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Email from Mom, 12 March 2012

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To: Phillip Larsen <phillip.larsen@myldsmail.net>

Cc: John Larsen <john@larsen-family.us>

Hello, Dear Elder Phillip Larsen!

Well, you are no longer the only missionary from our ward, no longer the only one on the Sacrament Meeting program! Sister Amy Taylor is now in the MTC, and it looks like she'll be there until the 27th of March. I guess it's a shorter time for those not learning a language? I have already written her one DearElder letter. Writing that on Friday morning made me late for something, but for a very good cause. I just wanted to be sure she got it that same day, or she would have to wait until this week. I'm sure it's overwhelming, with all of the new experiences she is having, and new things she is learning, and she will need to hear from home. Maybe it will also be good for her parents to hear from us, too, since we are also the parents of a missionary. Especially since they are not members, and the idea of sending your child off for 18 months and only be able to actually talk to her a couple of times in a year may seem very harsh. So maybe we can help them develop faith. And recognize the blessings that can come of having a child serve a mission.

My week has been very full, full of good things, but too full, I think. When Saturday came and it was a rare day that nothing was scheduled, I didn't fill it up with things, even though I have a continual list of things to do. I have to remember that when planning my time, to not overschedule. Julia and I took care of the Potter's cats for three days, which is always a nice thing. It's almost a bit of a vacation, being in someone else's house, playing with the cats, watching a show. We both enjoy it. I also helped Jenn Blanchette with laundry this past week, about ten loads of it. Her twins were sick (I think I mentioned it last week), and she had gotten behind on things. I also had a Presidency Meeting on Wednesday, and went to be Visit Taught on Thursday (I go to Sis. Hong's house, because she and Marcie Estes, my Visiting Teachers, both have small children and it's just easier there). I also knitted with Anne Senter on Friday, and had lunch with Gail Fletcher on Friday. So, lots of good things, but too many things.

There was also the Relief Society Birthday Party on Thursday, which was a Service Auction. They have done this for three or four years now, and I've always missed them before, but this was fun. When we got there, we filled out questionnaires, and

for each thing we did (things like writing in journals, brushing teeth, going to the Temple in the past month, writing to a missionary, all kinds of good things) we would get a \$ amount assigned to that thing, then we added up the money to see how much we had to work with. Then people had either brought things (I made poppy seed bread) or volunteered to do things (like overnight babysit, make dinner for someone, plan a child's birthday party, etc.), and Bishop Nelson was the auctioneer and auctioned off the things. I brought the poppy seed bread, as I said, and I also said I would be chauffeur and companion for a session at the temple (or initiatories), and lunch afterwards in the temple cafeteria on a weekday morning. Amy Theobald won it, but Jenn Blanchette really wanted it, too. So I think I'll do it with her, as well. I won two things: one from Kemper Ure ("2-hours worth of project help . . . twice, for a total of 4 hours . . . could be painting, finishing furniture, making file-folder games, organizing closets, making freezer meals, ironing, quilt blocks, garden help, mulch spreading, or anything else!"), and one from Amy Theobald ("A letter in the mail! No bills, no ads, no tax info., no junk--a real old-fashioned letter, full of compliments, news, and words that will make your day great!"). With Kemper, I am going to work on organizing and painting my room, which means your new room in the basement as well. And I would like to be able to write letters like what Amy Theobald is promising, so I'm looking forward to that, too, both for my own fun, and as a good example!

In our neighborhood, there is one house for rent at the corner, that has been empty for months. And Beverly's old house is empty and has a for-sale sign in front of it. Also, the new house that is built on that same property is empty and is for sale. And the Richards next door are living up North, so their house is for sale, and is empty. I don't even worry about warming up the noisy van (which would need a new muffler if we were not going to be replacing it very soon), because there is nobody around to bother with it! Anyway, the Estes family in our ward are looking to move to a house, and they looked at the Richards' house next door on Friday, and apparently they will be looking again today. It would be very different to have people we know from the ward right next door! We'll see what happens.

I went to Heritage Park yesterday with Heather, and it was a very small but very nice set of meetings. The talks in Sacrament Meeting were excellent. There were only about 25 people altogether in the chapel, including the missionaries, the bishopric, and the speakers, but still, the Spirit was there. John Cole had been invited to talk about ARP. And before that, Jeannie Erickson from the Littleton Ward talked about her experience as a single adult (she married at age 38), and how, no matter what our marital status, the covenants we make with Heavenly Father are one-on-one, we go to get Temple Recommends alone, we each have a personal relationship with the Savior, and the things like that of an eternal nature are done as individuals. I'll have to remember her, to maybe ask her to speak to other single adults in the stake at some point. Heather gave a good lesson, though she's still new at teaching. But she has a good understanding of the gospel and a strong testimony and an excitement for

learning that comes through. Then in Relief Society there were only seven of us in the room, but again, the lesson was good.

Well, today promises to be a beautiful day, unseasonably warm, and a good day for taking a walk and doing some yard work. Maybe I'll get some things done on my list today. On days like this, especially, when I can hear a variety of birdsong and see little plants starting to poke up through the leaves, I think of that scripture in Alma 30:44, "The scriptures are laid before thee, yea, and all things denote there is a God; yea, even the earth, and all things that are upon the face of it, yea, and its motion, yea, and also all the planets which move in their regular form do witness that there is a Supreme Creator." I hope you're continuing to enjoy and love your mission, and the people you meet, and that you're getting to know your new area better and better and love it the way you have loved the others. I love you, Phillip. And I'm glad for your mission, and I'm glad I'm a missionary mom!

Love,
Mom