

Our Families' Personal Progress

By Hillary Slaughter
and Elyssa J. Kirkham

Sometimes one person can change everything around him or her. If you start with yourself—if you have courage to start with yourself—then everything around you may order itself in time,” says Katya Kalashnikova from Kyiv, Ukraine.

Through faith and Personal Progress, Katya Kalashnikova and Ivanna Rubanchiuk of the Voskresens'kyi Ward were able to find that courage, giving them the opportunity to strengthen their families and prepare for the temple.

Making a Change

Both Katya's and Ivanna's families joined the Church shortly after the Kyiv Ukraine Mission was organized in 1992. But both families drifted into

inactivity before either girl was old enough to be baptized.

Ivanna's family moved when she was 13 to a home near a Latter-day Saint chapel. As she and her mother walked past it, her mother remembered the goodness the Church had brought into her life. She encouraged Ivanna to go to church. “My mother knew that in the Church they would teach me only good things in comparison to the world,” Ivanna says. She began attending church and activities and meeting with the missionaries, and when the missionaries asked her if she would be baptized, she agreed.

Katya's Story

At age 15 Katya was returning from a trip with a community youth group. She was surprised when her father told her that he had invited the

missionaries to teach her. He made it clear that while she was welcome to listen, he was not interested.

Katya set a time to meet with the missionaries. “As I listened, I felt that this is the right way to go. I remembered those feelings I'd had going to church as a child. And after a while, I decided to be baptized,” she says.

Progressing Personally

Both young women had to make adjustments to become members of the Church, and Personal Progress helped them make the transition. “I was still growing. I had my own habits. Even my manner of dress needed to change,” Katya recalls. “Personal Progress little by little helped me change. It gave me power to be a daughter of God, not just in church but every day.”

Through Personal Progress, Ivanna and Katya were able to establish habits that would spiritually strengthen them, such as prayer, scripture study, and watching appropriate media. They also learned how to teach lessons and serve others. Overall, it helped them draw closer to God and become better examples to their families.

“Personal Progress helped me. Every completed assignment gave me growth; it added knowledge

Katya Kalashnikova gained knowledge by doing Personal Progress, which influenced her parents to join her in attending church. Opposite page: Katya and her friend Ivanna Rubanchiuk in front of the Kyiv Ukraine Temple.



Personal Progress helped two young women in Kyiv, Ukraine, make positive changes in their lives and in their families' lives.



and courage,” Ivanna says. “It was especially good for me because most members of my family aren’t active members of the Church.”

Leading by Example

The changes Ivanna made through Personal Progress helped her be an example to her family. “All this time my parents have seen how I’ve changed. They were very happy that I was going to church,” Ivanna says. She attended church and activities alone until one day her mother decided to come with her to sacrament meeting. Now they attend church together.

Katya’s example also touched the lives of her family. Shortly after Katya joined the Church, her mother started to come with her and then her father. The families of both of these young women noticed the difference Personal Progress and Church activity made in Katya’s and Ivanna’s lives. They saw how happy they had become and wanted to take part in that joy.

Ivanna credits Personal Progress with helping her set a good example for her family. Ivanna and her mother now attend church together.



Entering the House of the Lord

The joy of Katya and her family continued to grow. As Katya participated in Personal Progress, she noticed that it focused on the importance of the temple. “There is a whole section dedicated to going to the temple, and I really wanted to get to the temple, but my parents weren’t ready,” she remembers.

Katya was able, however, to attend the temple with her seminary class. She recalls, “I did temple work for the first time. I was really happy, and I wanted to go again. I really wanted my family to go there and be sealed for eternity.”

Katya’s family prepared and finally felt that they were ready to go to the temple. Two years after her first visit to the temple, Katya returned, this time with her family. “I understood that it really is a place where families can become eternal,” Katya says. They were sealed in the Freiberg Germany Temple.



DEVELOPING SPIRITUAL STRENGTH

“The Young Women program has in it [a] powerful pattern to develop spiritual

strength in the young women and to offer the opportunity for us to help. Personal Progress helps young women prepare to receive the ordinances of the temple. They are helped by the examples of mothers, grandmothers, and every righteous woman around them in the Church.”

President Henry B. Eyring, First Counselor in the First Presidency, “Help Them on Their Way Home,” *Liahona and Ensign*, May 2010, 24–25.

Continuing in Faith

Katya and Ivanna are grateful for the Church, and both have benefited from its offerings, especially Personal Progress. “My testimony of Personal Progress is that it makes us stronger and helps us be perfected in every aspect of our lives,” says Katya.

Ivanna feels that Young Women and Church organizations have helped her prepare to be a missionary. Ivanna is positive about missionary work. She says, “Don’t get discouraged, but always be an example of how the Church changes our lives. We’re happy in it, and every person wants to be happy. And if we take people and show them that happiness, then they will follow our example. We always can—with small steps—help those people, serve them, and in some wonderful moment, they will be ready.” ■