



THE  
POINTED OF  
ACHIEVING  
BALANCE

## JENICA'S SCHEDULE BARELY GAVE HER TIME FOR WHAT SHE NEEDED. BUT WITH A FOCUS ON PRIORITIES, LIFE GAVE HER EVEN MORE OPPORTUNITIES THAN SHE EXPECTED.

By **Bethany Bartholomew**

Church Magazines

It had been a rough freshman year of high school. Jenica B., 17, of Illinois, USA, had ballet training, demanding high school courses, and Church and family responsibilities that were all competing for her attention. She was running on four to five hours of sleep, and it was exhausting. Jenica and her parents all knew something needed to change.

"I would love to have a professional career in ballet," Jenica says, "but ballet, as many dancers know, is a very fragile world, and it's very difficult."

Jenica wanted to keep training her hardest, but she also knew she wanted to make her education a priority. "We'd heard of other dancers who had done online school," she says. "I knew that we had to find a program that would be perfect for me."

So her mom found an accredited online school program that would allow Jenica to participate in extracurricular activities, and prepare for college while maintaining a rigorous ballet training schedule. And she'd have time for homework, scripture study, and rest. They jumped on the opportunity.

"That was truly a blessing," Jenica explained. "That was when I started training [in ballet] in Chicago, and I was still able to attend seminary. And I got so much more time to be with my dad because he also works in the city. I was even blessed with incredible opportunities to share the gospel with friends who were curious. It was a really good experience."

### SHARING WITH FRIENDS

Some of Jenica's opportunities to share the gospel have come when dancing has taken her away from home. She has found ways to maintain her standards and even to share her beliefs with friends. One summer, she was able to attend summer ballet trainings in both Arizona and New York City. While in New York City, she posted a picture of the Manhattan New York Temple

**"WE NEED TO PUT GOD AND OUR FAMILIES AND OUR EDUCATION FIRST AND THEN BALLET, BECAUSE ORDERING OUR PRIORITIES THAT WAY TRULY HELPS US FOCUS ON WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT."**



Jenica and her dad spend time together traveling to the city, sometimes even eating dinner together there.



on social media. She also likes to post dance images on social media with an inspiring quote from a Church leader or an uplifting thought.

"We can all use social media to spread the gospel," she says. "It doesn't have to be a big post about everything. It can just be a simple something that sparks interest or hope in somebody." In the end, she says, "other people will be grateful for our courage to share in such a public space."

Sharing with her friends and maintaining those friendships has helped Jenica to maintain her standards as well. "They're very respectful of my beliefs," she says, "and I'm grateful for that, because it makes it easier for me to live them."

## FINDING THE BALANCE

Even with Jenica's new schedule and new opportunities, balancing all of her responsibilities isn't easy. She attends early-morning seminary, catches some time with her dad on the train into Chicago, trains in ballet for the day, and then focuses on homework, scripture reading, and Church activities in the evening.

So how does she do all of it? "It's very difficult," Jenica says. But through all of her scheduling and organizing, she asks a simple question: "What do I want most at the end of the day? Because at the end of the day I want to be the best at ballet that I can be but also maintain my schoolwork and be able and prepared to go to college when the time comes, and so it's a sacrifice now."

She adds, “I had a ballet teacher who stressed that we need to put God and our families and our education first and then ballet, because ordering our priorities that way truly helps us focus on what is most important in this life. Having incredible examples like my ballet teacher and the people who guide the Church has helped me understand how to make this happen.”

## STANDING UP AND STANDING OUT

One thing Jenica has decided to keep high on her list of priorities is keeping her standards. Fortunately, most studios she has worked with have asked ballet students to maintain modest dress standards, making it easier for Jenica to uphold her own standards. But outside the studio, she says people notice a difference in what she wears.

“My friends do ask, and I’ve told them what the Church standards are that I hold, and they definitely think that it’s interesting, but they see where I’m coming from and where my beliefs are coming from so it tends not to be a problem.”

And people notice differences besides the clothing Jenica chooses to wear.

“People have definitely mentioned to me how they know people in the



*Attending early-morning seminary is important to Jenica, and her new schedule makes it possible.*

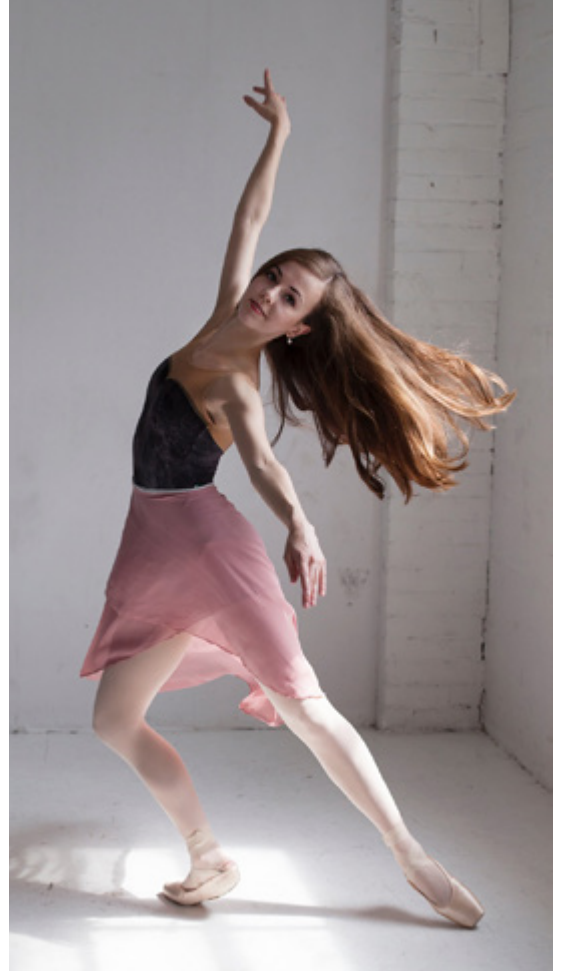


*Jenica enjoys talking with her friends about anything, including the gospel.*



*Jenica's friends are very supportive when she talks about her standards.*

Church and they're just very happy—they live happy lives—and they notice the light that we share even if we don't think that other people are watching. They notice differences. They notice when we choose to not use certain language. They notice when we choose not to use things that would be harmful to us, and for the most part they definitely value our strength to stand for what we believe in."



**"NO MATTER HOW DIFFICULT IT IS, HE HAS A PLAN FOR EACH AND EVERY ONE OF US."**

## A PASSION FOR SERVICE

Jenica has also found many opportunities to make service a priority in her busy schedule. For her online school's National Honor Society program, she worked at the bishop's storehouse and with an international organization to earn service hours. And when she was working toward earning her Young Women Honor Bee, she found a way to incorporate her passion for dancing in her community efforts. She started volunteering for two hours on Saturdays to teach ballet to inner-city children.

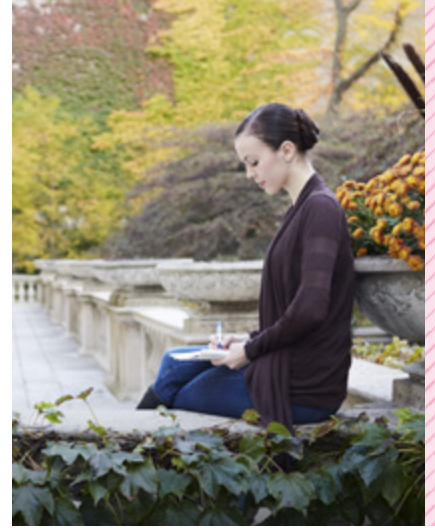
"I've come to realize my passion for service," she says. "I love feeling like I can make a difference in the world. Even here in Illinois, when I assemble food packs, I can help someone all the way across the globe—and with my own hands. And it helps me realize—even though I don't know them—the love that God has for His children."

## KEEPING PERSPECTIVE

Through all of her experiences in dancing, finding service opportunities, sharing the gospel, and organizing her responsibilities, Jenica has found a great appreciation for the things that matter most in life.

"There are things that we value in life and that we want to pursue, and I know that Heavenly Father will provide a way for us to do that if we continue to keep our faith in Him," she says. "Sometimes we can lose our sight on what's truly important and we lose sight of how much He has helped us in these things that we've been trying to achieve." Jenica says she's learned that "some things don't go the way that we planned, but no

matter how difficult it is, He has a plan for each and every one of us and if we truly pray and ask Him for help, He will provide a way for us to achieve what we want to if it's in His plan for us. And we just have to wait and be ready to accept what He wants us to do." NE



*Jenica loves having time to enjoy things like ice cream and games with her family.*



**"I LOVE FEELING LIKE I CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE IN THE WORLD."**