



FROM BOTTOM TO TOP

This young woman from Uruguay knows how to get where she wants to go.

BY DON L. SEARLE
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When you have talent, people sometimes tell you it will take you straight to the top. But in Joselén Cabrera's case, her talent took her all the way to the bottom of the world—Antarctica. And along the way she learned that worthy dreams are worth pursuing, and with those dreams there will be people to help when they are needed.

When she was 14, Joselén won a drawing contest sponsored by the Asociación Civil Antarkos in her native country, Uruguay. The prize: a trip to Antarctica for her and her schoolteacher, with a group of other students and teachers. Her father and the woman who taught her art helped show Joselén how to finish the drawing she had envisioned.

Her trip was an exciting three-stage journey: first, a



military transport flight from Montevideo, Uruguay, to Punta Arenas, Chile, then an overwater flight to the Chilean base in Antarctica, followed by an overland trip to the Uruguayan outpost, Artigas Antarctica Scientific Base, some 3,000 kilometers from Montevideo. Several nations have scientific bases clustered on King George Island off the coast of Antarctica.

Joselén's drawing and her account of her trip were featured in a national magazine, *Uruguay Natural*.

Antarctica was not quite the way she had imagined it, Joselén says, smiling. Her drawing showed penguins and ice. It was summer when she visited—snow in patches on barren ground and few penguins. But that gave her the opportunity to see a few more of the sights. She enjoyed hiking along the coast, where she saw Collins Glacier, the Drake Passage, and Lake Uruguay, from which her country's base draws fresh water. She was also able to visit other bases.

The trip was a dream come true for Joselén, who is now 19 and a member of the Colonia Suiza Branch,



Scenes from Joselén's visit to Antarctica.



Colonia Uruguay District. Since the trip, she has made other dreams come true as well. One of those was to complete her Personal Progress experiences and receive her Young Womanhood Recognition. Joselén wears her medallion, she says, so that she will remember what she has achieved and what she can become as a daughter of God. Now that Joselén has finished her secondary schooling, she plans to study architecture at the university level.

So far, there have not been many opportunities to share her testimony at school. While friends respect her beliefs, they do not discuss religion very much. Joselén is quiet but never afraid to speak up for what is right. That happened once when a student told others in class that Latter-day Saints are forced to pay tithing. No, it's not that way, she corrected. "We give willingly," she said, explaining that tithing is a voluntary offering to God.



Joselén grew up in the Church, but she found her own testimony when she was about 12 and came to understand that she could not always rely on her parents' knowledge. She says gaining a testimony "was not one 'Wow!' moment. But I knew the gospel brought me joy."

She goes out with the sister missionaries often during her summer vacations. Occasionally, there are opportunities to bear testimony to people she knows. One day the missionary lesson turned out to be with her best friend from school. "I told her truly what I feel," Joselén says. Joselén is glad that she was able to share her testimony with her friend.

"I like the story of Joseph Smith, when he was facing a difficult time in the Sacred Grove and still went ahead with his prayer," she says (see Joseph Smith—History 1:15–17). "I'm fascinated by his courage." She admires the way the young prophet stayed true to what he knew, even when others made fun of him.

Nephi is another of her heroes. "I am impressed by the valiance of Nephi when he did not let himself be held back

by his brothers," she says (see 1 Nephi 3:14–21; 4:1–4).

There is another dream she's working on now, and it involves another of her favorite pastimes: music. Joselén and her sister, Ileana, recently completed their certifications as organ teachers. Joselén loves to play music—from Primary songs to movie music—and she loves to listen to music, especially to the Mormon Tabernacle Choir.

"When I have a problem, a hymn will come to my mind," she says. "Hymns help me find answers." She attends seminary every school day in the branch meetinghouse not far from her home. "Sometimes I go early and just sit at the piano and play hymns," she says.

When there is a general conference broadcast, she goes early so she can sit and listen to the prelude music by the Tabernacle Choir.

Now that Joselén has been to Antarctica—a place few people on earth will ever see in person—is there another special place she would like to visit?

"I'd like to go to general conference and hear the choir sing," she says.

Who knows? If Joselén can make it to the bottom of the world, what's to keep her from coming out on top in whatever she wants to do. **NE**

Below: Joselén (in red) with her mother, Raquel; her father, Ruben; and her sister, Ileana. Center: Joselén with mementoes of her trip. Right: Joselén practicing the keyboard.



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