



Dear Donor/Supporter:

Twenty four years ago, two of the Lord's missionaries went to our home and taught the gospel of Jesus Christ to my parents. My dad said he felt their teachings were sincere and very convincing that it led to their baptism six months later. That was the beginning of a gospel journey that blessed every aspect of our lives, bringing guidance, comfort and peace.

My parents began to look for the best in our lives. I saw them start reading their scriptures faithfully, closed our store on Sundays and my mom would patiently bring us back to the primary room when Marvin, my elder brother, and I felt tired staying there. As members of the church, our parents taught us to live and practice Christ-like behavior. They also taught us the value of reading the scriptures. We started by reading a line or two from the scriptures each day before dad dropped us off to school. The testimonies we learned about the truthfulness of the gospel of Jesus Christ was the most powerful motivating force for us to continue to hold on to the rod and keep on coming to church and become an active part of it. Sometimes practicing Christ-like behavior daily can be a great challenge and sometimes we felt we were not making progress but during discouraging days our Savior's words saying "Be not weary in well doing for ye are laying the foundation of a great work and out of small things proceedeth that which is great" (D&C 64:33) gives us strength.

Two months before my elder brother Marvin left for his full time mission in 1999 our family's business, a hardware store, got burned. It was one of the most tragic trials our family had. We lost our business, our house, and our cars. A few of our relatives said it happened because we joined the church and they questioned why my parents allowed my brother Marvin to serve a mission. My dad simply answered, "It's our decision."

A year later, I went on a full-time mission in the Philippines Naga mission. That was the same year my dad got blind because of complications from being a diabetic. He was able to see again after an operation sponsored by his sister and partly from church welfare assistance. During this time my father had to depend on his sister's support for medication and my mom did everything to earn additional income by cooking rice cakes and other snack foods aside from her teaching job.

Despite the hard times my brothers and I did our best to continue with our studies. With the Lord's blessings, my brother Marvin received a scholarship in 2002 to study in Brigham Young University where he took international Business Management course through the recommendation of his Mission President Cesar A. Perez and his wife Sis. Perez. In 2005, my parents went to USA to attend my brother's graduation. While they were there they were offered a job. This was at that time a perfect offer since we could not afford to buy my dad's medicines here in the Philippines. They took this opportunity even though they would rather be here and stay with us.



## ACADEMY FOR CREATING ENTERPRISE

After serving my full-time mission I finished my studies and eventually landed a job. After being employed for three years I decided in 2007 to start my own internet shop business. With my meager savings I started with 4 computers. After two months competitors started opening just a few blocks away from my shop but that didn't discourage me from continuing my business.

A friend of mine later told me to enroll at ACE. With her encouragement, I joined batch 43 in June to July of 2007. I learned lot of things in the Academy including how to write business plans and the Rules of Thumb for a successful entrepreneur. After graduating from ACE, my brother Lucky and I started a water refilling station out of our savings. Our small internet shop thrived and by this time had more than 20 computers. We worked as a family to improve our water refilling business which at present sells an average of 120 containers daily with 50 containers at breakeven.

Few months ago I told my parents to come back home and suggested that with our businesses we can now be able to afford to buy my dad's daily medications. Now we are happy again living together here in the Philippines. This time we are starting a laundry shop business and also planning to start a computer parts and repair shop in Palawan City.

The Lord has blessed us with everything we have now. I am grateful for the challenges that served as our teaching moments and strengthened my faith and testimony. During the hard times we continued to hold on to the rod. Now I express my gratitude by paying honest tithes and by serving my brothers and sisters in every possible way. The Academy taught us to "Learn, earn and return" and I do it by sharing my talents and skills to those who want to learn computer literacy and basic computer repairs and maintenance. One greater gift we can give to others is by sharing not only our talents but by helping bring souls unto Christ through our good deeds and examples using the blessings we receive from the Lord. This is what the Lord expects us to show our gratitude for Him.

**The Academy for Creating Enterprise has now trained over 2000 returned missionaries like James Darwin over the past 10 years. Please help us continue the effort to help worthy Latter-day Saint families become more self-reliant by donating today!**