THE Y REPORT

The Miracle of People

By Sydney A. Springer ('22) in the Winter 2021 Issue



Hannah Larson shares real stories from people connected to BYU—including the students below—in her Instagram account @HumansOfBYU. Photo by Bradley Slade.

"People are miracles."

It's a conviction borne inside Hannah K. Larson (BA '20) when, as a BYU freshman, she challenged herself to talk to three new people every day. She moved beyond casual introductions to learning authentic stories. In May 2019, inspired by the Humans of New York project on social media, Larson launched @HumansOfBYU on Instagram to feature the diversity of people and experiences in the BYU community.

The posts feature portraits of students, faculty, staff members, or alumni, with captions telling the subjects' stories in their own words. Now with nearly ten thousand followers, Larson does much of the interviewing, photography, and writing herself in what amounts to a part-time job.

In September 2019—forever ago in Instagram years—the account featured Halle R. Hofman ('23), and the post still accumulates "likes" every week. Diagnosed at birth with Pfeiffer syndrome, a rare bone disorder, Hofman has undergone 23 surgeries. "I had to learn how to cope with people staring," Hofman shared. "But my mom always taught me to smile and wave in response."

Larson found Hofman's blog and felt inspired to reach out. "Hannah and I became friends instantly," Hofman says. "I think Humans of BYU is amazing because as I've read through

MORE FROM THIS ISSUE



FEATURE
Symbiotic Pathways to Truth
Choose faith until you better understand science—or until science can provide better explanations.



FEATURE
Slam Dunk
With boundless enthusiasm, Coach Pope is quickly—and not quietly—making his presence known.



FEATURE
How to Win @ Online Learning
Love it or loathe it, online learning is here to stay. See how BYU experts are navigating the new currents of edtech.

Browse the complete Winter 2021 Issue »

people's life experiences, I just am left feeling inspired."

In deciding whom to feature, Larson follows the Spirit and talks to everyone she meets. She has included stories from converts, members of the LGBTQ community, early returned missionaries, and those affected by suicide.

"The more we learn from people, the more we can love them," Larson says.

The account has taken on a life of its own, and Larson plans to broaden it to @HumansForChrist this year, with two volunteer writers helping her capture stories from Church members across the globe.

Larson's account is a project of faith — to her, people are "one of the biggest evidences that God exists," and she hopes the stories and miracles captured witness that to others.

"[God's] aware of you; He's aware of me; He's aware of the people who are following the page," Larson says. "And He wants to help all of us have those experiences where we feel the Spirit because that's when we feel the most joy."



Photo by Hannah Larson

Brayden E. McFadden ('21)

"Never in my wildest dreams did I think I would come home early from my mission. . . . I came home three years ago. It was only a year ago I felt like myself again. I'm a firm believer in taking small steps. It doesn't matter how much improvement, as long as it's improvement."



TOP



Photo by Hannah Larson

Halle R. Hofman ('23)

"I am 19 and have had 23 surgeries. . . . Pfeiffer syndrome has really taught me to look for the good and not to focus on the bad. It's helped me find my purpose and blessed me a lot. I believe our challenges can strengthen us and help us become the people we need to become."



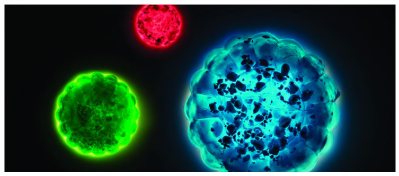
Photo by Hannah Larson

Sai K. Maddali ('22)

"I hadn't told my mom I wanted to be baptized. I was freaking out. . . . Hinduism isn't really a religion you convert to or away from. . . . The way Nephi talks about his parents is how I think of my parents. They're great parents to give me the opportunity to join the Church."

MORE ARTICLES









THE Y REPORT

Tweet Others As You Want to Be Tweeted

Q&A with BYU social media manager on internet trolls and avoiding negativity online.



THE Y REPORT

Miscellaneous Glory

Alien planets? UFOs? Photographer Daniel George's latest work features something more mundane: the Utah Jell-O salad.



FAMILY FOCUS

Seeing Differences

Beginning with their own example, parents can teach their children to be loving and inclusive.

Y MAGAZINE

Y Magazine is published four times a year by Brigham Young University for graduates and friends. Donors who contribute at least $25 to BYU Annual Giving receive the magazine for one year.

Make a donation online or call 1.800.525.8074

Current Magazine Staff

All Writers

BYU Copyright © 2023 Brigham Young University. All rights reserved.

Contact Us

Editorial inquiries and submissions:
magazine@byu.edu

Y Magazine
218 UPB
Provo, UT 84601

Update Your Address

Advertising

Y Magazine is a powerful tool for reaching a targeted market of BYU alumni, donors, students, and friends.

Advertising Information

advertising@byu.edu

News & Alumni

BYU Today Newsletter

BYU Alumni

Give to BYU

TOP