Fall Walton Newsletter

Start Strong, Stay Strong, Finish Strong

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As I sought out possible themes for our Walton program this year I came across a little booklet “Start Strong” which shared stories of athletes, business leaders and normal everyday individuals who faced difficult obstacles in their lives but who chose not to give up or to allow themselves to be defeated in life’s trials. In each case I observed how they had made a decision to start strong through personal life choices—studies, discipline, character development, etc. From the starting line they were already focusing down the road. When they faced significant obstacles, which could have broken their spirit, they chose to stay strong and not give up. In each case they achieved significant accomplishments and finished strong. It is my desire this year that our JBU Walton scholars adopt this theme whether it be in the academic, leadership, or spiritual arenas of their lives.

by Mr. J

1 Corinthians 9: 24-27 (TLB)

24 In a race everyone runs, but only one person gets first prize. So run your race to win. 25 To win the contest you must deny yourselves many things that would keep you from doing your best. An athlete goes to all this trouble just to win a blue ribbon or a silver cup, but we do it for a heavenly reward that never disappears. 26 So I run straight to the goal with purpose in every step. I fight to win. I’m not just shadow-boxing or playing around. 27 Like an athlete I punish my body, treating it roughly, training it to do what it should, not what it wants to. Otherwise I fear that after enlisting others for the race, I myself might be declared unfit and ordered to stand aside.
Freshman Story

Everything started like a dream some months ago. When Mr. Ronald Johnson and other people told me that I was a Walton scholar my life changed. When I came to JBU on August the 17 I realized that my dreams came true and my life as a new walton freshmen in JBU was starting.

At first I was kind of afraid because it is hard being in a foreign country, speaking an other language and starting to build new friendships. My first friends were the other Walton from all central america. These boys and girls are so friendly that you notice that those people that you first met in the airport will be your best friends and the people that you can rely on. After the first few days in JBU I met the missionary kids. I was very exited to meet people who love God so much, and people from all over the world that can share a little of their culture with me. These guys were amazing I made friends on the first day at JBU. Then we met with all the freshmen generation. It was something really crazy but funny and unbelievable. All those young boys and girls were so friendly and willing to know you better. After all the freshmen were here the next step was the big games. It was the best experience in my life. I didn't expect all those funny and exciting moments. I just saw those college moments in movies and I didn't expect them to come true.

Now I'm almost at the end of my first semester in JBU and the experience that I have had in these months were unbelievable. Camping stories, hiking, going swimming in Swepco etc. The whole experience in your dorm sharing with people and having great times is awesome. Sharing with the other Walton students that are like your family is really good because they make you feel at home and they support you every time. One awesome thing here in JBU is that professors are always willing to help you and they want to know you better. Professors become you're friends.

My freshmen year has been really unbelievable and I am very glad and exited I'm sharing this time with my Walton family, friends and all the people around me. These is the most wonderful blessing God has gave me and I am going to take advantage of it to make a difference.

by Humberto Smith
Our program had the opportunity to “show-off” at the Northwest Arkansas Hispanic Heritage Festival in September this year. It was a great chance to share what we are as Latinos and, of course, as Waltons. I truly believe that God created each one of us differently so we could combine as individuals to become one no matter the race, language or ethnicity.

Showing what going the extra mile means, our Waltons from Honduras, Guatemala, Panama, El Salvador and Mexico performed their national dances. The dances portrayed the cultural outcomes and daily life activities that make each country unique and special. The performances were full of humor, love affairs and happiness, which are typical aspects of our Latino flavor. But the charisma wasn’t all that the audience got to see. White, red, blue, yellow, stripes and a combination of all were part of the gorgeous costumes that our students were wearing.

Besides entertaining the public, our Waltons’ performances transmitted the uniqueness of the Hispanic culture and the highlights of its traditions, such as music and art, seen in every original musical piece and colorful hand-made costume. These guys did an awesome job and we should be highly proud of their work. They planned their presentations, rehearsed, shared great customs and did their best to show what we are made of.
Each year we celebrate the Hispanic heritage month at JBU to strengthen the bonds among students. JBU is well known because of the level of acceptance that students from all over the world receive, and even though we are foreign students, we definitely feel like we belong to this place. It is such a wonderful thing to feel welcomed in a community and also be part of it. As Waltons, this was a great opportunity to give and support the community not only in Siloam Springs but in North West Arkansas.

Claudia from Honduras performed a beautiful piece with her violin along with her partners. She thinks that “it's very important to create awareness of the Latino culture because, as Latinos, we are part of the world’s cultural mixture. It doesn't matter the quantity, nation, tongue or tradition. We all can create an integrationist society.”

Every time we, as the Hispanic community, have the opportunity to expose our culture, we are opening a new road toward harmony and unity. We are given the opportunity to eliminate social stereotypes and thus be perceived as something other than poverty, famine and crime.

Guys! We are carrying a pretty heavy responsibility. As Waltons, Latinos and ambassadors, our job is to bring a piece of our traditions, language, dances and customs to share and create bonds of international friendship. In addition, we are called to make a difference on campus whatever our talents are.

by Arline Mejia
Senior Story

Francis Morales is our December graduate of 2014. We gathered some of the best lessons and advice she acquired during her experience at John Brown University. Her major is Electrical Engineering and she is from Santa Ana, Costa Rica. Francis is a great example of how hard work and perseverance can go a long way in pursuing our goals. Her life experiences and daily activities have impacted Waltons around her in a very special way. This lady engineer has set a remarkable example of loving others and really demonstrates her love of the Lord and service to other people.

Francis tells us that her prayer had been to know more about the Lord but she couldn't find proper guidance back home. Her experience at JBU is what allowed her to really open her heart to the Lord. During her junior year she started to transition into a genuine relationship with God by being more attentive to hearing His voice. She then knew that He had always been knocking on her door, to show His immeasurable grace and love. To describe this, Francis says “the Lord brought me here to get to know Him and He also gave me a degree.”

During her time at JBU, Francis has been involved in several activities and ministries. She led a group of Waltons in a Nursing Home Ministry, was part of the Grupito Walton as an organizer and speaker and was always involved in activities such as the International Food Festival (homemade Tres Leches is her signature dish, if not, ask Victor from Panama) and Walton Cookout. The impact Francis had in the life of other people is a real blessing and even though it is sad to see her leave, she has left the Walton Program with hearts full of joy.

Thank you Francis for all that you have taught us and shared with us! We are thankful with the Lord for extraordinary people like you, who show His unconditional love and blessings. You will be dearly missed and we wish you a successful walk with the Lord back in Costa Rica, where we know that through your endeavors you will continue to impact lives in a positive way.