

Lily's PERSONAL Progress

Lily, a young woman with Down syndrome, is learning, serving, and growing through Personal Progress.

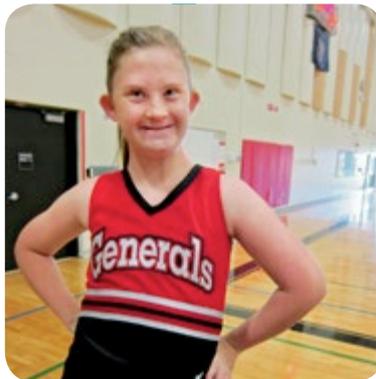
By Becky Young Fawcett

Lily S. of Utah, USA, had a busy ninth grade year. As a cheerleader, she participated in parades, football games, basketball games, and cheer camps and clinics. But the path to Lily's cheerleading career was not an easy one.

As soon as Lily found out about her junior high school's cheerleading tryouts, she knew she wanted to be a part of the team. For three weeks, Lily practiced with a former cheerleader to learn cheers and dance routines. She also spent hours making up her own cheer. After weeks of practice and a tough audition process, Lily made the team—and the Young Women Personal Progress program had helped.

Because of Personal Progress, Lily has participated in many activities where she learned to set goals and work hard to achieve them—skills that definitely helped her reach her cheerleading goals. Because of her Down syndrome, however, Lily sometimes needs to modify experiences and projects. The *Personal Progress* booklet says, “You may adapt experiences and projects according to your personal circumstances, interests, and needs with the prior approval of a parent, a Young Women leader, or another adult” ([2009], 7).

With the help of her parents and Young Women leaders, Lily is figuring out when and how to adapt Personal Progress to meet her needs. But whether a project is adapted or not, Lily, her parents, and her leaders make sure that every experience and project provides Lily with opportunities to grow.



Personal Progress helped Lily reach her cheerleading goals.



For a Virtue value experience, Lily learned the importance of being temple worthy.



Coloring pictures helps Lily to remember important scriptures.

Remembering with Pictures

Because of her disability, Lily is unable to memorize scriptures or long passages. So, with the approval of her mom, Lily has decided to listen to an audio version of the scriptures instead and then color a picture that represents what she's supposed to memorize. Then she discusses the importance of the verse with a parent or leader and hangs the picture where she can see it and remember what she learned.

Lily also colors pictures to remember scriptures that she reads but doesn't need to memorize. For Virtue value experience number three, Lily and the other young women in her ward read Alma chapter 5 together and talked about being worthy to enter the temple. Lily colored a picture of the Salt Lake Temple to remember what she learned. “I know I can go to the temple,” she says. “I like doing baptisms for the dead.”

Serving Her Neighbor

Lily is also able to complete many Personal Progress experiences and projects without adapting them. For example, one of the value experiences for Good Works is to spend three hours serving outside of your family. For this project, Lily and her mom cleaned up a neighbor's yard. After completing the project, Lily felt stronger. She says, "It was hard work and I was happy when it was over, but I am glad that I did it!"

Lily was also able to serve when she completed her Divine Nature value project. For this project, she decided to babysit for free so that a couple could attend the temple the day before their child with Down syndrome underwent a major medical procedure.

Lily's mom took Lily to the family's house and stayed with Lily while the parents were gone. "I was a little scared at first," says Lily, "but then I started playing with the kids, and they were really nice."

After Lily spent the evening playing with the children, she got them in their pajamas, helped them brush their teeth and hair, and read them a bedtime story. Lily's mom sat back and read a book, letting Lily do her job. Through this experience, Lily learned about service and about caring for and interacting with others. "I felt happy after I babysat. I learned I could do something I hadn't tried before."

"It helps me it helps me and it helps me
SERVE... READ, LEARN"



For Lily's Individual Worth value project, she swam in Special Olympics.



For Young Women in Excellence, Lily displayed her Special Olympics medals.

Understanding Her Worth

At a Young Women in Excellence event in her ward, Lily was recognized for completing her Individual Worth value project. For this project, Lily participated in Special Olympics. She competed in three track-and-field events and three swimming events. She worked very hard to prepare for her competitions and learn the proper techniques.

When Lily first started learning how to throw a rubber javelin for a track-and-field event, it was a bit tricky. But Lily practiced hard, and when the day of the event came, Lily was not nervous at all because she knew just what to do. When the results came in, Lily earned the gold medal!

Lily's participation in Special Olympics helped her learn that she can do hard things, that she can develop her talents, and that she has great worth.



A Program for Progress

Through Personal Progress, Lily is learning to cook and handle money, and she is also learning the importance of going to church, reading her scriptures, saying her prayers, and going to the temple. “It’s a good program,” Lily says. “It helps me serve people, it

helps me read, and it helps me learn.”

Former Young Women general president Elaine S. Dalton taught something similar: “Personal Progress is not a program that is separate and apart from your life. It is a tool that you can use to draw closer to Heavenly Father and our Savior, serve

others, be anxiously engaged in good works, learn leadership skills, develop relationships with others, and prepare for temple covenants” (“Introduction to Personal Progress,” *New Era*, Sept. 2011, YW1). This is true for all young women, including Lily. **NE**

Becky Young Fawcett lives in Utah, USA.



Tips FOR ADAPTING PERSONAL PROGRESS

The *Personal Progress* booklet says, “You may adapt experiences and projects according to your personal circumstances, interests, and needs with the prior approval of a parent, a Young Women leader, or another adult” ([2009], 7). If you need to adapt Personal Progress, here are some things to think about.



- Remember that each project and experience is different. Consider each requirement individually to decide if it will work with your personal circumstance.
- Rather than focusing on what you can’t do, think about things you can do or things you would like to learn.
- Before adapting an experience or project, consider whether you might be able to complete the requirement described in the *Personal Progress* booklet with the help of a friend, family member, or leader.
- Counsel with your parents and leaders to help them understand your talents and abilities as well as areas where you want to learn and grow.
- If you need to adapt a project, focus on the skills or traits that the experience or project is trying to help you develop. Ask yourself, “What should I be learning from this, and what can I do to learn this?” Then be creative in identifying projects that would give you similar experiences.
- Get approval from either your parents or leaders before you adapt an experience or project.
- Be creative. What things do you love doing? What are your gifts? Form your experiences and projects around those things so you are doing something you enjoy and are able to accomplish.
- Be aware that many Church materials are available in accessible formats such as audio and large print. See lds.org/disability/materials to learn more.