

## ARTICLES

## Delighted to serve

Young Church service missionaries in Family and Church History Mission are indispensable

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By [Julie Dockstader Heaps](#)

Church News staff writer

Elder Troy Ogden loves families — especially his own — and loves computers. So when the opportunity came to put his two loves together by serving as a Church service missionary in the Family and Church History Mission in Salt Lake City, he jumped at the chance.



Sister Karli Anderson, right, is a Church service missionary with her grandmother, Sister Margaret Herrick, the mission nurse. Missionaries such as Sister Anderson provide a "win-win" situation for the Family and Church History Mission.

*Photo by Julie Dockstader Heaps*

Today, he serves full-time in the Church Office Building in the digital processing center for the mission, where he helps direct 5 terabytes (1 terabyte is a thousand gigabytes) of information daily. The 20-year-old helps preserve records sent from Church camera operators throughout the world who take digital images of family history records which are then prepared for extractions and cataloging.

"Families are important and I wanted to do something with computers," Elder Ogden told the *Church News* while sitting at a desk surrounded by

computer screens. The room has its own cooling system to protect ceiling-high towers filled with computer drives.

Elder Ogden is one of 45 young Church service missionaries serving full-time missions in the Family and Church History Mission at Church headquarters. They work with some 1,200 senior missionaries in the Family History Library, in the Church Office Building and at the Joseph Smith Memorial Building. And, according to the senior missionaries, their supervisors and mission leaders, these young missionaries are indispensable.

President Ronald T. Halverson of the Family and Church History Mission calls the service these young people provide a "win-win" situation.

The Family and Church History Mission is just one of many Church service mission opportunities for members who might have special needs. For information about such opportunities, go to [www.lds.org](http://www.lds.org), click on "Serving in the Church," then on "Mission and Service Opportunities," to read about "Mission and Service Opportunities for Senior Adults and Recommended Young Adults."



Elder Troy Ogden changes computer drives in digital processing center in Church Office Building. His supervisor lauds his contributions.

*Photo by Julie Dockstader Heaps*

Each mission has unique opportunities and requirements. Church service missionaries serving in the Family and Church History Mission already live in or near Salt Lake City and are recommended by their bishops and stake presidents.

And for some, such as Sister Karli Anderson, serving here has only enhanced a close relationship with her grandmother, Sister Margaret Herrick, who is the mission nurse. "It's been a great addition to my mission to be able to help her serve her mission and because she's a huge addition to this work. You can see the love she now has for family history," Sister Herrick said.

This love for family history has especially blossomed since Sister Anderson broke through "a wall" in her own family history that had stood for a couple of generations. Through months of intense research on her own, while still fulfilling her responsibilities doing missionary information extraction, she finally located a birth certificate for this ancestor, which led to going back two more generations.

"The great-aunts were thrilled," Sister Herrick related, adding that her granddaughter has submitted temple work and was baptized for her great-great-grandmother.

Sister Herrick added with a smile that Sister Anderson also holds the department record for checking 485 missionary applications in one day. "Most of the checkers all have 10 fingers; she does all her typing with this," holding up her granddaughter's left hand, which is missing fingers. Sister Anderson types with her

thumb. In addition, a bout with spinal meningitis as a child left her weakened on her right side.



Sister Ashley Taylor, left, visits with Sister Thelma Bwalya, Sister Barbara Tweed and Sister Hiromi Kawai in Family Search Center. Missionaries from Family and Church History Mission and Temple Square mission often interact.

*Photo by Julie Dockstader Heaps*

Other senior missionaries and employees working in the Church Office Building extol the contributions of these young service missionaries. Herb White, Elder Ogden's supervisor in the digital processing center, is one of them.

"I can honestly say that without these Church service missionaries that we have working in our area we couldn't do the job," Brother White said, explaining that service missionaries are a valuable resource, "especially the young kids who already know computers. It makes a very easy transition for us to

teach them the skills they need to be able to do the processing of these images."

He was especially impressed one day arriving to work and finding Elder Ogden already at work. "What are you doing here so early?" he asked.

"I woke up about 5:30 this morning and realized I had done something wrong, so I got dressed, came in and fixed the problem," the young elder replied.

Brother White attributes this kind of attitude to two things: "No. 1 is dedication and No. 2, having the mission call and receiving the inspiration to know that there was a problem and being able to come in and fix it."

However, serving a Church service mission in the Family and Church History Mission is not all technical. Sister Ashley Taylor serves in the Family Search Center in the Joseph Smith Memorial Building.

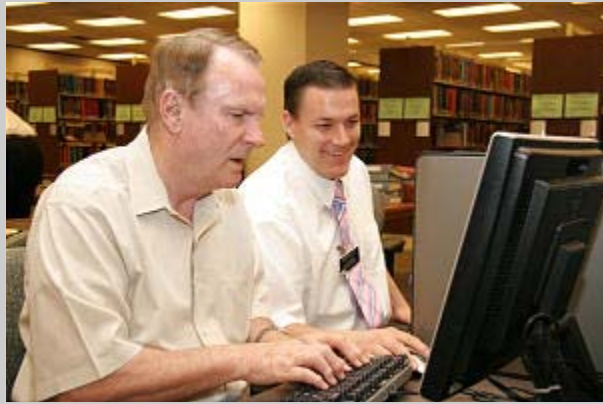
One day on the way to lunch, Sister Taylor felt prompted to "teach about the Plan of Salvation." She wasn't sure how this might happen as missionaries in the center often help non-LDS tourists curious about their ancestors but who often have no interest in missionary discussions.

But upon returning to her post, she struck up a conversation with a woman who expressed curiosity about the Church's doctrine on the meaning of life. "I got to teach her about the Plan of Salvation. It was overpowering to me because it just came to me, and I did it!"

"Quite an experience," the young missionary added.

That is the consensus for all the young service missionaries in the Family and Church History Mission at Church headquarters.

Elder Ogden added one more thought: "It's fun."



Family history patron Bill Massey, left, who is blind, is assisted by Elder Nathan Millet. Brother Massey calls his work "a team effort."

*Photo by Julie Dockstader Heaps*



Elder LeGrand Redd sits at his station where he ensures family history consultants are correctly logged into the system. He says his niece, Cambri, on screen, is his personal inspiration.

*Photo by Julie Dockstader Heaps*

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