

GETTING A **JUMP** ON HER FUTURE

By Miriam Bay
Church Self-Reliance Services

An idea, a trampoline, and a desire to help others propelled an 11-year-old girl to great lessons about self-reliance and service.

Most 11-year-olds are already busy with school, home chores, and activities with friends. But Alexandra C., from the state of Durango, Mexico, wasn't a typical 11-year-old. In addition to all the normal things young people do at that age, Alexandra was making money from her own business and serving in her community.

So how does a girl that young start her own company?

Starting with an Idea

It began when Alexandra heard of some classes the Church offers to help people learn to be self-reliant. The group was mainly for people 18 and older, but Alexandra was determined to join. She loved the idea of learning how to get a job or start her own business.

Could it be that she, a girl still in elementary school, might not only shape her *own* future but also help people who had even less than she did? After all, many of the Church members she knew from her town had little education and few resources.

Alexandra joined a group called "Starting and Growing My Business," one of three subjects offered. Rather than being taught by a teacher, the group was led by a facilitator—a fellow group member who guides the other members through the course and encourages discussion. Alexandra met with her group every week for three months.

As Alexandra learned how to be both temporally and spiritually self-reliant, she began to look around at the needs in her area. She noticed that there weren't enough recreational activities for all the kids in her town, so she saved up money and bought a small trampoline. Alexandra put the trampoline in a public area and started renting it out, using ideas she'd learned about marketing and finance in her course.

The trampoline became very popular in her community.



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BLESSINGS OF WORK

“Developing the capacity to work will help you contribute to the world in which you live. It will bring you an increased sense of self-worth. It will bless you and your family, both now and in the future. . . .

“To be truly self-reliant, you must learn how to work with others and turn to the Lord for His help and strength.”

For the Strength of Youth (2011), 40, 41.

The Blessings of Service and Hard Work

Alexandra started using her skills in other ways too. Because she’d shown great respect for all her group members and had followed through on all her commitments, Alexandra was trusted to facilitate a new group—a position normally held by people 18 or older.

When Alexandra became a facilitator, she was by far the youngest of the six participants in her group. She carefully studied the materials before each group meeting so she’d know how to best help her fellow group members. She took her new role seriously. “She would get anxious when her group didn’t arrive on time or when the video equipment didn’t work,” said her father, David.

Alexandra learned to balance homework, the trampoline business, and her facilitator role exceptionally well. And she thinks it was well worth it. “God blessed me when He made me a facilitator,” she said. For her, one blessing was to learn about loving those you serve.





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To learn more about the self-reliance classes, visit lds.org/go/816000.

That love led her to reach out to her group with a real desire for them to succeed. For instance, each time they met, group members made weekly commitments to apply what they studied to their businesses and then teach their families the gospel principles they’d learned. When participants in Alexandra’s group didn’t reach their goals or missed a class, she’d visit them in their homes to see if they were all right and to encourage them to fulfill their commitments. “I loved visiting my group members,” she said.

Alexandra’s dad added, “I marvel to see how my little daughter could feel so strongly about the well-being of those in need. She has great compassion for those she serves.”

Now a Beehive in Young Women, Alexandra has plans to expand her trampoline business to a nearby community. By learning to be more self-reliant and helping others do the same, she said she’s already started to see changes in herself and her new friends in her group. “My testimony of Christ has grown,” Alexandra said. “I feel more sure of myself, and I want to serve.”

Alexandra said that because of this training course, she’s more aware of who she really is and how she can serve. “I learned I could improve myself. And I loved to see all of the group members improving. I know they’ll be better off now; their businesses will improve. I know that God called the prophet and that the self-reliance training was revelation from Him.”

For Alexandra, her testimony, self-worth, and service to others have definitely been things worth working for. ■