decided to go for it now that it's one week out! Ughh!!:) Tonight I went to the YMCA and ran on the treadmill for 35 min and got only 2.5 miles in. And I had to walk twice to catch my breath. This week should be interesting as I train, needless to say!

Here's a quote for the day from Elder Holland:

“Like thieves in the night, unwelcome thoughts can and do seek entrance to our minds. But we don't have to throw open the door, serve them tea and crumpets and tell them where the silverware is kept!”

That's a great one on taking control of our thoughts. They are powerful, yet we can choose to heed them or not. I have found that praying or reciting a scripture or quote helps me refocus my thoughts on a more positive line. There is just as much positive to think about as there is negative, so why not spend most of the time in the positive area, right?

I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you, I love you!!! Do you know I love you? :) Do you feel that I love you? I really hope so, cause in the words of the Berenstain Bears, "looks so feels so, so it's so!" I am hoping you are finding happiness in each day and something to be grateful for! You are in my thoughts and heart always, sweetheart.

Love, Mom

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2/1/13

Hi Heather!

How is my AMAZING daughter today? You know, no matter how discouraged you are, or how much you are going through, you always have a kind word for someone else to boost them up and make them feel good. That is such an incredible gift. I bet you have already made somebody laugh today and brightened their world! You make an impact, you truly do! I remember you called me after the first week you were a counselor at EFY and said that as you walked into the room of girls that you never had met before, there was an instant

connection and you felt that you already knew them. It was a week of massive impacts on those girls. And the girls at the Journey too. You connected with them faster than any of the other staff there. You truly have a special gift!

And here's a quote by President Uchtdorf:

Often, the answer to our prayer does not come while we're on our knees but while we're on our feet serving the Lord and serving those around us. Selfless acts of service and consecration refine our spirits, remove the scales from our spiritual eyes, and open the windows of heaven. By becoming the answer to someone's prayer, we often find the answer to our own.

I love you! I know you are working hard and I know you are going to come out victorious!

Lots of loves and hugs!  
Mom

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2/3/13

Hi Heather!!!!

We went to the beach yesterday and I ran 6 miles on the beach barefoot! Oh my, my calves are so sore!:) Hopefully they will be ready for the 9 mile run next Saturday! This is no easy build up, this is shock training. Today Brandon and Mindy got back. We had them for dinner. It was nice to see them. It's funny how they live so close but we hardly see each other.

So Taylor is in the room right now and I asked him what he saw as one of your good qualities. And he said that you are a good listener and then he said that you are a good laughter. You tell funny stories and make people feel comfortable and the two girls that he's dated that have known you (Sidney and Cassandra) both love you and think you are great. And he thinks it is because you have an infectious laugh and are a good conversationalist. I think that being a good listener is one of the most rare qualities found in people any more. You are a very good listener! And a good laughter! You came into the world with a good sense of humor. From the first cartoon you saw as a toddler, you were giggling. I was amazed and enjoyed that about you. And it never went away! Just last month you were laughing so hard at the Ice Age squirrel!:)haha!

Here is a quote by Brad Wilcox:

Humor helps. Humor heals. In fact, many medical studies have linked laughter with better physical and mental health. Such studies confirm the scripture that states, "A merry heart doeth good like a medicine" (Prov. 17:22). Humor allows us to view our lives in a more positive light, deal with personal conflicts and intolerance, and cope with trials and frustrations

that might otherwise seem overwhelming. As we are told in Ecclesiastes, there is “a time to laugh” (Eccl. 3:4).

He also tells a funny story:

Abraham Lincoln struggled with bouts of depression and used humor as therapy. His ability to laugh at himself was revealed during a political debate in which his opponent called him “two-faced.” Lincoln replied, “I leave it to my audience. If I had another face, do you think I’d wear this one?”:)

Keep smiling my sweet, beautiful daughter! Keep laughing too! I love you soooooo much!!!!!!!

Love, Mom

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2/4/13

Hi Heather!!!

It was so good talking to you yesterday!! Thank you for calling!! You sound really good and I am grateful!

Today Taylor, Emily and I went to Beaumont to see Brian on his last day at home. He flies to Utah tomorrow and Wednesday goes in the MTC. It was a fun day just hanging out and watching Shelby get the last few things done and watching them pack. Two hours before he got set apart Taylor asked him what he wanted to do to finish off his childhood and they ended up watching Sponge Bob.:D

You are a very special person and I know The Lord is watching over you! You are my precious daughter and you have brought me so much joy and have brought love into my life in abundance! I know everything is going to be all right. It already is a lot better! YAY for you for getting to step six!!!!!!! Hooray for Heather!!!

I love you soooooo much my wonderful daughter!!!

Love, Mom

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2/5/13

Hi Heather!

How are you today? I miss you! You are such a great daughter! Today was a pretty great day for me. I practiced all the Suzuki songs plus others, and I had a lady over that is the Laurel advisor and showed her how to make a little smock for children who are in the cardiology area in the hospital. My former Beehive advisor, Jill Sampson, her roommate, Hannah Clark is a nurse and works on that floor and she said they need these smocks that tie at the sides and

have a pocket in front to hold the monitors or other wires and stuff. So at New Years, Shelby was here and I asked her to help me design a pattern based on one that Hannah had given me. So the Laurels are making some tomorrow night and the Mia Maids will be doing some in March. Then Hannah said we can take them to the hospital and she will set up a tour and stuff. So that was great! I also took around 3 invitations to 6th year girls for a meeting for girls camp, because they weren't at church on Sunday. I also watched The Biggest Loser with Dad, Taylor and Emily. "That's fun! We thank the pilgrims, every one!" :)

Emily had a rougher day. She thought she was all ready to take the preliminary test to get her driver's permit, and Dad took her to get it, but she didn't pass the test. She had studied what she thought was the material, which was the online course, and then Dad saw this book and asked her about it and she didn't think it was important for this test, so they went. She didn't understand any of the questions. She was pretty upset, but now she's picked herself up and is going to try to get it by the end of the week.

Here is an Elder Holland quote:

"My beloved brothers and sisters, I testify of angels, both the heavenly and the mortal kind. In doing so I am testifying that God never leaves us alone, never leaves us unaided in the challenges that we face. "Nor will he, so long as time shall last, or the earth shall stand, or there shall be one man [or woman or child] upon the face thereof to be saved." (Moroni 7:36) On occasions, global or personal, we may feel we are distanced from God, shut out from heaven, lost, alone in dark and dreary places. Often enough that distress can be of our own making, but even then the Father of us all is watching and assisting. And always there are those angels who come and go all around us, seen and unseen, known and unknown, mortal and immortal.

May we all believe more readily in and have more gratitude for, the Lord's promise as contained in one of President Monson's favorite scriptures: "I will go before your face. I will be on your right hand and on your left, ... my Spirit shall be in your [heart], and mine angels round about you, to bear you up." (D&C 84:88)"

You are doing so good! I am so proud of you for continuing to try and for working so hard on the 12 steps!! I love you so much, so much!!!

Love, Mom

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2/6/13

Hi Heather!

Well, today was a busy day! I ran 4.5 miles in the rain. It was great because it was fairly warm and I started in a sweatshirt over my shirt, but then ended up putting it around my waist and the rain kept me from getting hot and sweaty. It just got me wet.:) Then we went to piano and

that took a while. When I got home I had to come up with an activity for the Mia Maid class tonight. We were supposed to make valentine dish towels for the older women in the ward, but I never could find the right size and cost of towels, so I had to switch to something else. I found (on Pinterest, of course :)) a cute idea of cutting out multi-colored felt hearts and sewing them all in a row down the middle and make a garland. So I bought the felt and got it ready. Then I made dinner and went to a class presidency meeting at 6 and then we had mutual at 7. It went well, except that we only made one and I was hoping to make 8. So now I don't know what to do with it, but it turned out sooo cute! Today I am grateful for Pinterest! I need ideas fast sometimes and I always get an idea or two after just a short search on Pinterest! What are you grateful for today?

Here's the quote for today, by President Benson:

"Men and women who turn their lives over to God will discover that He can make a lot more out of their lives than they can. He can deepen their joys, expand their vision, quicken their minds, strengthen their muscles, lift their spirits, multiply their blessings, increase their opportunities, comfort their souls, and pour out peace."

I asked Emily what she admired in you and she said that you are very caring and think about others, and that you are very beautiful. Such true words!! You are a wonderful, beautiful daughter! I hope you have a wonderful, beautiful day!

I love you, I love you, I love you!!!!!!  
Mom

---

2/7/13

Hi Heather!

Well, I practiced piano for about an hour today at least to get ready for the Book 2 party tomorrow. I think I made a mistake on every one of the songs. I definitely am not perfect.:) But I'm ready. I decided last minute to send an email out through Susan Combs to invite people if they can come. But I'm not expecting anyone and that's ok. I just wanted to let people know that I was having a small celebration in my life. So far that I know, Dad, Emily, Mindy and Sister Johnson will be there. I left a phone message on Kylee's phone, but I don't know if she'll be able to come. And Daenon may get dragged along too.:) I'll tell you if anyone else comes. I actually have a presidency meeting before the book 2 party, and right after the party, I'm picking Jen up to go to Dallas for the 15K race. So tomorrow is going to be a very busy day! Actually, you are probably reading this on Friday, so it is today for you!:)

I saw a post on Facebook that Shalayne is engaged. And we also got an invitation saying that Breanne (sp?) is getting married on Feb 14. I thought you would be interested in those news bits.

Quote for the day from Elder Holland:

The first words Jesus spoke in His majestic Sermon on the Mount were to the troubled, the discouraged and downhearted. "Blessed are the poor in spirit," He said, "for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." I speak to those who are facing personal trials and family struggles, those who endure conflicts fought in the lonely foxholes of the heart, those trying to hold back floodwaters of despair that sometimes wash over us like a tsunami of the soul. I wish to speak particularly to you who feel your lives are broken, seemingly beyond repair.

To all such I offer the surest and sweetest remedy that I know. It is found in the clarion call the Savior of the world Himself gave. He said it in the beginning of His ministry, and He said it in the end. He said it to believers, and He said it to those who were not so sure. He said to everyone, whatever their personal problems might be:

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

"Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls."

In this promise, that introductory phrase, "come unto me," is crucial. It is the key to the peace and rest we seek. Indeed, when the resurrected Savior gave His sermon at the temple to the Nephites in the New World, He began, "Blessed are the poor in spirit who come unto me, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."

Heather, I want you to know that I love you so much! You are so important to me and so special to me! I hope you have a really neat experience today!

Loves and hugs, Mom

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2/9/13

Hi Heather!

I am in Dallas with Jen right now. Oh, funny story! I sent Susan Combs the email about my book 2 party, right? Well, at 9 this morning, one hour before the party, I see the email come through. I clicked on it and she replied, "I have other plans." So she thought it was a personal email, and didn't send it out. :) So obviously no one other than Dad, Emily, and Mindy came, plus Sister Johnson. And that was great, because I wasn't nervous at all! It went really well, and I'm glad I did it.

I am nervous about the race tomorrow because I'm not feeling totally ready. I'm also tired. I'm sure it will be great though. :) I always get nervous before a race. But then it is fun.

Here's a quote from Elder Holland:

"What is the best that lies within us? Of how much are we capable? None of us yet knows. An old Arabic legend tells of a rider finding a spindly sparrow lying on its back in the middle of the road. He dismounted and asked the sparrow why his feet were in the air. Replied the sparrow, "I heard the heavens were going to fall today." "And I suppose you think your puny bird legs

can hold up the whole universe?" laughed the horseman. "Perhaps not," said the sparrow with conviction, "but one does whatever one can."

I can't remember if I already sent this to you, but it's good anyway.:)

I love you and I think about you all day long. And I hope you are feeling some joy. You are just so wonderful! I love you soooo much!!!!

Love Mom

---

2/11/13

Hi Heather!

I did it! I somehow ran the 9.3 miles today! The last mile, though I drank just a couple of gulps of water and I got a side cramp that spread across my whole stomach, so it was a painful ending, and I couldn't sprint across the finish line like I like to do. But I finished, and that's the important thing! :) now my knees and joint at the top of my leg are hurting. Ahhh the joys of long distance running!:) the trip was really fun and I'm glad I went! It felt good this past week to push myself physically again.

Oh, I'm sorry! It is now Sunday. Last night when I was writing to you I got to that state of exhaustion that would result in hysterical crying if I was a baby.:) I had run then driven me and Je home from Dallas. Then I had talked with Emily and taken her and her friends to a dance, then picked them up, so it was very late and the exhaustion hit me like a semi truck.

Here is a quote from the New Testament about running:

1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the asin which doth so easily bbeset us, and let us run withcpatience the race that is set before us,

2 Looking unto Jesus the aauthor andbfinisher of our faith; who for the joy that was set before him cendured the cross, despising the dshame, and is set down at the right hand of the ethrone of God." - Hebrews 12.

I really like that scripture! And I really love you so much!!! You are such an inspiration! I hope you have a wonderful day!

I love you!!!!

Love Mom

---

2/11/13

Hi Heather!!!

Happy Birthday!!!!!!!

I hope it's a great one!!!! And I hope this year is full of wonderful and beautiful things for you!

Instead of one quote, I have 32 quotes for you! I have been on Facebook more today than combined in my life I think!:) Anyway, I asked my FB friends in a general post if they would send me a private message telling a quality they admire about you. (Those who know you of course!:) And I tagged you in the post. Then today I messaged only your friends I know to do the same. I haven't heard from all, so I will continue to send them your way when they come in, but I did get 32 responses!! I had already asked Taylor and Emily earlier this week and put their responses in earlier letters, but they still want to say more, so you'll be hearing from them again in a later letter. I hope you enjoy! You are a wonderful and very loved person and almost everyone thanked me for the opportunity to share! Everything that is shared is so true and echos everything I believe about you. You make this world and this life a much more beautiful place to be! Thank you for being you! I love you soooooo much!

Love, Mom

ps: Sister Johnson asked me to pass on this information to you:

Heather,

I wanted to touch base with you re: Mike and Mari's wedding:

· Where should we book the plane ticket from and on what date? The wedding is on Friday, April 26th. I am assuming that you would want to fly in a day or two or three earlier. When would you like your return date to be? Just let me know.

· They are currently planning to be married about 4:30 or 5 pm and the reception will be from 7-9 pm. Would you like to take photos prior to the wedding ceremony or between the ceremony and reception? We are easy. Just let us know and we will plan accordingly.

We're excited to see you again! Thank you for being their photographer.

Jeanne

One of the many qualities I admire about her is that she is so creative and can make anything boring so much fun! -Auna Doria



Heather one of the things I admire most about you is your passionate spirit. You feel things deeply and have a beautiful way of expressing yourself through your photography and the things you write. I hope that you will realize not everyone has an eye for beauty like you and you have blessed so many people's lives including my own with your talent.

I think this amazing passionate girl that I am talking about has survived despite all your trials and difficulties. It is the key to overcoming it all with the help of a very loving and patient Heavenly Father.

I hope this birthday you feel a fresh start. I hope you realize you have people who will never give up on you and who see the amazing person you are even with all that has transpired. Never give up! Understand that complete healing is possible!

I love you! Happy Birthday! -Jen Hansen

As I've been thinking about what quality to choose, I realize that it will be hard to pick just one! She has several qualities that are admirable that I'd like to mention. These are in no particular order, but are just from memories that are coming to mind. She has always had a ready (and beautiful) smile; she is a good listener; she is artistic in many different mediums from art on paper, to photography, to creative writing; she has a big and generous heart especially to small children, animals, and the proverbial underdog; and to end with, I think she makes others around her feel good about themselves, which along with several of the other qualities I listed made her such a good counselor at EFY. - Shelby

I LOVE Heather Feather!!! Things I admire about her..... That infectious smile of hers, her bright light, her capacity to love, she is accepting, she is non-judgmental, she is talented, she keeps trying, she is a true friend, i think she would do anything for anybody and she is trying her best to figure things out just like the rest of us! This world is a better place because she's in it and I feel blessed to know her!!! She loves her family, she is better than she thinks she is and she keeps putting one foot in front of the other..... She is a very special daughter to her heavenly parents and her earthly parents and I hope she will be truly able to "get" that!!!

XOXOXO -Becky Peterson

-compassionate, inspiring,

Or,

It may sound as if I'm stealing this from Obama (maybe I am) but I love your audacity of hope. Anytime someone (you) decides to hope and dream is a big deal; to continue believing we are able to continue following our dreams is amazing and you go after what makes you happy time and time again. One day I would love to be as able as you are to go get what I want! The resilience and love you show with your actions, dreams, and life is incredibly admirable and I always feel inspired after talking with you. I'm happy to know you and I love you! -Saryah Leyton

I admire her talent to look at a beautiful world that needs to be captured! I admire her ability to smile & bring light to a room & I admire her comforting spirit in a world that needs lots of hugs! Love ya -Jasmine Hernandez

Heather is the most resilient person I know. She finds beauty in things that people take for granted. I have always admired her and likely always will : ) -Bailey Williams

Her amazing artistic eye. It comes through in her photography, her writing and any project she sets out to do. -Marci Freeman

Not sure I can just pick one! I love so much about Heather! I have always been so impressed with her creativity, and how she has expressed it in so many art forms and at such an early age. I still remember her claymation film! I also love that she is her own person, or at least portrays it, and isn't afraid to speak up and express her views! I look forward to visiting with her each time she visits! -Sarah deGraaf

Heather, here is how I see it. I admire all the things that are you. There is nothing more amazing than the things going on in your life right now because of your ability to press forward. There is nothing in this world more beautiful than you because of your awesome DNA. There is nothing more perfect than what you have discovered about yourself so far because of your intuitive internal focus. There is nothing smarter than the progress you've made in your spirituality up to this very day because of your mature spirituality. Additionally, there is nothing more normal than each step you have taken. There aren't that many people I respect like I respect you...regardless of the state of your thoughts and heart at the moment...I DON'T CARE!! I will never care!! I will never give up on you even if you are an 80 year old lady still hobbling with your walker into a rehab clinic. \*\*\*Serious time alert\*\*I have felt the amazing person that you are through the Holy Ghost, and I have intuitions about things you could do someday. Keep trying. Pick yourself up if you fall. Go for the unnatural of faith and effort regardless of what you just did or thought about. Write down your thoughts and ideas as much as you can because they will be your success one day. Trust yourself. I honestly am excited and feel privileged to know you. Love you! Melissa Santos

what an honor. I love the peace I feel when I look at Heather. She smiles and I feel her love. What a gift to share with others. Just being with her makes me feel good. Happy Birthday to her.. -Marilyn Wilkes

Supportive -Alissa Wheeler

The quality I admire most in Heather is kindness. Heather was very kind to my daughter, Samantha, at a time when not very many others were. Heather has a warmth in her personality that is sincere. The kindness and acceptance she showed to Sam meant a lot to me as a mom. I hope she will always know that she is wonderful!! Love, Trudy Sarlls

A quality I admire in Heather (let me know if it's a repeat, I've got more) is perseverance. She has constantly kept pushing and trying in the face of very difficult opposition, and she hasn't given up or stopped caring. It's been something that I've looked to for strength at times and has inspired me. -Damon Janis, Jr.

Heather is so kind and patient. She has this wonderful quality of seeming calm and collected in the midst of chaos. At least, that's what I've always thought. I always enjoy seeing her because her smile radiates kindness and makes me feel at ease. I think that may be what helps to make her such a great and talented photographer. Happy birthday to her! We love and miss her. -Jeanne Johnson

A great quality about Heather is that she feels an emotional connection to people. She is eager to share in people's happiness and in their sorrow and struggles. She is very thoughtful. -Aunt Mindy

I admire her fierce independent spirit! -Spencer Janis

Here is what I admire about Heather...

I admire Heather's ability to tap into her emotions. She feels deeply, and loves deeply and has an amazing ability to express and share that love with others, especially when done through the lens of her camera. She also has an eloquent and profound way with words and is a very powerful writer. She inspires me to be true to myself and never give up the fight! -Kaitlyn Janis

One quality I admire about Heather is that she is a very attentive and devoted listener. Whenever I talk to her, she makes me feel like everything I think and say is important to her. -Kylee Weyment

Heather - I'd like to say that I sat down to write about a quality that I admire in you and kablam "Quality XYZ" just popped into my head along with a profound statement about how you exemplify said quality. But...no. Sorry. That did not happen. Instead, I waffled between your sense of humor and your compassion. Then, I thought, "Lighten up, mention her physical beauty or her sweat pants." But, while I admire both of those things, they just don't cut it either. I admire so much about you. You are funny, wise, smart, compassionate, beautiful, and I love you just the way you are. -Danae Janis

Something interesting I thought I should mention to you is the timing of this opportunity. In my D&C class we were discussing how we were in the pre-mortal life. My professor then challenged us to think about what traits we have now and whether or not we had them before this life. I struggled to come up with one and began thinking about other people I know. Interesting enough Heather came to mind and I began to think about her and the struggles she is having. Right when I began pondering on this I got a facebook alert on my phone from you with this opportunity.

As a result, I feel that she came from the pre-mortal existence with a very caring heart and sensitive spirit for those around her and she has an exemplar ability to not give up. She had those traits then and definitely displays them now.

The other day she mentioned the ability she has to be loved by so many and I know that is the case with us family and by her friends. I feel it is due to these traits she was pre-mortally blessed with. -Ethan Janis

One of my favorite qualities about Heather is her determination. When she makes up her mind she is unstoppable. -Dad

Heather...the first thing that comes to mind is KINDNESS.

She is a tender, gentle soul and quietly observes and sees goodness around her...her photography is evidence of this quality. She smiles and listens, loves and lifts with her happy eyes and contagious laugh---how I love her laugh! She is a blessing in my life and I love

her to pieces! Happiest of birthday wishes to you, Heather!

Lots of love, Aunt Becky

"Heather!! Oh, my beautiful cousin! You've brought so much joy into my life. I still remember the many times we've shared laughter and excitement and did artsy projects together. Your talents are incredible when it comes to photography and creativeness. I've always looked up to you like that, wanting to practice those same qualities. Thank you for being that example to me! You have a sweet spirit, Heather, and you bring a glorious shine to the room. Never lose that quality. You're so special and I think about you all the time! I hope we can see each other soon! I love you!!"

~Julie Bingham(:

The quality I admire in her has been how generous she is with sharing her time and talents. She has done several photo shoots for our family (for free!) and they are some of the most valuable pictures we have. Like the pictures of us in the hospital with Ethan... absolutely priceless. They made me cry when I would look at them. That made me think of another thing I admire about her, she is so observant, she can notice the little things that are obviously important to others. -Whitney Haslem

Oh!!! That is so nice!! I love her dearly. I can't pick just one, so you can choose...

I love how quick to laugh she is! I am not a funny person, but I think I am when I am around her!

I love how non-judgmental she is. I don't recall her ever saying something negative about someone else. Not even a bad attitude about anyone.

She is so forgiving. She loves people and is very merciful toward them, no matter what they have done. Such a Christ like quality.

I also think she has the most beautiful smiling face. Likely to melt any hard soul.

Also, I don't know if you knew this, but I work at Geneva Elementary in Orem, and her cousin on your husband's side is doing her EL ED cohort work there!!! She is so nice and immediately reminded me of Heather. That is how we found out our connection! Small world. We planned on visiting her together when she was in Provo/Orem area. We hope to catch up with her soon! -Chelsea

Heather, Happy Birthday!! So, I'm going to tell you something about yourself that I admire, (and I hope you're remembering it too!) This is how I know you...you never run out of ideas of things to do. Seriously. It's more than being creative, because you actually do something with your ideas. O.K., some you haven't done for a long while, but you have done them. Whether it's crafts (like clay models...who can forget the animation with them?!), athletic activities, music, extensive writing, pet ownership, photography in its art and in business ideas and products (like pets photos...brilliant!), designing a room, or figuring out activities for little people, you expand your experience and skills into so many areas. Truly amazing. I hope you have a wonderful birthday. Take care.

Love, Amy

She is beautiful! She is an amazing photographer! She always has something nice to say about someone else! She has cool hair! She has a contagious smile! -Uncle John and Aunt Val and family

When I think of Heather, I think of stillness. She sees and thinks about things deeply and intently. Much of the time I've been with her, she seems to be listening and internalizing what's going on around her. Having a conversation with her is fulfilling because she looks right at you and you know she's really listening. I think it's partly why she is an amazing photographer. She watches and soaks it in, turning what she sees and hears through her eyes, ears, mind, and lens into something meaningful - a beautiful expression of herself and those around her. -Aunt Heather

A quality that I have always admired about heather is her loving and caring heart. Heather is the kind of person that you could tell anything and not feel judged or like she doesn't care. She is an amazing listener and she just makes people happy. -Shalayne

I admire Heather's loyalty and friendship. I am grateful that even though as time passes and we move on with our lives, we will always be friends. She is a great friend, because she is such a good listener. She is able to sympathize and listen without judging. And, I am grateful for her helping me through heartaches and disappointments in college. -Alyssa Grant Ridge

Something I really love about Heather is her ability to laugh, even at the most outrageous things. Her smile and laugh are so contagious and have helped me to look at the world with a lighter heart. I love her so much! And miss her too. -Heather Hall

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2/12/13

Hi Heather!!

For me it's your real birthday, so HAPPY BIRTHDAY again!! I hope it was nice and you had a good one! Besides the cheesecake and flowers that were scheduled for delivery, there were a couple of more things that may have come sooner, or might arrive later. I don't know. If you didn't get them by today, then it's still your birthday month and you can celebrate it all month, right?:)

Today I spent the entire day at Audralyn Allen's home baking giant heart-shaped sugar cookies and chocolate chip cookies. It's for a fundraiser for girls camp. The girls came over to her house tonight and put dollops of frosting all around the edges and packaged them in boxes with lids that have a see-through plastic top. We got orders for 145 cookies, so it was a very long day. But each of the girls will have about \$100 dollars put towards her amount for camp.

So here are 6 more messages that came in after I hit the send button last night. Kirsten and Amie's were within about 10 minutes.:) Anyway, here they are!

Her smile! I love her smile, both in her face and eyes! She is precious. -Jan Swope

Heather has a tender heart that reaches out to those around her in love, help and support. Her amazing capacity to love comes out in the art of her photography, I see and feel it in each of her pictures. -Aunt Allaire

One of the things that I admire most about Heather is how she is able to get so much meaning and emotion from music and lyrics. I personally have never been able to do that, but she seems to have found it!

Love ya! -Derek Janis

Here's the qualities I admire in Heather:  
She's so willing to help people around her.  
She has such a beautiful voice.  
She has a deep connection with inspiring things (music, nature, etc).  
She's got a real eye for beautiful photography.  
She has a contagious laugh.  
She has a deep capacity to love.

I love and miss her SOOOO much! -Amie

Heather is sensitive to the needs of others. She helped save my life in so many ways. She is my best friend and such a loyal friend. She is an amazing listener. She validated me when I needed it most. I love her very much and miss her. I pray for her and think about her often. I have needed her friendship. When I lost faith in the ability of people to be a true friend, she restored my faith. Thank you for giving me the opportunity to say Happy Birthday to her.  
-Kirsten

My name is Elizabeth and the quality I love most about Heather is her passion. She lights up a room with her love for life. And her honesty. Miss you much baby girl. -Elizabeth Mellor

So there are a few more! I love you so much! Keep up your great work!

Love and lots of big bear hugs from your mamma bear!

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2/13/13

Heather! I love you so much and I admire you in so many ways! You have a great sense of humor and you're super approachable. You care about other people and you are always looking out for them. You are an amazing listener (which is hard to find in someone), and I can see that you are confident in who you are and you have taught me a lot that I can be confident too. And lastly I want to say that you are so beautiful! Inside and out. I'm sorry I wasn't able to write this on your birthday:( but I love you and I hope it was a good one! <3

---

2/14/13

Hi Heather!

Did you laugh today? Did you smile today? I hope so! It's good for your health you know.:) Remember how Taylor's boss, Fred, likes chicken? Taylor told me today that Fred ate "mad wings" from the freezer and after he ate them he said, "that was a good investment!":)

At piano today I started Book 3! I have the first page of the first song memorized for the right hand. Yea! That reminds me that when I was there I told Sister Johnson about your birthday and the request I had made about a quality they admire in you, and before I finished, she wanted to tell me hers!:) So this is what she said:

I have always thought Heather was beautiful. But as beautiful as she is on the outside, her spirit is even more beautiful. -Marilyn Johnson

So I have two more that I received as well! Madison sent it to me right after I sent your letter yesterday. (of course!:) She said:

Compassion for others -Madison

And then Emily sent me hers:

Heather! I love you so much and I admire you in so many ways! You have a great sense of humor and you're super approachable. You care about other people and you are always looking out for them. You are an amazing listener (which is hard to find in someone), and I can see that you are confident in who you are and you have taught me a lot that I can be

confident too. And lastly I want to say that you are so beautiful! Inside and out. I'm sorry I wasn't able to write this on your birthday:( but I love you and I hope it was a good one! <3  
-Emily May

Do you remember the last night we were together? You asked me as we cuddled if you were worth it. I just want to reiterate that YES YOU ARE WORTH IT! Please don't let anyone, especially yourself tell you otherwise! And I knew your friends would tell you the same! So I had to get it in their own words and now it's there in black and white: eager, beautiful, thoughtful responses that tell you why you matter, how much you matter, how much worth you have in this world. But so very much worth in MY heart. As I went to bed the night before your birthday, I thought about 24 years ago at that time I was in the hospital, just a few hours from delivering you and how excited I was. And then last night on your birthday, thinking about how 24 years ago, the most beautiful, precious baby was in my life. Dad and I prayed last night together and I thanked Heavenly Father for you and for the blessing of incredible love that filled our hearts and lives because of you.

I believe in you and your courage and strength! I'm proud of what you are doing and accomplishing! It's a mighty war, but you are a mighty warrior!! I love you so much!

Love, Mom

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2/14/13

Hi Heather!

Ahhh! Today I didn't have any obligations. It was nice! I cleaned my room which had been the drop off zone for every latest project or event. But my closet was terrible too, so I straightened it up a bit and then my room. And I got stuff to make a chicken cordon bleu dinner. Dad made it for me. That was nice! It was funny, yesterday he wanted to stop working for a little while and I was headed over to Audralyn Allen's house to tie glittery tulle around boxes that had the giant heart cookies in them for the girls camp fundraiser. He said he would come with me. So there we are at Audralyn's; Dad is cutting the long strips of tulle for the bows and I'm tying the bows. He had glitter all over himself! Not something I would ever predict!:) And Emily and I got him to play 3 rounds of Jenga with us tonight. Lots of fun surprises!

It's finally gotten cold again. Sheesh! It hasn't even felt like winter hardly. And I'm sure you have been freezing this whole time! Every morning when Emily and I go out to the car, she exclaims how cold it is and it's only like 57 degrees at 5:50 AM. Well, today it was like 37, so it was a little nipier.



So guess who responded to my Facebook request today?! Ashley Maka and Janey! They were both so sorry they had not seen it till now and hoped they could still share. I told them it was a gift that just keeps on giving!:) So here are their replies:

Something that I have always loved and admired about Heather is her ability to listen to others. She has a way of listening and appreciating what you're saying whether it is something important, or just something silly. She was always the one I couldn't wait to tell all my stories to because she would just listen when needed, laugh when appropriate, and seemed to care just as much as I did. I love her so much!! -**Janey Scott**

A quality I admire heather is her resiliency. Heather, as we know, has been through so much. She continues to press forward and find ways to fight. She has the strength and resolve that many others wish they possessed, whether that strength and resiliency was learned or innate does not matter. She is amazing, and continues to shine and make the best of each situation she finds herself in. Heather is one of my best friends and I am so grateful for her support, love and care through the rough times I have faced. I am grateful for her, more than she will ever know. -**Ashley Maka**

You have such wonderful friends! Such loyal friends, and that's because you are too! They all have expressed such love for you because they have felt such love from you. You are an amazing person! I love you so much! Have a super-ta-duper day!!!

Love,  
Mom

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2/16/13

Hi Heather!

So today I was in a very cleaning mood! (that was totally ungrammatical!) I started by scrubbing the shower down. I dusted all 5 windows of my bedroom, cleaned the rest of my bathroom, vacuumed my room, and then the whole downstairs, washed my bedding, cleaned the kitchen (which amazingly, wasn't too bad:)), cleared out the freezer and then sat down to create another Dr. Suess invitation for the 11 year old girls that will be coming in to YW this year. (Julia deGraaf being one!) Then I went to the temple with Brandon and Mindy and we all went to dinner after. It was nice. Today I am grateful for cleaners that make my bathroom smell so nice!

Here's a quote for the day from Elder Holland:

"So feeding the hungry, healing the sick, rebuking hypocrisy, pleading for faith—this was Christ showing us the way of the Father, He who is "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, long-suffering and full of goodness." In His life and especially in His death, Christ was declaring, "This is God's compassion I am showing you, as well as that of my own." In the perfect Son's manifestation of the perfect Father's care, in Their mutual suffering and shared sorrow for the sins and heartaches of the rest of us, we see ultimate meaning in the declaration: "For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever

believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. For God sent not his Son into the world to condemn the world; but that the world through him might be saved.”

I bear personal witness this day of a personal, living God, who knows our names, hears and answers prayers, and cherishes us eternally as children of His spirit. I testify that amidst the wondrously complex tasks inherent in the universe, He seeks our individual happiness and safety above all other godly concerns. We are created in His very image and likeness, and Jesus of Nazareth, His Only Begotten Son in the flesh, came to earth as the perfect mortal manifestation of His grandeur. In addition to the witness of the ancients we also have the modern miracle of Palmyra, the appearance of God the Father and His Beloved Son, the Savior of the world, to the boy prophet Joseph Smith. I testify of that appearance, and in the words of that prophet I, too, declare: “Our heavenly Father is more liberal in His views, and boundless in His mercies and blessings, than we are ready to believe or receive. ... God does not look on sin with [the least degree of] allowance, but ... the nearer we get to our heavenly Father, the more we are disposed to look with compassion on perishing souls; we feel that we want to take them upon our shoulders, and cast their sins behind our backs.

I bear witness of a God who has such shoulders. And in the spirit of the holy apostleship, I say as did one who held this office anciently: “Herein [then] is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another” —and to love Him forever, I pray.”

I chose a long one. It is profound. It reminds me of the beginning of the Young Women theme we quoted to each other the other night, “We are daughters of our Heavenly Father, who loves us...” I know He loves us. And I love you too! So so so much! I hope you have a beautiful day and feel my love and God's love. You are so precious!

Love, Mom

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2/17/13

Hi Heather!

Today I got to sleep in till 8:00! And just as I was getting up I got a call from Jen telling me that in one hour, there was a 4 mile race starting at a church across the street from the YMCA. So I decided to do it. It benefited adoption and orphans, so it was a good cause, I got a new running shirt and got a 4 mile run in, which is just what I was planning on running today, but wasn't sure how I was going to motivate myself to do it. So it all worked out perfect! And I ran it with an average 10.55 minute mile too, which is better than the last 3 runs that I have timed this month.

So that was this morning. This afternoon I worked on finishing the cutest (I do have to say) invitations for the 11 year old girls. I borrowed some lines from other Dr. Seuss-ish invitations, and stuck in my own lines too to come up with a fun invite. I found a cute image of the fish on

the book One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish Blue Fish. It's a nice frame for the poem. Then I cut a light blue paper just a little bigger than the image and scalloped the bottom edge. Then punched 2 holes at the top and put a red ribbon with white polkadots through and tied a bow. They are so cute! This is the poem:

One fish, two fish, red fish blue fish,  
We Young Women have a wish!  
We're having New Beginnings, it's truer than TRUE,  
A very special day, and we want to invite YOU!  
We're excited to tell you  
Of the fun you will have,  
And the goals you will set,  
The service you'll give,  
And the joy you will get. (from Young Women)  
You could not, would not want to miss,  
A celebration quite like this!  
February's the month,  
The 20th is the day (7:00 PM)  
Bring Mom and Dad  
To hear what we say!

And I found a Dr. Suessy font. Anyway, between the two invites I've written, I've got Dr. Seuss on the brain! It's fun, but doesn't come natural. I think you would find it totally natural to write a poem Dr. Seuss style! You are so good at all kinds of writing, but I think especially those kinds of poems! If that sounds like fun, I would like to propose that you write one, about anything. I know it would be great and I would LOVE to read it sometime!!:)

That reminded me of our Janis Family Newspaper! And so I had to go find one of your poems. This is one of my favorites. It's not Dr Seussy, but it's beautiful!

B l u e i s . . .  
Peace, serenity, contentment, calmness  
Spring carpet of forget-me-nots  
A blueberry juice stained chin  
The pure summer sky from a hammock  
A pair of favorite frayed holey jeans  
Water in a pool of forever

Here is a quote for the day by Elder Neal A Maxwell:

"Creativity involves both a process and a result. It springs out of our seeing possibilities that we have not seen before and out of seeing connections between patches of truth and beauty and responding to them in ways we have not done before. Feelings that lead to poetry, mental imagery that leads to painting, and pondering that gives birth to prose are but examples."

Tonight was the adult session of Stake Conference and afterwards the Bartholomews invited several people in the ward over for a dessert bar. So Dad, Taylor and I went. We were there first and Margaret, as soon as she saw me, wanted to show me all the pictures she had around the house that you had taken at the wedding. She loves them! They are in her bathroom, living room and in an album! She told me that Amber's wedding still isn't in an album because the pictures she got aren't the right colors that they were in the wedding, and that is bothering her so much, she can't make the album. The photographer was her niece and she doesn't want to offend, so she's trying to figure it out. You have a talent, it's truer than true!

I wish you a creative day today! I love you so much!!

Love, Mom

---

2/17/13

Hi Heather!

I just got off the phone with Grandma Scott and we had a nice talk. She told me she sent you a package for your birthday and it got returned to her with a "return to sender, could not find address" or something like that on it. It is the address I gave to the flower deliverer and to the cheesecake, and the couple of other things I sent you. Did you get those things? I typed the address in to google and it came up right. It's 11337 South 445 West, South Jordan, 84095, right? So, I don't know what to tell her. Maybe I'll email Brad and ask him. Grandma said John and Val are building a house in Hurricane and it should be done the first week of March. It sounds nice. They are probably excited!

Here's a quote for the day from President Monson:

"I have found that, rather than dwelling on the negative, if we will take a step back and consider the blessings in our lives, including seemingly small, sometimes overlooked blessings, we can find greater happiness."

Yep, I believe that, and when I do that, I always feel better, or I calm down, or everything seems just a little lighter in my life. I know I've said that before, probably multiple times, but it's something I've really tried to do in the past 4 or 5 years consciously, and have had amazing results. So I like to talk about it when I think about it. Today I am grateful for a peaceful home, chocolate, and children who have such loving, supportive and strong bonds with each other. What are you grateful for today? I think about you all the time, and pray for you, and believe in you! Know you are in my heart always and am cheering you on and wrapping my arms around you when you need it!

I love you mucho!

Mom

---

2/18/13

Hi Heather!

Emily said she wants to run a 1/2 marathon in March at the Beaumont Gusher 5K, 1/2 Marathon and full marathon run. so we are going to train together. We shall see. Since I've been running again, it's been nice, but it's been hard getting back into it. I haven't fully committed by signing us up yet, but I would like to do it in a crazy sort of way, (because it isn't fun while I'm doing it!). Anyway, so today we ran 2 miles. Somehow the two miles today was harder than the 4 miles on Saturday was. Some days are just that way.

Then she was in a cleaning mood, so I let her go through and clean out our towel and sheet closet. I let her throw away two large bags of stuff and give away 1 large bag. It always feels good to do that!

Here's a quote for the day by Pres. Monson:

"The Lord is in all of our lives. He loves us. He wants to bless us. He wants us to seek His help. As He guides us and directs us and as He hears and answers our prayers, we will find the happiness here and now that He desires for us."

I love you. I am so grateful for you! You are a person who make a difference in people's lives and you are doing that every day. I pray for you and hope you are finding more peace and happiness every day.

Love, love, love Mom

---

2/20/13

Hi Heather!

It's almost 2 in the morning! Spencer got home tonight and he was in a talkative mood!:) Emily and I spent quite a bit of time today cleaning his room. (The back room) It has become a storage room, so I had to get rid of more stuff! Yea! I am making trips to drop off at Goodwill every day and I'm loving it!

I need to get to bed, but I want you to know I am thinking of you. I love you so much and am so proud of how hard you are working and all you are doing! I send all my love to you!!!!

Love, Mom

---

2/20/13

Hi Heather!

Today was crazy busy! Wow! I'm so tired! I'm sure it didn't help that I stayed up so late last night!:) But Spencer offered to take Emily to seminary this morning, so I got to sleep in a little. We had piano today and then I went visiting teaching to Jackie Hatfield. Then Spencer and I went and bought him a suit and shirts and slacks and a coat for his mission. He wanted one of his shirts to be a cuff shirt and wanted cuff links.:) I humored him. Then I spent the rest of the afternoon getting decorations together for New Beginnings tonight. It went so well!!! The decorations and refreshments were great, but the program, which the girls were in charge of was the best! A few laurels and a couple of Mia Maids, (Emily was one) were assigned a Dr. Seuss book and a value to associate it with. They were asked to briefly tell about the book and then relate it to the value. They all did so good!! I was really impressed. Emily did the value faith and got the book Horton Hears a Who. She was able to relate so many points in the book to faith and apply it to our life.

Here is a quote by President Monson:

"There is no fog so dense, no night so dark, no gale so strong, no mariner so lost but what the lighthouse of the Lord can rescue. It beckons through the storms of life. It calls, 'This way to safety. This way to home.' It sends forth signals of light easily seen and never failing. If followed, those signals will guide you back to your heavenly home."

I just realized President Monson was in the navy, so he probably likes metaphors about ships.:) His is always a positive message, full of hope. Somehow that quote reminds me of a line or two in your patriarchal blessing. Something about navigating the storms of life. I know the Savior is there and is very aware of you. I have seen His hand so many times in your life and in mine.

I love you so much! I think about you every day and care about your happiness and your day. I hope it is good! You are so precious!

Lots of love,  
Mom

---

2/20/13

Hi Heather!

Today was crazy busy! Wow! I'm so tired! I'm sure it didn't help that I stayed up so late last night!:) But Spencer offered to take Emily to seminary this morning, so I got to sleep in a little. We had piano today and then I went visiting teaching to Jackie Hatfield. Then Spencer and I went and bought him a suit and shirts and slacks and a coat for his mission. He wanted one of his shirts to be a cuff shirt and wanted cuff links.:) I humored him. Then I spent the rest of the afternoon getting decorations together for New Beginnings tonight. It went so well!!! The decorations and refreshments were great, but the program, which the girls were in charge of was the best! A few laurels and a couple of Mia Maids, (Emily was one) were assigned a Dr. Seuss book and a value to associate it with. They were asked to briefly tell about the book

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I love you so much! I think about you every day and care about your happiness and your day. I hope it is good! You are so precious!

Lots of love,  
Mom

---

2/22/13

Hi Heather!

Today I ran 4 miles and some of it was in the rain, and it felt good. That's because it was pretty warm. With all of these longer runs I'm feeling stronger and that's a good feeling. Tonight at institute, President Allen brought his computer or i-pad (can't remember which) in at the end and in front of those who were still there, had Taylor press the submit button. So his papers are in and he should get the call in about two weeks from today. Big day for him! And Spencer went to the temple today, so it was a big day for him too. He went by himself, as he wished.

Tonight the kids watched a movie and Dad and I watched another one on the i-pad that Brandon recommended about a Sushi Chef that is famous in Japan. It was a documentary, so it was not action packed, but it was interesting and good. It made Dad want to go there and eat.:) I guess you have to make reservations a month out. He only serves sushi. No appetizers. And he gives you the sushi pieces one at a time on your plate. You get 20 pieces and it costs 30,000 yen. Don't know how much that is in dollars, but probably a lot.

I went out to the Janis Herald and found these two poems you wrote in the Feb. 2003 issue.

Tongue Twister:

As Shirley shopped at Sherman's Shop Stop, she slipped on some slime and shrieked shrilly as she slid on her spine.

Acrostic:

**S**ilver spots in a sea of black  
**T**hat never ends. Forever sparkling  
**A**s they travel  
**R**ound and round the earth, and the clouds move to and fro,  
**S**wirling, mixing, hiding the sky.

So good!!! Wow! That was 10 years ago! I remember just painstakingly pulling words out of the boys heads and trying not to put my own words in, but helping them think of the phrase that would pop in my mind. Do you remember me doing that? I never had to do that with you. You would sit down and all I remember is that you enjoyed the process and in a short time had a clever, or witty or thoughtful piece. I think I could have assigned you a poem a day and you would have easily done it!:) )

I love you and hope you are having a good day! I am cheering for you out here in Texas! I believe in you, my wonderful daughter!!!!

Love, Mom

---

2/24/13

Hi Heather!

I'm sorry I didn't get a letter out yesterday!! Today I ran 6 miles. I ran to the lake, then around the lake 4 times and then home, going the long way once I reached the neighborhood. We went to the beach today. It was colder than the previous weeks that we went, but Taylor and Spencer threw the football and I got some pictures that were fun.:) Spencer is making a new and improved shoe shelf for us. He designed it pretty meticulously and then got the wood. Tonight he cut the wood and then stained it a dark walnut. The pieces are all drying out in the garage. I'm excited to see how it will turn out! He's enjoying the project.

I'm reading The Infinite Atonement, by Tad Callister for the second time and I love this book! For the quote of the day, I want to share a chain of related scriptures and thoughts. The first is from the book's author:



"Regardless of the depth or multiplicity of our individual weaknesses, the Atonement is always there. Therein lies its beauty and genius—it is never beyond our grasp. The Savior is always standing by, anxiously longing to endow us with those powers that will convert our every weakness to a strength." Then this scripture chain:

This is Moroni, in Ether, who feels weak in writing: "Thou hast also made our words powerful and great, even that we cannot write them; wherefore, when we write we behold our weakness, and stumble because of the placing of our words; and I fear lest the Gentiles shall mock at our words." (Ether 12:25) and the Lord answers, "And if men come unto me I will show unto them their weakness. I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them." (Ether 12:27) So this promise is more than just being able to overcome the weakness, like neutralizing it, it is saying that the Atonement has the power to turn our weakness into a strength.

"I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me" (Philippians 4:13).

"The Lord God showeth us our weakness that we may know that it is by his grace . . . that we have power to do these things" (Jacob 4:7).

"God . . . giveth grace unto the humble. . . . Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up" (James 4:6, 10; see also 1 Peter 5:5).

"He giveth power to the faint; and to them that have no might he increaseth strength. . . . They that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles" (Isaiah 40:29, 31).

Two almost identical examples of weakness and the Lord's answer and the difference in response and thus the difference in consequence:

And Moses said unto the Lord, O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither heretofore, nor since thou hast spoken unto thy servant: but I am slow of speech, and of a slow tongue.

And the Lord said unto him, Who hath made man's mouth? or who maketh the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? have not I the Lord? Now therefore go, and I will be with thy mouth, and teach thee what

thou shalt say.

And he said, O my Lord, send, I pray thee, by the hand of him whom thou wilt send.

And the anger of the Lord was kindled against Moses, and he said, Is not Aaron the Levite thy brother? I know that he can speak well...

And he shall be thy spokesman unto the people: and he shall be, even he shall be to thee instead of a mouth," (Ex 4:10-16)

And when Enoch had heard these words, he bowed himself to the earth, before the Lord, and spake before the Lord, saying: Why is it that I have found favor in thy sight, and am but a lad, and all the people hate me; for I am slow of speech; wherefore am I thy servant? (Moses 6:31)

And the Lord said unto Enoch: Go forth and do as I have commanded thee, and no man shall pierce thee. Open thy mouth, and it shall be filled, and I will give thee utterance, for all flesh is in my hands, and I will do as seemeth me good. (Moses 6:32)

Enoch says ...the Lord spake with me, and gave me commandment; wherefore, for this cause, to keep the commandment, I speak forth these words. (Moses 6:42)

As Enoch spake forth the words of God, the people trembled, and could not stand in his presence (Moses 6:47)

So great was the faith of Enoch that . . . he spake the word of the Lord, and the earth trembled, and the mountains fled, even according to his command; and the rivers of water were turned out of their course; . . . and all nations feared greatly, so powerful was the word of Enoch, and so great was the power of the language which God had given him (Moses 7:13; emphasis added).

"My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness" (2 Corinthians 12:9).

I thought that was really amazing and wanted to share! I love you so much! You are my precious daughter and I am so grateful for you! I hope your day is beautiful in many ways. I hope you can feel my love and hugs!

Love, Mom

---

2/25/13

Hi Heather!!

It was so good to talk to you and hear your voice! You sound good and strong! I'm so happy!!!! I always love listening to you, you have such interesting things to say!

Ok, quote for the day. This is from Pres. Uchtdorf last April:

This topic of judging others could actually be taught in a two-word sermon. When it comes to hating, gossiping, ignoring, ridiculing, holding grudges, or wanting to cause harm, please apply the following:

Stop it!

It's that simple. We simply have to stop judging others and replace judgmental thoughts and feelings with a heart full of love for God and His children. God is our Father. We are His children. We are all brothers and sisters. I don't know exactly how to articulate this point of not judging others with sufficient eloquence, passion, and persuasion to make it stick. I can quote scripture, I can try to expound doctrine, and I will even quote a bumper sticker I recently saw. It was attached to the back of a car whose driver appeared to be a little rough around the edges, but the words on the sticker taught an insightful lesson. It read, "Don't judge me because I sin differently than you."

I really love that thought.

I hope you have a fantastic day!!!

Love you!  
Love. , mom.

Sorry it's so short!

---

2/26/13

Hi Heather!!!

Today was a busy day getting all the rest of the stuff for Spencer. He is so funny!:) He could care less about some things, so got the cheapest, but had definite opinions about other things.

Emily ran 6 miles today, which is her longest run so far in her life. She was pretty happy!

You just called Dad and sounded so good! I am so happy for you!! I hope and pray that it will continue and you can have this peace and joy for always!

Here is a proverb for our quote of the day: "Be thou humble; and the Lord thy God shall lead thee by the hand, and give thee answer to thy prayers"

I know this is happening in your life! I love you so much!!! I hope you have a wonderful time with Spencer!

Love, Mom

---

2/26/13

Hi Heather!

Did you have a wonderful day? I hope it was great to see Spencer! It was so weird to take him to the airport knowing this was it for two years. It's been a bit of a whirlwind having him here, so it's all been so fast! It was really great to have him here and to spend a little time with him though. We all had a good time together!

I went to a Thrive Food party at Jen Hansen's tonight. It's a food storage company that flash freezes food and it holds its flavor and texture and nutrients for like 20+ years. She is a GOOD salesperson! :) She had lots of food to sample. I loved the vegetables! They taste like really yummy health food chips or snacks. That's before they get rehydrated. The cheese and butter were super good too. Anyway, what a fun evening having a food storage party, right?:D

Here is a quote by President Eyring:

"Jesus Christ lives, knows us, watches over us, and cares for us. In moments of pain, loneliness, or confusion, we do not need to see Jesus Christ to know that He is aware of our circumstances and that His mission is to bless."

And here is another one of your fantastic poems from the Janis Homeschool Harold. It is a painted poem:

**Storm**

Musket flashes light the universe,  
Heaven's percussion band shatters the still night,  
And the earth vibrates,  
Liquid marbles roll from the sky,  
Pools of these transparent orbs gather on spotted cement,  
Heavy air swirls as the giant cries.

Very good, very good! I love these newspapers! I am yawning my head off! I hope you have a great day tomorrow and that you feel my love and all our family's love for you!

Love, Mom

---

2/27/13

Hi Heather!

I talked to Spencer for a few minutes about a half hour before he went to the MTC. He said he had a great talk with you! I'm so glad you got to spend some time with him! I just love how all of my children love each other so much and I just see the bond you all have. It is a very rewarding feeling as a mother! Damon told him he would get a better haircut at a place in Provo than at the MTC, so this morning he went and got the haircut. So Damon ended up going with him to the MTC and got a couple of pics. I will try to print them up and send them to you in the next day or two.

We are still watching The Biggest Loser and it's down to the last 5 people. The person we watched tonight get eliminated had a really big transformation when they showed them a few weeks later. It is so amazing to see how just small, but continuous things in our lives can make such a difference!

Here's a thought for the day kind of on that same line of thought from Elder Ballard:

There is one simple daily practice that can make a difference... That simple practice is: In your morning prayer each new day, ask Heavenly Father to guide you to recognize an opportunity to serve one of His precious children. Then go throughout the day with your heart full of faith and love, looking for someone to help. Stay focused, just like the honeybees focus on the flowers from which to gather nectar and pollen. If you do this, your spiritual sensitivities will be enlarged and you will discover opportunities to serve that you never before realized were possible.

I know you have helped Spencer and your care and love and counsel have made a difference in his life, especially in these past few weeks. I remember cleaning his room years ago and I found a note that you wrote to him. It may have been from a Young Women value experience in Personal Progress, but the fact that he kept it said a lot to me! You are a wonderful sister, daughter, person!

I love you so much! I hope your week continues to be great! Did I say I love you? I love you!!!!

Love, Mom

---

3/1/13

Hi Heather!

Dad went on a business trip for Dentma today. Brandon was going to go, but their bishop passed away this week and his funeral is on Friday, so Dad said he would go. Their bishop is Brother McPhearson, if you remember them from our ward. He died of cancer and didn't want to be released and somehow was able to stay actively serving as bishop till he passed away. I feel so bad for the family! So Dad went, and it's actually to Richmond, Virginia. Funny, huh? He comes home on Saturday night.

I worked on cleaning Spencer's room today. He left it rather messy.:) There were boxes from school that he had shipped here and most of the clothes he had brought in his suitcase stayed. Then there was garbage and bedding that need to be cleaned. (not the garbage, just the bedding.:)) So I got it organized in the closet and the sheets are in the laundry, so that is done and it looks better already. I will try to work with Taylor, so it's a little more cleared out by the time he leaves!

If you want to write a letter to Spencer, his address is:

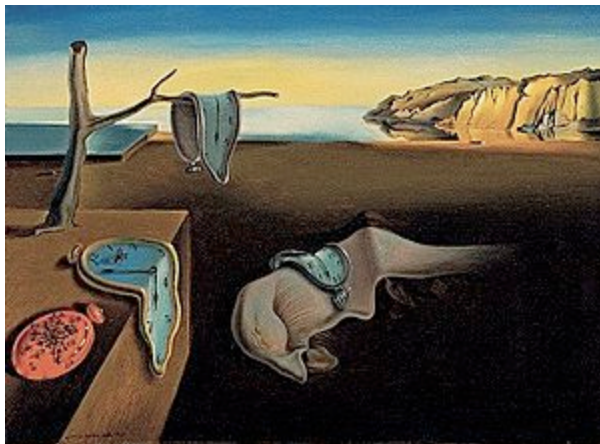
Elder Spencer Janis  
VA-RICH 0313  
2005 North 900 East  
Provo, UT 84604

The VA-RICH stands for Virginia, Richmond. And the numbers are the month and day he leaves the MTC, which is March 13, just two weeks. You probably already know that, but just in case.:) After that his mission office address is:

9327 Midlothian Turnpike  
Suite 1-B  
Richmond, Virginia 23235

I ordered about 4 pictures to send to you, but they weren't done when I went to get them, and so I haven't had a chance to get them later. I will get them sent tomorrow!

Here's another creative story you wrote for the Janis Homeschool Herald. Written in May of 2003. It was an assignment to take a famous painting and create a story about it. You chose "Persistence of Memory," by Salvador Dali:



"They climbed over a pebble the size of a boulder. They knew it was a pebble because you should have seen the stones. A beetle scuttled across their path, leaving tracks the size of

elephants feet in the soft dust. Wind blew softly. How did they get here to this place, this giant world? They were going towards something, something amazing. But the sweat dripped in their eyes and they couldn't see it. The sun streamed down and beat upon their backs, but it was ok because the wind blew. A snake (or was it a train? They were the same size) slithered past, slowly, and they held onto a scale. They were closer, closer, closer, almost there, and finally, arrived. The clocks of Time. They knew it was their chance to get back to reality, to home. But as they started to climb, growing taller and stronger until a pebble was the size of a fingernail, the clocks softened. Dripped, became pools of metal liquid, bigger and bigger, all but the hands and numbers a silver lake, and the solids swirling and skimming the surface. As they stood there watching, the sound of a thousand clocks ticked,

"Now! Now! Now! Now! Now!"

So they jumped. The lake engulfed them, spat them out in their own land, their own time, and they forgot."

That was awesome! Such good stuff!

Here's a quote for the day from Mosiah 7:33

"But if ye will turn to the Lord with full purpose of heart, and put your trust in him, and serve him with all diligence of mind, if ye do this, he will, according to his own will and pleasure, deliver you out of bondage."

As it says, it is his will and his pleasure to deliver and to bless. The formula is there. And the few stories I read in the AA book testify to this formula. But it's true for everything. I have learned this principle for myself and know that peace in the midst of affliction comes through this formula.

I love you! You are my sweet daughter! Keep smiling! You are beautiful!

Love, Mom

---

3/2/13

Hi Heather!

Emily and I just watched Taylor play basketball with the men in the ward against another ward and our team won. So he's pretty happy and is being quite expressive and loud now. :) Now we're going to watch The Apple Dumpling Gang. :) Do you remember that movie? I'm sure you do!

Taylor is telling us about names that he comes across while scanning records at work. He is keeping a list of the most unusual names he sees. Here is his list:

Lacee Lovely  
Tracy Loveless  
Jacquie Buttles  
Latoisha Adams  
Rebecca martinez  
Booker T Washington (lives on martin luther king apt 1!)  
Jeffrey Snodgrass  
Bryan Goodpastor  
Tamara Van Dusseldorp  
George Washington  
Thaw Wah  
LaRhonda Shird  
Kip (ritchie)  
Karie Butt  
Jason von haefen  
Krashandra Jones  
Deandrea maskill  
Chelsea Sorrow  
Kenneth Buttrick  
Joy Williams  
Bernessica  
Jarnesha  
Jessica Quackenboss  
Parshendatha Davis  
Quanika  
David Davis  
Rebecca Black  
SigiFrido Hipolito

He's funny.:)

Ok, quote for the day by Elder Bednar:

*To not take counsel from our fears means that faith in the Lord Jesus Christ overrules our fears and that we can press forward with a steadfastness in Him. To not take counsel from our fears means that we trust in God's guidance, assurance, and timing in our lives."*

I hope you have a beautiful day! I hope that you have a sparkle in your eyes because you have hope in your heart. I have hope in my heart for you! You made a huge impact on Spencer and where he is right now. You are amazing! I love you so much!!!!

Love, Mom

---



3/3/13

Hi Heather!

Emily and I ran 9 miles today! It was a killer for both of us. We had a few times where we walked a little bit, but we made it. Then Emily made a protein shake and I had some and the milk was a few days overdue, and my stomach hasn't felt too good the rest of the day. She's fine, though. Anyway, next Saturday is the 1/2 marathon. I hope it will go ok; I'm a little nervous.

Here's another fun submission to the Janis Family Herald. It's a story by you and Emily, rolling a die and taking turns writing that many words:

### **Julie's Freckles**

#### **By Heather and Emily**

Julie is happy because she loves her freckles. But they fell off. Julie wished that she still had some freckles. I know! She got so she made some freckles with brown markers and blowpens! And also, permanent marker.

"Oh dear," said Julie. Because she had *permanent* marker on her face in big, black, ugly spots. Well, Julie looked in the mirror over the sink. Then she scrubbed and scrubbed her face. But they wouldn't budge. So she rubbed bleach on her face. But oh, BAD LUCK! And OWW! Julie started crying. Her tears made her fake freckles come off! Oh Joy! Happy day!

This quote for the day is a hymn written by President Joseph Fielding Smith:

Does the journey seem long,  
The path rugged and steep?  
Are there briars and thorns on the way?  
Do sharp stones cut your feet  
As you struggle to rise  
To the heights thru the heat of the day?  
Is your heart faint and sad,  
Your soul weary within,  
As you toil 'neath your burden of care?  
Does the load heavy seem  
You are forced now to lift?  
Is there no one your burden to share?  
Let your heart be not faint  
Now the journey's begun;  
There is One who still beckons to you.  
So look upward in joy  
And take hold of his hand;  
He will lead you to heights that are new-  
A land holy and pure,  
Where all trouble doth end,

And your life shall be free from all sin,  
Where no tears shall be shed,  
For no sorrows remain,  
Take his hand and with him enter in.

I really like this! It reminds me of another hymn, "How Gentle God's Commands" and the line that says, "Come cast your burdens on the Lord, and trust his constant care."

Take care and have a wonderful day! I love you and am constantly thinking of you and hoping you are doing well.

Love, Mom

---

3/4/13

Hi Heather!

I hear you're sick! I'm sorry! I hope you get better soon! I wish I could make you some herbal tea!:) Dad enjoyed your conversation. He said you sound good besides being sick. I'm so grateful!

This afternoon Matt Nelson came over and helped make white chicken chile with Taylor. Tomorrow at work they are having a chile cook-off and there is prize money for the winner, so they decided to do our recipe together. He and Taylor carpool to work every day and they work in the same room, "The File Room.":)

Brother Leyton bore his testimony today (surprise!:) and started by telling a story of how one of his daughters called him up and asked him if he wanted to go to lunch. So he was happy to go and thought she was paying, but found out that when she asks him to lunch, he pays. So his wallet is lighter. And then he said he that wasn't why he got up today and proceeded to bear his testimony of writing in journals.:) He's so random and funny! What would our testimony meetings be without Brother Leyton, right?:)

There was a young adult fireside broadcast tonight and Elder Bednar spoke. I listened to it online. Sister Bednar spoke first, though, and it was a wonderful talk. She said as she travels all over the world with her husband, she is saddened by how many young adults feel that God doesn't seem to care about them or is even aware of them. She then talked about having eyes to see, ears to hear, feet to follow and hearts to understand. She read a quote by President Kimball that I felt impressed to send to you as the quote for the day. He said, "I find that when I get casual in my relationships with divinity and when it seems that no divine ear is listening and no divine voice is speaking, that I am far, far away. If I immerse myself in the scriptures the distance narrows and the spirituality returns."

Here is another one of your newspaper writings. The assignment was Fairy Tales from another perspective.

**Cinderella**

## By Heather

Once upon a time there was a girl. She was my stepsister and her name was Cinderella. We met when we were ten, and my mother married her father. At first I thought she was nice, the kind of girl adults love, the material teachers pets are made of. And then, my new stepfather died!

It wasn't as though I cared. I hardly knew him. But then mother forced me to share a room with her. What a sloppy pig! She would sneak cookies and crackers, bread, cake, anything, up to our room in the middle of the night, then throw what she didn't eat under my bed. In the morning, she would throw her clothes on the floor, and she never picked anything up.

Years passed, and we turned 17. I finally had my own room. Our older sister never had to share a room. Isabel always got her way. The maids were growing sick of picking up after Cinderella, and finally, they went on strike. Mother was angry and dismissed them all, so there was nobody to clean up after or cook for the Royal Highness Cinderella.

After three days of living in her mess, Mother made her clean. She cracked the whip and Cinderella had to clean the whole place from top to bottom. And she pretended to be happy, singing and all, but I knew the real reason. The Royal prince, had caught her eye and every Tuesday and Thursday would ride past our home on his way to the hunting grounds. He fancied Cinderella, and she sang through the window to him.

The problem was, if she went off and got married, Mother would make me do all of her work (we can't have Isabel spoil her smooth hands, can we dear?) and so I made sure that whenever there was a ball, Cinderella had so much work to do that she couldn't possibly go. So the only time she saw the prince was through a window twice a week.

However, one night, we left for a ball, and somehow she got there too and was the most beautiful girl there. The prince proposed to her the next day with a glass shoe (I prefer rings) and they got married the next month. We weren't invited. And now I get to work.

:) Very fun and creative! I hope your week is a really good one and that you can feel better soon! I love you and miss you. You are my very precious daughter!  
Love, Mom

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3/5/13

Hi Heather!

How is my sweet daughter? I got the pictures sent today to you! Yea! So you can probably look for them on Friday hopefully! We still haven't heard from Spencer, BUT! Tonight Dad, Emily and I were watching Horton Hears a Who (which has nothing to do with my story, but I just thought I'd throw that in:)) and the phone rang and it was a lady in the ward. Her family moved in right before Spencer's Senior year and they have a daughter named Laura who is his age. Well, Laura went in the MTC the same day Spencer did and she is going to Arkansas, English speaking. Laura's mom called and asked if I had heard from Spencer yet and I said no and asked if she had heard from Laura and she said today. I guess their P-Day is Thursday. She wrote and it arrived today. Laura is in Spencer's zone, so she sees him

often. She told her mom to call and tell me that when she sees Spencer, he is very happy, and she wanted me to know. She's such a kind girl! Anyway, I thought I'd pass that on, since it's the only information I have gotten about him since last Wed.! So hopefully we will get an email on Thursday from him. And that's the earliest day we could get Taylor's call in the mail. So Thursday could be a pretty cool day!

Here is a Psalm for the quote of the day:

God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble.

Therefore will not we fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea;

Though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof...

The Lord...will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. (Psalms 46:1-3, 9:9)

Here's another Herald Newspaper entry!

### **Ethel's Chicken**

**by Heather**

**(This actually won a contest in a home school magazine!)**

Ethel was 97. Although she was fit, did all her shopping at a health food store, and could do full splits on a trampoline, her eyesight was not what it used to be. Which is why she couldn't tell a chicken from a rooster. So she named the chicken John. The rooster was called Melissa.

One fateful morning in June, John waddled out of the roost and flapped her way to the top of the old blue barn. The barn was VERY old. Ethel's grand pop had built it. Actually, it had caved in and was a rubble heap. John believed it would offer some privacy. Her head stuck over the top of it, but all in all, it was an ideal place to lay her first egg.

In the house, Ethel pulled mud encrusted boots over turquoise socks and stomped around singing a tuneless song to herself. She didn't notice John behaving like chickens do, and throughout the morning as she gathered the eggs, milked the cows, planted some corn, and wrote a letter, she never even glanced her way. I'm sure if she had known the truth she would have said, "My dear rooster! You are to stop clucking at once!" because that was just the way she was.

Early evening, Ethel went looking for John. She had missed her.

"John! My sweet John! Come here this moment!" John did not come. So Ethel climbed the blue barn heap so as to be higher and see farther. CRUNCH went John's foot as the old woman stepped directly on it. The chicken flew. Have you seen a chicken fly before? Ethel did that night. And she also discovered that John was a chicken. The next day she bought glasses. And John became Elizabeth.

Clap, clap, clap, clap, clap, clap!!!! Alright my girl, consider yourself hugged by me and know that I am close in thoughts and spirit! I hope you have a really great day!

I love you so much!  
Mom

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3/6/13

Hi Heather!

How's my Heather? I hope great! Emily and I went to piano today then to a fabric store to get cute fabric for a project we are doing in Mia Maids: making little smocks for kids in the cardio wing of the children's hospital, that tie at the sides and have a pocket on the front for tubes and stuff. We found some really cute material! My favorite has darling multi-colored owls on them. Another was bubblegum pink with big white polkadots on it.

Dad and I walked to the lake and sat on a bench and enjoyed the sunshine and ducks. Then a firetruck came screaming down Cinco Ranch Blvd. and interrupted the peace. A big dog across the lake in a yard started howling until the siren wasn't audible. It was so funny!

I talked a bit with Damon today and he said he's on his third cold of the season and it's wearing him out. Then Taylor came home early saying his throat is sore. So it looks like you've got company! I hope you are feeling a little better!

Quote for the day from Elder Hollands introduction to his book, "For Times of Trouble" These passages (Psalms) become the spiritual equivalent of what a fierce combatant declared in the days of political and religious revolution that set the stage for the Restoration of the gospel. Paraphrasing the defiant Thomas Paine, I, too, can "love those who can smile in trouble, who can gather strength from distress, and grow brave by reflection. It is the business of little minds to shrink, but they whose heart is firm, and whose conscience approves their conduct, will pursue their principles unto death." The primary purpose of these scriptural psalms is to help us "grow brave by reflection," help us exert the faith necessary to "smile in trouble" and "gather strength from distress." The promises of light to those who are engulfed in darkness and strength for those who are battling an enemy are regularly recurring themes throughout the psalms.

I am really interested to actually study Psalms like I never have before. I'm sure they are chock full of victory scriptures!

And..... another great writing entry in the Harold. The assignment was: Create a Character

**Eloise Midgeon**

**By Heather**

As my daughter Eloise appeared in the doorway of the plane with her fiancé and the pastor, the TV crews started rolling the film. I was holding her wedding dress, at least, trying to. There were about fifty yards of material on it, and she wouldn't need a parachute if she had worn the dress instead! Why was the dress here? Eloise was getting married... in the air. The three of

them jumped out, three parachutes billowed up like gigantic mushrooms, and the ceremony began. Eloise was swinging her plump four foot three body around, trying to get closer to her tall groom. Her round arm attached to his long bony one, and her black hair whipped her face and tickled his. Behind this black veil, her luminous green eyes sparkled and glowed. The violet shirt rippled around the parachute straps. And finally, short legs kicking the air, Eloise Midgeon tumbled to the ground.

Yea!!! You were and are still so talented and full of sparkle! I love you and hope your day sparkles bright!

Love, your loving and encouraging and believing-in-you Mom!

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3/4/13

Hi Heather!

I finally picked up the pictures and I'll get them in the mail tomorrow. (or today for you:)) So this was my day: took Emily to seminary and slept in the car. Came home and slept for a little bit more. Got ready for the day. Took Emily to voice lessons and slept in the car.:) Wrote a letter to Spencer. Worked on a project I just started. I'm going to make some videos of myself talking about homeschool, to help new moms who are feeling they want or need to homeschool, but get overwhelmed at the amount of curriculum and courses and subject matter that is out there, to help them calm down and give them the confidence that they can do it. So I've come up with about 14 different topics to address and I'm just making bullet points to talk about in that topic. I just finished the outlines and bullet points. I'll let it sit a little longer and see if I can think of anything else, and if there are other topics, and then I'll start filming. After Christmas we got this cool lighting set, so it hopefully will look a little better with that. I'm excited!

Then I practiced piano and stopped and went with Dad to Whole Foods, a new one that is just off 99 and Fry. He is still dealing with itchy skin and thinks he may just need a cleanse, so he's going to juice for the next few days and needed some fruit and veggies. Picked up the pictures at Walgreens that I'm sending to you. Finished practicing piano, went jeans shopping with Emily and we both found a pair, amazingly. Made dinner (beans and rice and steak, quinoa for Dad along with a juice) and ate. Had a FHE lesson by Dad and watched The Biggest Loser. Now I'm writing to you. So now you have a little glimpse at my day.

So for the quote of the day, I had heard that Elder Holland had a book out called "For Times of Trouble - Spiritual Solace from the Psalms" and I went out to see if there was a good quote and I found one, then I found an excerpt from the book and it was pretty awesome, as pretty much everything is that he writes, so I thought I'd pass it on:

## **Chapter 1**

Psalm 56:9

*When I cry unto thee, then shall mine enemies turn back: this I know; for God is for me.*

Although it seems to confuse the order of these selections right at the outset, I have chosen to begin my discussion of individual passages with this one because I believe all confidence, all comfort, all strength, all safety starts here—"This I know; . . . God is for me." That truth has to be seared into our hearts, written in bold letters across the tissue of our brains, and never forgotten. Like the blood of the Passover with which ancient Israelites were to mark the lintel and side posts of their doors, we ought to have some such figurative reminder constantly before our eyes and always in our hearts that God is for us. Whenever we go out and always when we come in, no matter what the trouble and trial of the day may be, we start and finish with the eternal truth that God is for us. He loves us. He is our Heavenly Father. He never sleeps nor slumbers in His watchcare over us. His work and His glory are to save us, to exalt us, to see us safely home with Him.

Everything He does is in support of that ultimate purpose, no matter what refinements or trials are required in the achievement of that objective. Acknowledging the dimensions of His majesty and all quantum physics of the universe, from the budding of a flower in spring to expanding realms of galaxies without number, God's singular, solitary quest is to bless and exalt His children, to save (if they will let Him) every human soul.

So in our efforts to swim through our sea of troubles, we must master this thought; in the common parlance of our faith, we must get a testimony of it. *God is for us*. He is *never* against us. We and all others have the freedom, the eternal agency, to make choices, including stupid or cruel or evil ones. Because of this He can be against things we do and against things that others do to us. He will always be against sin, abuse, and error in whatever form they come and from whomever they may flow. But even then He has the divine ability to separate His opposition to the sin from His unyielding love for the sinner. We may not be very good at making that fine distinction, but He is perfect at it and has had a lot of practice.

In, through, and around all of the human, societal, and natural difficulties in our mortal world, God always loves us. *He is always for us*. In His divinity He cannot do or be otherwise. He would have no reason to be if it were otherwise. It is His nature to love His children. There are certain qualities and virtues that are inseparable from godhood. One of them—the principal one—is His unflinching, unfaltering, unflagging love for His children. We are trying to achieve those divine attributes, but He already has them. If He were to betray them or leave them or compromise them, He would "cease to be God."<sup>21</sup> But He is never going to cease being God and He is never going to compromise the virtues and characteristics of His godhood.

So we will find ourselves better prepared to carry on in the face of difficulty, to go forward with true faith, if we can hold to a few rock-solid principles that will undergird us on our way. The very first of those, the most fundamental of all, must be that God lives and does love us—that *He is for us*. And as the Apostle Paul would later ask, "If God be for us, who [or we might add, what] can be against us? . . . We are more than conquerors through him that loved us."<sup>22</sup>

And I believe that and see evidence of it every day! I just got a Facebook message from Brother Davies and he shared this about you I think in response to your birthday and my request, "I think Heather has an amazing gift at capturing emotion in her still photography. She is very talented."

I love you so much and I am for you too! I hope your day is spectacular, my spectacular girl!!  
Love, Mom

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3/8/13

Hi Heather!

I hope you get this today! I went to Sister Combs house last night for a Book Club thing and stayed way too late talking with people and didn't get back home till to late, so I'm hoping I can still get this to you today! Taylor didn't get his call yesterday, so hopefully it will come today. He's not been feeling that well, so he's stayed home from work yesterday and today. Tonight we are driving over to Beaumont and Emily and I are going to run the 1/2 marathon tomorrow. So hopefully it will come today, otherwise we will have to wait till tomorrow night to get it.

Spencer sent a quick email to us yesterday. He was negative in the brief words. The MTC isn't seeming to agree with him, but he says he's trucking along. So yesterday wasn't as exciting as we all had anticipated.:) But the day was gorgeous and Dad and I walked to the lake again and sat and talked on a bench. That was so pleasant!

HEATHER!!!!!!!!!!!!!! Hey, this is Taylor :) I really hope you're doing well!!! I think about you often and am so proud of you for fighting!!!! Update into my life: I work at GnA partners from 8-5 monday-friday and in what little free time I have after that I work out with Spencer Riggs who needs to loose 15 pounds and drop his blood pressure before he can turn his papers in. He's lost 5 pounds so far and the goal this coming week is for him to loose another 5 pounds!  
I love you so much and wish the best for you! :)

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3/8/13

Hi Heather!

We are in Beaumont now. Shelby and I searched on a website called [missionsite.net](http://missionsite.net) that is a website to set up a mission blog on, to see if we could find anyone in Spencer's district and we actually found a blog of his companion! Well, one of his companions. He has two. Both are from Springville, Ut and went to the same high school but didn't know each other. He told his family in his letter on Thursday that Spencer is a great guy. He told about how they got red dots put on their tags the first day and all day other missionaries would say, "Welcome to the MTC elder!" And he said it got annoying after a while and so towards the end of the day they took them off. (I'm sure Spencer initiated that!:) then he said that this Wednesday they



enjoyed greeting the new arrivals with the red dots with, "Welcome to the MTC!" Haha This companion looks Hispanic. His name is Elder Martinez. His other Elder Forrest Adsit. So now we know a little bit more.:) also, Brian said in his letter that he's seen Spencer twice and they have opposite schedules, but they decided when they will see each other next they will take pictures. So between the girl in our ward, Brian, and his companion, we are getting a little more of a picture!:) )

The quote for the day is Lamentations 3:22-23: "It is of the Lords mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness."

I love you and I hope you are having a wonderful day! You are so precious to me and I think of you all the day! (Sorry I don't have a Herald entry!)

Love, Mom

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3/10/13

Hi Heather!

Well, yesterday Emily and I made it through the 1/2 marathon! We both finished! She did it in 2 hours 14 minutes, I believe, and I did it in 2 hours 40 min. It was really hard this time for me. I don't think I had trained long enough, both on the physical level and on the mental level. I went strong for the first half, but by mile 9 I was stopping to walk for a half minute every 1/2 mile or mile. Then it was so hard and painful to start back up. But I'm still glad I did it. I needed something to push myself in. We were both hobbling around the rest of the day, but today I think we are mostly recovered. Whew! We did it and I'm glad it's over! I think she is too!:) It was nice to see Shelby and family as well. We brought Julie back with us as it is Spring Break this week. I don't know if I mentioned this, but Julie is now home schooling. She is doing an online program that is accredited and it only takes her a few hours in the morning and she's really liking it and learning more, she says. So that will be fun to have her here for a few days. When we got home last night, Taylor immediately went to the mailbox and I quickly grabbed the camera. It didn't have the battery in it, so I slapped it in and turned it on as soon as Taylor came it. It hadn't come. Ughh! So maybe tomorrow!:) )

Quote for the day is Psalms 107:28-30: "Then they cry unto the Lord in their trouble, and he bringeth them out of their distresses. He maketh the storm a calm, so that the waves thereof are still. Then are they glad because they be quiet; so he bringeth them unto their desired haven."

Story from October 2003 Herald:

If you were a witch and could grant three wishes, what wishes would you grant?

**Mike's Wishes**

**Heather**

I was sitting on my front porch enjoying the cloudy Halloween afternoon, when Mike came.

"Ms. Travis, I know you're a witch."

*Great*, I thought grumpily.

"Grant me a wish."

"Sorry, bub," I said. "It doesn't work that way. No can do."

"You don't even know what it is yet!"

He said.

"It doesn't mater. If I grant you a wish, you'll have another one, and so will your friend, and his friend, and soon, my entire life will be filled granting other peoples wishes. Sorry, No."

He frowned. "I don't think you could do it."

Darn. That gets me every time!

"What's your wish?"

"To be the richest seven year old kid in the world."

I handed him a quarter. "There. I didn't even have to do magic. Congratulations."

He glared at me and said exasperatedly,

"Oh fine. Then I want a million dollars."

"Do you think I can just wave a wand and you will be a millionaire?"

"Yeah."

I pulled a wand out of my pocket and swung it around in the air a few times.

"There you go."

"Where's the cash?" he demanded.

"Oh go home. Its in your bedroom, but I doubt it if your mom lets you keep it."

He ran down the street to his house and slammed the door.

Two hours later, I heard someone pounding on my door. I opened it and Mike stood there with his hands in his pockets.

"Grant me another wish."

"Why should I do that?"

"My mom wont let me keep the money. I wish she would."

Sigh. "Fine. But you need to pay me. Tomorrow bring me two toads."

"Okay. Well, grant my wish!"

What a polite, patient little boy. I waved my wand again. "Go home now." He stood there.

"WHAT?"

"Can I have one more wish?"

"If you will just leave me alone. This is the last one you get."

"Give me unlimited wishes."

"No."

"A dog then."

A dog. That would be easy. I waved my wand for the last time. The yellow Labrador blinked up at him.

"AW! Thanks!"

"Now grant me a wish."

"Maybe."

"Go home."

He turned and the dog chased him all the way home.

I hope you are enjoying these. I'm enjoying reading them, for sure! This story is awesome! I hope you are having a splendid day and that good stuff happens! I love you so very, very much!

Love, Mom

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3/11/13

Hi Heather!

Well, today was exciting! I got the call in the mail around 12:00 and texted Taylor. He was pretty distracted the rest of the day. He is excited about where he's going. He immediately went up and put some Indian blanket jacket thing on that reminds him of Arizona and had me take pictures.:) The mission boundaries are interesting. It is a long skinny strip that takes in a little bit of California, goes all the way across Arizona, and takes in a little bit of New Mexico. In July there will be a new mission created in Gilbert. It will affect his mission, so he may be transferred to that mission in July. I don't know how the boundaries will be affected either. So the boys will be here in the USA serving on either side of us in Texas!:) )

I cleaned house a little today. The kitchen was a little messy, but the kitchen floor was gross! So I scrubbed the formica counters and the sink, and swept and mopped the floor. It feels and looks so much better!

I hope you are doing well and having really good days and nights! I think about you all throughout the day. My thoughts aren't very far away from you.

Quote of the day:

Wait on the Lord: be of good courage, and he shall strengthen thine heart: wait, I say, on the Lord. ————— Be still, and know that I am God: -Psalms 4:4; 27:14; 46:10

If God can from time to time tell His prophets to wait, He surely can and will tell us the same thing. On those occasions, the most courageous stand we can take is just that—to stand, to be patient, to be still, to believe that there will be victory even if the victory is not to come now. Be of good courage. The Lord will strengthen thy heart. Holland, Jeffrey R. (2012-11-23). For Times of Trouble (Kindle Locations 444-446). . Kindle Edition.

You have so much of life ahead and so many wonderful things to do! You are an incredible person and I am excited to see you become everything you are meant to become!!! I love you so so so so SOOOOOOOOOOOO much!!!

Love, Mom

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3/14/13

Hi Heather!!

It was so good to hear from you and to hear how good you sound!! Your apartment sounds perfect!

I got your phone and mail sent today. You should get it around Saturday. Spencer flew to Richmond today. We never heard from him. I don't know if he tried. We did get a call from his mission office tonight saying he had arrived safely, been fed a nice dinner, was instructed and shipped out. We will hopefully hear from him on Monday.

It's nice having Julie here and enjoying a relaxing Spring Break. The girls did some tie dyeing (sp!) and Daenon came over and they got some frozen yogurt and watched a movie.

Quote for the day: a psalm and then thoughts from Elder Holland:

I will meditate in thy precepts, and have respect unto thy ways... (Psalms 119:15)

"An earlier psalm counseled us to "commune with your own heart." None of us are alone with our own thoughts, prayers, dreams, and reflections as much as we ought to be. But we should try to "get away" into our inner space, to that quiet, spiritual center God gave every one of us. Nowhere can anyone find a quieter or more untroubled retreat than in his or her own soul. President David O. McKay taught: "We pay too little attention to the value of meditation, a principle of devotion. In our worship there are two elements: one is spiritual communion arising from our own meditation. The other, instruction from others... Of the two. The more profitable introspectively is the meditation. Meditation is the language of the soul. It is defined as 'a form of private devotion, or spiritual exercise, consisting in deep continual reflection on some religious theme.' Meditation is a form of prayer."

I hope these next few weeks you continue to find more joy, more hope and more peace! I love you and think about you and pray for you each and every day!

With all my love, Mom

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3/11/13

Hello my dear son!!! (Spencer)

Thank you for your email. Sorry to hear the MTC stinketh. Glad to know you're still trucking though! Sorry to hear you and your district aren't forging beautiful bonds. I'm surprised a little, since you have studied all the great people principles in How to Win Friends and The 7 Habits books. But I truly think you are making a difference in your district, you may not see it. Sometimes when a person's way of doing things or seeing things is challenged in any way, the first response is not always positive, but they will definitely noodle on it, and may come around if they think it's got merit. (And I'm making assumptions, so I could be totally off base, and you can just ignore me if i am.:)) Dad has many approaches to life and things that were not in my realm of perspectives, but over time, I've come to really appreciate his ideas. I think

Dad has a natural ability to communicate his ideas most of the time in a "How to Win Friends" way, so I haven't reacted too strongly to his ways over the years.

Well, we went to Beaumont Friday night and Emily and I ran the 1/2 marathon on Saturday. The sky was overcast and it was lightly misting right before the race. It was like 65 degrees and a good breeze was blowing, so it was absolutely perfect for a long run! My physical and mental prep were not at the top, so after mile 9, it was tough. I walked for 1/2 a minute a few times, and it was painful, both mentally and physically to start running again. But I wanted to get it over with too, so that's what spurred me on. Emily and I ran the first mile or so together, then I started lagging behind. She finished the 13 miles in 2 hours 14 min and I did a 2 hours 40 minute time. That wasn't my best time, but that's ok. We hobbled around the rest of the day, but I'm all recovered and no soreness. Same for her. I'm really proud of her!

Taylor still hasn't received his call. I know he's anxious, but he's not freaking out, just staying positive. It should be here today or tomorrow, so we will let you know as soon as we can, of course!

Dad and Brandon decided to bring Ryan into Dentma to sell the product. Infusionsoft isn't moving fast enough and is wanting to make a package deal using Dentma's bridge and go to the big players, but don't want to give much of the profit to Dentma. Like only \$49/mo per sale. They are deciding to be ok with that, even though it's not that great of a deal, but they will put their own package together as well and sell to the smaller players in the pot. Ryan will be the front line sales guy. He just got trained as an Infusionsoft expert and he works for a dentist as his office manager, so he will also help design and create more dental campaigns for them to sell. I'll keep you posted, or Dad will.

We brought Julie back with us from Beaumont, as this week is Spring Break. She will stay for a few days and I hope they will have fun! It's a 50/50 chance with those two!:) Last night they wanted to go to bed at 8:30 so they wouldn't be tired today and would have energy, but we heard them laughing hysterically till at least 10:30 last night!:) Silly girls.

You are an amazing person, Spencer! You have so many abilities! When you set your mind to something, you go for it like a bull charging or a tank. You have incredible stamina and physical and mental strength. You are a natural leader, with or without the title. You can really rally others and get them excited. I love to see you in action, or hear about it. And even though you say you don't really like people, I think you actually care a lot and are very sensitive. You will have such amazing opportunities to help people and you are a man of action that will make things happen! Three stories to illustrate just popped into my head. One is when we were hauling all the wood in bags out to the front and I tripped and really cut up my hand and knuckles. I got pretty banged up. You were right there and just took over and I felt so taken care of. You were so attentive and capable. Another is when you first got to Biddulph Hall your freshman year and the football game was on and you c

ame in and got the whole group to change the channel and root for Boise, till they were all wildly cheering when Boise won. And the other Taylor said he came home from a test one Saturday and it was going to be a pretty boring day, but you were there and rallied the apartment to going and doing something and he said it was the funnest day in the whole semester. Those are just three small stories. But there are much greater ones.

I love you so much!!! Thank you again for sending us that email! It's so good to hear from you! I hope you have a truly amazing day! I know you will because you will make it amazing for someone else!

Love, Mom

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3/17/13

Hi Heather!!

I love you! And you are an amazing person! You are doing some incredible things. I am so proud of you and so impressed and grateful for how much you have done and are doing. I know it's more than I'll ever know, but I do know it's huge!! I'm so grateful you care! You are so precious to me and you are a noble daughter of God.

Alissa had her baby today! She said in her email: In case you didn't connect up on Groupme...Zev Aaron Joseph was born today at 7:19p, he came in our largest at 7lbs 12 oz and 20.5 inches. We are all healthy and happy and soon will be sleeping :)



A couple of days ago Kirsten left a voicemail on Dad's phone asking for your number. Dad texted her and let her know you had extended 1 more month and that you were doing well. She texted back: thank you very much! When you get to talk to her would you tell her i miss her but am glad she is getting help?

I hope you have a wonderful day and that hope is smiling brightly before you! I love you! You are as incredible to me as when you were first placed in my arms.

Love, Mom

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3/17/13

Hello my dear son!!!

I hope your travels went well and you are starting to adjust to your new area! I haven't checked the weather over there, but the weather here is like almost summer! It was in the low 80s yesterday and today. I know it's not that warm in Virginia, but have you been cold enough to have to wear your nice new long wool coat yet? That may not get much use till next winter, huh?:)

So Emily and Julie had a great week. They each both got sick, like colds, but they didn't fight and they found some fun things to do, so it was successful!

Taylor is excited about Tempe (pronounced Tem PEE) Arizona. He immediately ran up and got this southwestern-type jacket on and had me take some pictures. Then he was like, "I need to grow a mustache to make the picture complete." So he's started. I don't know if he's doing it to tease me or if he's just in a weird mood. The picture I took is the attachment.

On Friday I actually started filming myself talking about homeschool. I made a 20 minute video just talking about my story and it was too long. So I'm going to have to do several takes to make each segment more concise. But I'm excited! I've had a few women call and tell me they want to homeschool, but when they look for resources online, they are overwhelmed and start doubting themselves. When I talk to them, they realize they can do it and relax. So I am making short video clips talking about a low-stress way to start it and to encourage them in their initial feeling of wanting to homeschool. My main point is going to be, you don't have to be a rocket scientist to homeschool your children, just a mom who loves her children. So we'll see how long it takes me to get these made. I have 14 topics that I want to make into videos: My story, my philosophy, reading, writing, math, science, history, art, music, PE, social, homeschooling high schoolers, benefits and challenges of homeschooling, and college. Each segment I don't want much more than 10 min long.

Tonight we went over to Kylee and Ryan's to celebrate Eden's 1st birthday. We gave her a book about the 5 monkeys jumping on the bed and it comes with a glove and five monkey puppets attached to the glove. It was fun watching her open some of her presents. She was excited about them. Then they took her clothes off down to her diaper and laid a big plastic tablecloth or something down on the floor and set her in the middle. Then they put a small cake platter with a small, three-layer cake on it in front of her. She gingerly touched the frosting and started to laugh. Then she dug her hands in a little more and she laughed some more. Then she tasted what was on her hands and got really excited. It was hilarious to watch her eat the cake, spill the cake, smear the cake on her face, hands, feet, legs. It was a show for sure!:)

Alissa and Joe had their baby yesterday, Saturday evening around 7 Utah time. They had a boy and named him Zev Aaron Joseph Wheeler. Here's a picture:



I am reading a book by Elder Holland called *For Times of Trouble: Spiritual Solace from the Psalms*. Each chapter is little and is about a verse or a few verses from the psalms and then his commentary. The one I read today I want to share:

Psalms 18:36; 94:18–19 "Thou hast enlarged my steps under me, that my feet did not slip. ———— When I said, My foot slippeth; thy mercy, O Lord, held me up. In the multitude of my thoughts within me thy comforts delight my soul." When we allow God to come into our lives (or we are wise enough to come into His) He "enlarges our steps" for the path we must walk—or, in more modern language, He gives us bigger feet that do not slip. Much of the miraculous help we find in the gospel is just that—a miracle from heaven, the power of divine priesthood, the attendance of angels administering to us through a very thin veil. These are gifts from God, manifestations of His grace. They are provided for us without much control or power—or even much worthiness, it seems—on our part. But other elements of God's miraculous help consist of things He does to, in effect, let us help ourselves. Some paths we feel we just can't walk. Some mountains seem just too high to climb. Some steps are just too difficult to take. When that is so, heaven does intervene, but often it is not to smooth out the path or remove the mountain or shorten the steps. More often than not, God sends help in a different way. He makes us stronger and more sure-footed. In effect, He gives us bigger feet, stronger legs, a firmer back, more stiffened shoulders. He deals with us rather than with the problem we face. We then proceed with new strength, less slipping, and are all the stronger for it. A case in point is recorded in Book of Mormon history. In a very difficult circumstance, "the burdens which were laid upon Alma and his brethren were made light; yea, the Lord did strengthen them that they could bear up their burdens with ease."<sup>71</sup> The trials were still there, but the backs of the people were made equal to the burdens the Lord placed upon them. Time and again, over and over, more than we give Him credit for, the Lord steadies us in those moments when we slip. He secures our footing. He keeps us from falling. Obviously, some people we know have not only slipped but taken a brutal nosedive. However, even in those mistakes He can pick us up, dress our wounds, and put us on our way again. But we would do well to pause and give consideration to the dozens of times, the hundreds of times that we didn't slip. Perhaps through our own ignorance or insistence, we should have. But we didn't. His mercy held us up. Life holds many recognizable near misses, but there are many, many more that are not recognized, the consequences of which we never knew, the danger of



which never came to be. Before our foot slipped—or even as it started to slip—we were taken to safety. In the multitude of those thoughts, those memories and chances when something might have happened differently and tragically (but didn't!), “thy comforts delight my soul.”

I hope you have a wonderful week! You are a wonderful son and I love you so much! My life would not be nearly as colorful or full of life without you in it! I'm so grateful to have you for a son! I truly, truly am!!! You are in our constant thoughts and prayers. I know you are doing amazing things and having amazing experiences that are truly miracles!

Love, love, love Mom

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3/17/13

Hi Heather!

I hope your day is going well! I love you! Tonight we went over to Kylee and Ryan's to celebrate Eden's 1st birthday. We gave her a book about the 5 monkeys jumping on the bed and it comes with a glove and five monkey puppets attached to the glove. It was fun watching her open some of her presents. She was excited about them. Then they took her clothes off down to her diaper and laid a big plastic tablecloth or something down on the floor and set her in the middle. Then they put a small cake platter with a small, three-layer cake on it in front of her. She gingerly touched the frosting and started to laugh. Then she dug her hands in a little more and she laughed some more. Then she tasted what was on her hands and got really excited. It was hilarious to watch her eat the cake, spill the cake, smear the cake on her face, hands, feet, legs. It was a show for sure!)

I can't believe the weather here! It has been 82 degrees the past two days! It already feels like summer! I hope we get a few more spring days!!!

Here is a cute writing assignment you did that was a comparison of two things:

Babysitting is like a circus. The kids of course, are the clowns. I am the ring master. I crack the whip and run the show. I am in charge. People are allowed to come down half way through the circus and ride ponies. The children follow me and we play games like bucking bronco. I am the horse. I decide when we stop. It is time to eat dinner. Dinner is like the circus popcorn. It gets everywhere. However, desert (and cotton candy) magically finds its way in every mouth, and doesn't leave a mess. The show continues, and as the acts wind down, so do I. The kids watch a movie: “Dumbo.” The show is finally over and the people are herded out of the tent to go home. I herd the children upstairs to bed. It is like I am running three rings. The children do not want to go to bed. But finally the house is quiet and almost seems empty. With all the people gone, the circus workers are able to do the last job: I clean up. When the parents get home and pay me, it is like the applause at the end of an act.

**-Heather**

Quote from Elder Holland:

“C. S. Lewis once said that if we could recognize who we were, we would realize that we were walking with “possible gods and goddesses” whom, if we could see them in all their eternal

dignity and glory, we would be tempted to fall down and worship.<sup>74</sup> Because this is true, we need to think more highly of ourselves and we need to think more highly of each other. In all of God's creations, mortal men and women are His greatest work and the only portion of His creation to carry the actual life-giving seeds of His eternal splendor, the chance to perpetuate the glory of such great creations. We need to think more about that when a baby is born, and we need to think more about that when some of those babies grow up to face trouble. We need to continue thinking highly of them and to be helpful to them. We need to honor the divinity that is within all humankind. In doing so, we will be returning to God at least some of that glory and honor with which He has crowned us. In a world—or should we say, in a universe—of large troubles and small, a world of physical, financial, political, and social forces seemingly beyond our control, there can be moments when we also wonder, "Do I matter in all of this? Can my small and sometimes painful place in the great scheme of things amount to much? Can God know me or have time for me or hear my prayers? With all that needs divine attention in the world—famines, wars, pestilence, sin—can my heart be known, understood, and seen as important in the grand expanse of the universe?" On difficult, discouraging days almost everyone asks such questions. But the eternal truth, the timeless declaration is "yes" to all of the questions above and more. The great eternal truth is that this entire plan of life, the plan for our salvation, is an outline for each man and woman, each boy and girl, individually. By name, place, and personal circumstance God knows us and our needs. He knows our hopes and dreams and He knows our fears and frustrations. Above all, He knows who we really are and what we can become through faith in Him."

I think you used that quote by C.S. Lewis in your 6th year program at girls camp. I am so grateful for you and for the amazing person that you are. You are facing mountains and you are climbing them and I am honored to know you and to be your mom. Keep climbing! I love you so so so so so so so much!!!!!!

Love, Mom

---

3/18/13

Dear Heather,

This is actually dad writing :) Mom is feeling sick today. She's having a pain in her lower stomach which will hopefully go away quickly. So I offered to write to you since she's laying in bed not feeling too well.

We watched the finale to the biggest loser tonight. You got mom onto it over a year ago and she really enjoys it. Every Monday after family home evening we watch it as a family. It's been a fun tradition.

Mom includes such great quotes in her emails to you. Here's one I've got for you:

Proverbs 16:24 - Pleasant words are as an honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones.

I read recently that honey is the only food that never spoils :) And it's one of the foods that includes all the substances needed to sustain life - enzymes, vitamins, minerals, and water.

I love you tons and think about you every day. I'm very proud of you and your courage and strength in the face of your challenges.

Have a wonderful day!

Love,  
Dad

---

3/19/13

Hi Heather!

I'm back! I got some 24 hour bug in the stomach and then it went to a little bit of chills, a little bit of fever, and a little nausea. No fun! But I woke up today and felt good, so I'm very grateful! I'm glad Dad wrote to you! "That's fun! We thank the pilgrims, every one!":)

I called the Richmond, Virginia Mission office and got Spencer's address. So here it is if you get a chance or want to write him:

7108 C Belvedere Dr.  
Newport News, VA 23607

I did a lot of sitting around today. I was building my energy back up. I talked on the phone a lot to Grandma Scott, Damon and Shelby. Brian flew to Germany today. He actually had a 4 hour layover in Houston. They talked on the phone for about an hour with him.

I also planned out the activity the Mia Maids are in charge of next week. We are doing a Passover Seder and dinner with all the youth. (Well, I am with a little help from the Mia Maids.:)) I wrote down everything I need to get and how much and when I will make it and thought through the whole process. It's a big project, but I've done it so many times on a smaller scale, it won't be too bad. It will be a fun activity to do next week.

Quote for the day:

Psalm 22:4-5: "Our fathers trusted in thee: they trusted, and thou didst deliver them. They cried unto thee, and were delivered: they trusted in thee, and were not confounded." When our problems seem great and the future uncertain, when we wonder whether there is a way out or a way around or a way through, we would do well to remember that our personal (or collective) forebears had the same fears we have and were blessed with help from on high. It

gives us hope to remember that others before us needed deliverance and they received it. Sometimes those solutions came quickly, sometimes they came only after months and years, but they came nevertheless. When the young Nephi needed to rally his brothers to faithful action, he asked them to remember the even more difficult tasks that their fathers had faced in earlier times. "Let us be strong like unto Moses," he said, "for he truly spake unto the waters of the Red Sea and they divided hither and thither, and our fathers came through, out of captivity, on dry ground." We will do better in our hour of need if we can remember that those before us faced even more challenging troubles than we and still "came through." When difficult times come, remember that others have faced all of this and more, not the least of whom were our great pioneer fathers and mothers in the early decades of this Church's history. They walked with faith in every footstep and sought a place "which God for [them] prepared." They cried unto God and were delivered when the very thought, the very hope of deliverance, seemed to be furthest from realization. We can trust Him to deliver us, too.

I love you and am so grateful for you! Have a beautiful day sweetheart!

Love, Mom

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3/20/13

Hi Heather!

We just got back from mutual and the Young Women invited the "older and wiser" couples to come play games. We had the YW rotate every 10 minutes to the different tables so they could interact with all the older people. It was a hit, as it always is!:) Emily really enjoyed it. She liked playing Apples To Apples with the Combs. Sister Combs was very literal and hilarious.:) Emily said she kept picking Emily's cards on purpose because she's her favorite. haha! Except one time she picked Brother Combs' card and told him in her voice (I bet you can just picture it!:) "You know me too well!" Then she leaned across the table to Emily and said, "We've been married for 38 years!" haha

Emily and I had a sudden flash of dejunking our kitchen this afternoon, so we worked on the paint cans under the stove! They are either in the garage to be thrown away or up in the bathroom under the sink. A better place than the kitchen! And we organized a couple of drawers and cleared all the piles on the counters, so they are all... clear! Yea! Maybe tomorrow we will be in the same mode. I really want to get rid of so much stuff, but when it comes to saying goodbye to some things it's hard! Ugh! I'm trying. Emily would have me throw everything away, but I'm just too stubborn. :)

Emily has a quote for the day. It is from the movie The Help.

"You is kind,

You is smart,

You is important." -Aibileen Clark

That's a great one! I send it to you! I tell it to you! Own it and believe it! It's soooo true!!!

Here's a funny acrostic poem by Taylor I found in the Feb. 2003 Herald:

**E**ach ear perks up

**A**fter Emily starts to sing. I want to

**R**ip my ears off

**S**o be quiet!

**-Taylor**

I love you! Have a happy day! Have a hilarious day! Laugh lots!

Love, Mom

---

3/21/13

Hi Heather!

I managed to keep the kitchen clean all day today! I'm so happy! And I cleaned the fridge out and wiped it out. It looks great and I feel great! So funny what can get me excited huh?:) I am grateful for a clean kitchen and for a stomach that doesn't hurt. What are you grateful for today? You are so precious to me! I hope your day has some sunshine inside and/or outside.

This quote is from President Monson:

"One day a few years ago, after taking care of matters at the office, I felt a strong impression to visit an aged widow who was a patient at a senior care center in Salt Lake City. I drove there directly. When I went to her room, I found it empty. I asked an attendant concerning her whereabouts and was directed to a lounge area. There I found this sweet widow visiting with her sister and another friend. We had a pleasant conversation together. As we were talking, a man came to the door of the room to obtain a can of soda from the vending machine. He glanced at me and said, "Why, you are Tom Monson."

"Yes," I replied. "And you look like a Hemingway." He acknowledged that he was Stephen Hemingway, the son of Alfred Eugene Hemingway, who had served as my counselor when I was a bishop many years ago and whom I called Gene. Stephen told me that his father was there in the same facility and was near death. Gene had been calling my name, and the family had wanted to contact me but had been unable to find a telephone number for me. I excused myself immediately and went with Stephen up to the room of my former counselor, where others of his children were also gathered, his wife having passed away some years previous. The family members regarded my meeting Stephen in the lounge area as a response by our Heavenly Father to their great desire that I would see their father before he died and answer his call. I also felt that this was the case, for if Stephen had not entered the room in which I was visiting at precisely the time he did, I would not have known that Gene was even in that facility. We gave a blessing to him. A spirit of peace prevailed. We had a lovely visit, after which I left. The following morning a phone call revealed that Gene Hemingway had passed away—just 20 minutes after he had received the blessing from his son and me. I expressed a

silent prayer of thanks to Heavenly Father for His guiding influence, which had prompted my visit to the care center and led me to my dear friend Alfred Eugene Hemingway. I like to think that Gene Hemingway's thoughts that evening—as we basked in the Spirit's glow, participated in humble prayer, and pronounced a priesthood blessing—echoed the words mentioned in the hymn "Master, the Tempest Is Raging":

Linger, O blessed Redeemer!  
Leave me alone no more,  
And with joy I shall make the blest harbor  
And rest on the blissful shore.

I still love that hymn and testify as to the comfort it offers:  
Whether the wrath of the storm-tossed sea  
Or demons or men or whatever it be,  
No waters can swallow the ship where lies  
The Master of ocean and earth and skies.  
They all shall sweetly obey thy will:  
Peace, be still."

OK, I have finally found the earlier Newspaper Issues. They weren't coming up on Publisher. I discovered they were in PDF format! So this acrostic poem you wrote in June of 2000 (age 11):

Swimming gracefully through the water,  
Have to teach their young to slaughter,  
An angry whale to them beware,  
Reluctantly they show some fear,  
Kiss their scales and you will cry,  
Sharks are sneaky and they're sly.

I remember being so impressed with this poem because acrostic poems don't have to rhyme, but you made yours rhyme. You could work with the beginning letter of each line and at the same time make rhyming couplets. And you also knew some shark facts to make it even more cool! You are so smart!

Heather, I love you and can't tell you enough how much I do. I wish I could hug you right now! I think about you all the time and pray for you all the time too! Have a beautiful day!

Love, Mom

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3/22/13

Hi Heather!!

I didn't de-clutter today, but I did clean my bathroom and wash my sheets! Yea! Everything is in bloom and it's so warm. Summer is right around the corner here! The oak pollen is dusting

everything and it's got Emily sniffing and itching for a little while. I guess Grandma and Grandpa Janis just spent a week near San Diego at a resort that has hot springs. Grandma told Dad they had a very relaxing time and it was really nice. We didn't even know they had gone. I'm so glad they did that! I'm sure you are too! You are so sensitive to their comfort and happiness. You're so sweet to always think of Grandma and give her back rubs.

I came across this article by Elder Holland back in 1980 when he was not an apostle, but the church's commissioner of education. It's called *Belonging: A View of Membership*. It was a really good article. I liked this quote:

"The Savior asked, "What man is there of you, whom if his son ask bread, will he give him a stone?

"Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?

"If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that ask him?" (Matt. 7:9–11).

To my beloved Pat and me, our children are more precious possessions than any crown or kingdom this world could offer. There is literally not anything in righteousness we would not do for them; there is no stream so deep nor mountain so high nor desert so wide that we could be kept from calming their fears or holding them close to us. And if we "being evil" can love so much and try so hard, what does that say of a more godly love that differs from our own as the stars differ from the sun? On a particularly difficult day—or sometimes a series of difficult days—what would this world's inhabitants not pay to know that heavenly parents are reaching across those same streams and mountains and deserts, anxious to hold them close? "

I know I'm so far from being a perfect parent, but please know that my love for you is so deep and wide and high and vast! The quote spoke to my soul. And I know that where my love and abilities are imperfect and lacking, God's aren't.

Here's a limerick you did in October of 2000:

Lickity splickity rhymes  
are made out of spooky old chimes  
They swing and they sway  
So there's something to say  
And sung with a tune many times.

I hope today is a good one! I hope there's something wonderful to be grateful for! I love you so much my talented, kind, wonderful daughter of mine!!!!!!

Love, Mom

---

3/23/13

Hi Heather!!

Well in all the years that you kids went and helped at Special Olympics, I never went. This year I will, though! It's next Saturday. I went to a training meeting this morning for it. Our ward is in charge of the field events. I'm excited! I can't believe I never went! I know you guys always liked it.

I have kept the kitchen counters cleared off all week! It's amazing! The house gets cleaner every day! I vacuumed, went food shopping, got rid of a few pans and reorganized a couple of cupboards in the kitchen today. Baby steps. But it feels good!

I practiced piano a lot today. I now have two songs memorized in Suzuki 3. I'm sorry for just talking about me. I feel so "ME" absorbed when I write! I much prefer to listen to you and hear how you are doing! I hope you are doing really good!

The quote for today is from the New Testament: The Savior said, "My peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid." (John 14:27).

This limerick you wrote is from the 2nd ever Herald! Feb. 2000:

There once was a shy picture frame  
Who thought that he needed a name.  
He liked the name Joe,  
Even more he liked Beau.  
He thought it would bring him great fame.

Remember you are in my heart today and always! I love you soooooooooooooo much!!!!!!!

Love, Mom

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3/25/13

Hi Heather!

Sorry I didn't write last night! I was sick again! It came back as I was going to bed Saturday night just a titch and I woke up feeling a little bit chilled with a slight yucky taste in my mouth, but I went to church and sat. And I went to Brandon and Mindy's for dinner and sat, and then I came home and laid down and that was that!:) (I just rhymed and I didn't even know I had!:) We went to Brandon and Mindy's because Auna and Staussen came out for a visit. Ron is studying like crazy and Ryan is out of town for the week, so Auna decided to come stay with



Kylee. It was fun to see her and Staussen is super cute!!! He's such a happy baby!  
Unfortunately I didn't want to get him sick so I didn't hold him. Bummer!!!

I got a letter from Spencer today. It was upbeat and in response to my letter. I thought I'd share it with you:

I'm so sorry to hear that you're feeling sick! I hope you get well soon, do you have any idea what might be causing it? Haha you're always doing things for other people, and volunteering for stuff, it's actually awesome. As a kid I thought it was frustrating because I was selfish and couldn't see outside myself, but that shows a lot about your character and work ethic that you do these things all the time.

I'm so excited to see the remodeled kitchen, be sure to send me pictures of it!

That's insane that Ron has to study at least 12 hours a day. I just gained a lot of respect for him haha. Is he stationed at Langley AFB?

I'm not printing these because I don't have a printer that I know of. It's working out fine though, I have plenty of time on the computer.

Thanks for the package, I haven't got it yet, but thanks for sending one :) The little things really help.

Oh, and that spiritual thought you shared with me last week..I used it in a talk yesterday haha, so thanks! Don't be afraid to send me spiritual messages like that, I'm looking for insights to use in lessons and what not.

Thanks for everything Mom, you're awesome!  
Spencer

I haven't remodeled yet, but tomorrow a lady (from our ward) is coming over to give me some input. I'll start there and see what she says and then hopefully get a little more confidence and actually DO something! Today in preparation of her coming, I cleaned the cupboards inside and out and had another small pile of stuff to take to Goodwill. Yea! I'm loving getting my kitchen clean, one day at a time!

Here's another limerick you did for the newspaper:

There was an old man of Shane,  
Who had a lion's mane.  
He went to the barber,  
To get it cut shorter,

But alas, it grew back again!

I love it!!!!

Here's a quote for the day from Elder Ballard in 2004:

"Brothers and sisters, I believe that if we could truly understand the Atonement of the Lord Jesus Christ, we would realize how precious is one son or daughter of God. I believe our Heavenly Father's everlasting purpose for His children is generally achieved by the small and simple things we do for one another. At the heart of the English word atonement is the word one. If all mankind understood this, there would never be anyone with whom we would not be concerned, regardless of age, race, gender, religion, or social or economic standing. We would strive to emulate the Savior and would never be unkind, indifferent, disrespectful, or insensitive to others."

This quote touched me because I feel God's love for you and how precious you are to Him. And you are so precious to me too!!!! I hope you have a day to look back with gratitude on! I sure love you tons and tons!!!

Love, Mom

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3/29/13

Hi Heather!

How are you today? I took a break today and relaxed. I did get the kitchen cleaned up after the big cooking day. It wasn't that bad, I was able to stay on top of it, but I did have some cleaning. I also went visiting teaching to Susan Combs. That's always an adventure.:) She was babysitting her granddaughter and grandson. Both are darling! The granddaughter is so adorable, both in looks (she looks like what Goldilocks should look like) but also in personality.

I talked with Dad today. He said he and Brandon and Ryan are making good connections and the InfusionCon is going well. He will get home late tomorrow night. So it's chill around here. Pretty quiet. (Not that Dad is such a loud guy:))

I found this while searching for verses that said strength and decided I'd have it be the thought for the day!: 2 Nephi 22:2 (Also Isaiah 12:2) "Behold, God is my salvation; I will trust, and not be afraid; for the Lord JEHOVAH is my strength and my song; he also has become my salvation." It reminds me of the hymn The Lord is My Light, and also my favorite scripture lately in Proverbs: Trust in the Lord with all thy heart and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.

Here's an AWESOME Dr. Seussy poem you wrote in September 2001:

### Noodles of Rubber

My thinking cap I did put on,  
The thoughts I thought were hard and long.  
And then an idea came clear and bright!  
But to get to the surface it had to fight.  
Spaghetti of flubber?  
Wait! Noodles of rubber!

They stick to your feet so you can jump real high,  
Or you can walk up a wall, yes you can if you try!  
If you want, you can use them like clay or play dough,  
And make a shovel, a rake, a barn or a hoe.  
These rubber noodles can do anything,  
So quick! Come and get some! You'll love these great things!

About a month after I created my invention,  
I decided to take it to an inventer convention!  
The convention was fun, but it got better still,  
When my noodles were shown, they created a spill!  
A man in the front said, "How wonderfully clever!"  
But the best was to come, the best thing for me ever!

The patent it got, number 4004,  
Is what got my great noodles into the store.  
If you want some, better get some quite fast,  
But you only need one pack, 'cause they're made to last!  
And here is advice for "inventors-to-be":  
All ideas are super, just try them and see!

I love you super girl! Have a super duper day!!!  
Mom

---

3/31/13

Hi Heather!

Happy Easter, and happy liberation day!:) Seems metaphorically appropriate!:) I hope there are some wonderful plans to see family today! And I hope that moving in goes smoothly and you can settle in really nicely!

Yesterday Emily had invited her friend from school that went with her to Homecoming and has gone with her to a few dances and movies to go to special olympics. So in the morning her phone went on the blink and it had her friend's phone number and address. I knew which neighborhood it was, but we didn't know the street or house and we drove around and finally had to just go to special olympics. She had one other friend that I had the number of who would have this other friend's number and we texted and called and got nothing till around 11:00. I felt so bad! The friend was so sweet and kind and understanding when Emily finally called and explained the situation. Special olympics went well and was fun. I was at the javelin throw and the guys were doing it. There was this high school guy with autism who was up. He was so cute! The announcer booth started playing "That's What Makes You Beautiful" and this guy recognized it and got excited and started dancing. Then he was singing along out of tune. As he sang "oh, oh, oh," he threw the javelin. It was so great! I wish I had a video! Emily had to go home part way through because the wind was whipping up lots of pollen and she was getting miserable. Poor Emily. It was not her day!

Taylor was telling us about some of the funny things his manager, Fred said lately. (He's a 36 year old black guy who is very southern:)) "Whoowie!! My hand's ichin! There's money'll be comin' in soon!" "I question a lot about a man who'll eat his chicken biscuit in the bathroom stall." (After doing some scanning he said...) "These are proolly the best scans in the last year and a half. I'm gonna take a quick break to let my scanner cool off. While I'm gone, you might wanna check to make sure those fire extinguishers work." Taylor said that he said all those in the same day.:) hahaha!

"The quote for the day is one I have already done, but is a beautiful one, especially for today. It's by Elder Holland:

Jesus has chosen, even in a resurrected, otherwise perfected body, to retain for the benefit of his disciples the wounds in his hands and in his feet and in his side - signs, if you will, that painful things happen even to the pure and the perfect, signs, if you will, that pain in this world is not evidence that God doesn't love you, signs, if you will, that problems pass and happiness can be ours."

I love you so much! I hope you have a wonderful day that is full of hope and love! you are amazing and are going to overcome it all! I have faith and confidence in you and I also have faith and confidence in the Lord, who overcame the world that He could bless you and succor you and help you. You are such a wonderful, beautiful, sweet, strong daughter! I love you!!!

Love, Mom

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3/31/13

Hi!

So this week I spent Tuesday and Wednesday preparing food and everything for the ym/yw Passover seder. I mean down to folding 21 origami frogs for table decorations, Emily made 7 matzah vases and I got pink carnations and white baby's breath to fill the vases. I did a lamb, asparagus, roasted red potatoes, matzo ball soup, strawberry shortcake, the works! Everything worked out great! The food all came together and was done on time and tasted great. It was funny how many people were surprised at how good the food was. Duh!!;) (I don't do this every year for something that tastes awful, thank you very much!) But I think most youth still have a hard time trying new things. There was a Beehive/deacon table and I was over there when they were dishing up the matzo ball soup and they were a little wary. One of them tried it first and exclaimed, "It tastes like ramen!" Then I think they were more open to trying it. haha! Taylor led the seder and he did a great job. He wore Dad's yamuka. When it got to the part where the youngest is supposed to ask the questions about how on all other nights...why on this night do we... he had Noah Mallick, who is the youngest youth who just came in a month or so ago read those. Noah still has a bit of a speech issue and it was so cute to hear his little accent asking the questions.:)

On Saturday we had the annual special olympics, and it was my first time ever going. It was really fun. The weather went from hazy, to a little sun, to windy and cold and a very light sprinkle, to ending with it being really sunny and warm. I got some sun on my face. Our ward was in charge of the field events. I stood by the javelin throw. When the men athletes were doing javelin, there was this young guy, a junior or senior in high school, goes to Cinco, who was up. The announcer booth was occasionally blasting a song out. Well, at this time they started playing the song "That's What Makes You Beautiful." This guy recognized it and got excited and started dancing. Then he was singing along out of tune. As he sang "oh, oh, oh," he threw the javelin. He was totally in the moment. It was so great! I wish I had a video!

So on Tuesday, the lady in our ward came over and spent an hour looking at the kitchen and giving me ideas. I liked what she said! It gave me direction. So on Friday when I had time, Emily and I went to Home Depot and found everything we want! The lady suggested repainting the cupboards (AGAIN!) in an off white color. She said there is better paint now that doesn't show the brush strokes, or better yet, have them sprayed. So I will get someone else to sand and paint and do it right this time around. She sent me the number of someone and I called and actually have him coming tomorrow (today when you get this) to give me a bid. Then she suggested a granite top with not a lot of pattern in it about the color of the cabinets right now, kind of a tannish, with darker veins in it. For the back splash, she suggested thin glass-like tiles in the light tan/cream tones that you buy in a sheet and grout them. They would add a little feminine touch and would have a sparkle to the walls. We would get a flat top stove and a new oven and microwave in stainless steel.(for resale, because I don't particularly like the stainless because it's hard to keep looking nice daily. But it looks the best.) Then she suggested getting stone tile for the floors in a darker shade to blend in better with the dark wood floors, and to replace the entry with the wood that we have in the rest of the downstairs.

So going with the suggestions, we found a perfect stone for the floors, a perfect backsplash of thin glass tiles in the tones we were looking for, and a quartz countertop that is actually a dark chocolate brown. We even found appliances we liked and I think we will be moving on all of this really fast. We may even get it done by the time Taylor leaves. We'll see, though.

We had a very nice Easter. I got up this morning and cleaned the kitchen, then set up Easter baskets and hid candy for the hunt. Taylor and Emily had a fun race and of course Taylor got way more.:) They died eggs after church, and after dinner we all listened to Handel's Messiah and each of us followed along in the score. We didn't finish it (it takes about 1 hour 45 min) because Brandon, Mindy and Daenon came over after an hour of it to visit. But it was a very wonderful way to celebrate Easter! Sister Santos several weeks ago had been feeling like she should give a talk on Easter and Dad, a few weeks ago was praying to know who to ask, because he was in charge of the talks for March. He felt impressed to ask Melissa and she told him, "It's about time!" Dad thought she was joking, but at church she told him she had these promptings. Her talk was really deep and she was so passionate. I told her how wonderful it was after sacrament meeting and she said, "I was yelling! And I didn't know it. My dad told me and he said it kept him awake.":0 But I told her she was passionate and it came straight from her heart. I may send you her talk, I think you'd like it! She is definitely unique!

I've been praying to recognize blessings we are receiving through your service and sacrifice and the one this week that I feel is my answer is the peace I am feeling right now about Heather. She is done with full time care at the Phoenix Recovery Center today and I know I should not be this calm and peaceful. I am truly surprised at how calm I am and I know it is through the strengthening grace of the Savior and His Atonement which is activated on my behalf because of your sacrifice. Thank you! I seriously could be having panic attacks right now. It reminds me of a victory scripture in 2 Ne 25:23 that says, "For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, after all we can do. What you have done and what you are doing is drawing on the powers of Heaven and I am so grateful!

I hope your week is full of blessings that you give and you receive. You are so precious to me and I'm so grateful to be your mother!

Love, Mom

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