

Make It HAPPEN!



Before Reading

Think about your own goals. Do you want to play soccer or make music? All of these activities take time and practice.

During Reading

During reading, review the highlighted vocab words. While learning about Jason, understand how he got to where he is today. What **skills** has he shown that have helped his **career**? In each chapter, the Make It Happen! activity will help you, too, build skills to reach your own goals.

After Reading

Look in the back of the book for questions and activities to help you think about Jason's story. Share these with a friend, parent, or teacher. Also, talk about the skills you need to reach your goals.

skill: the ability to do something that comes from training, experience, or practice

career: a job or profession that someone does for a long time

“A dream is never finished until you let it be . . . and
I’m not ready to wake up from this one yet.”

JASON DERULO

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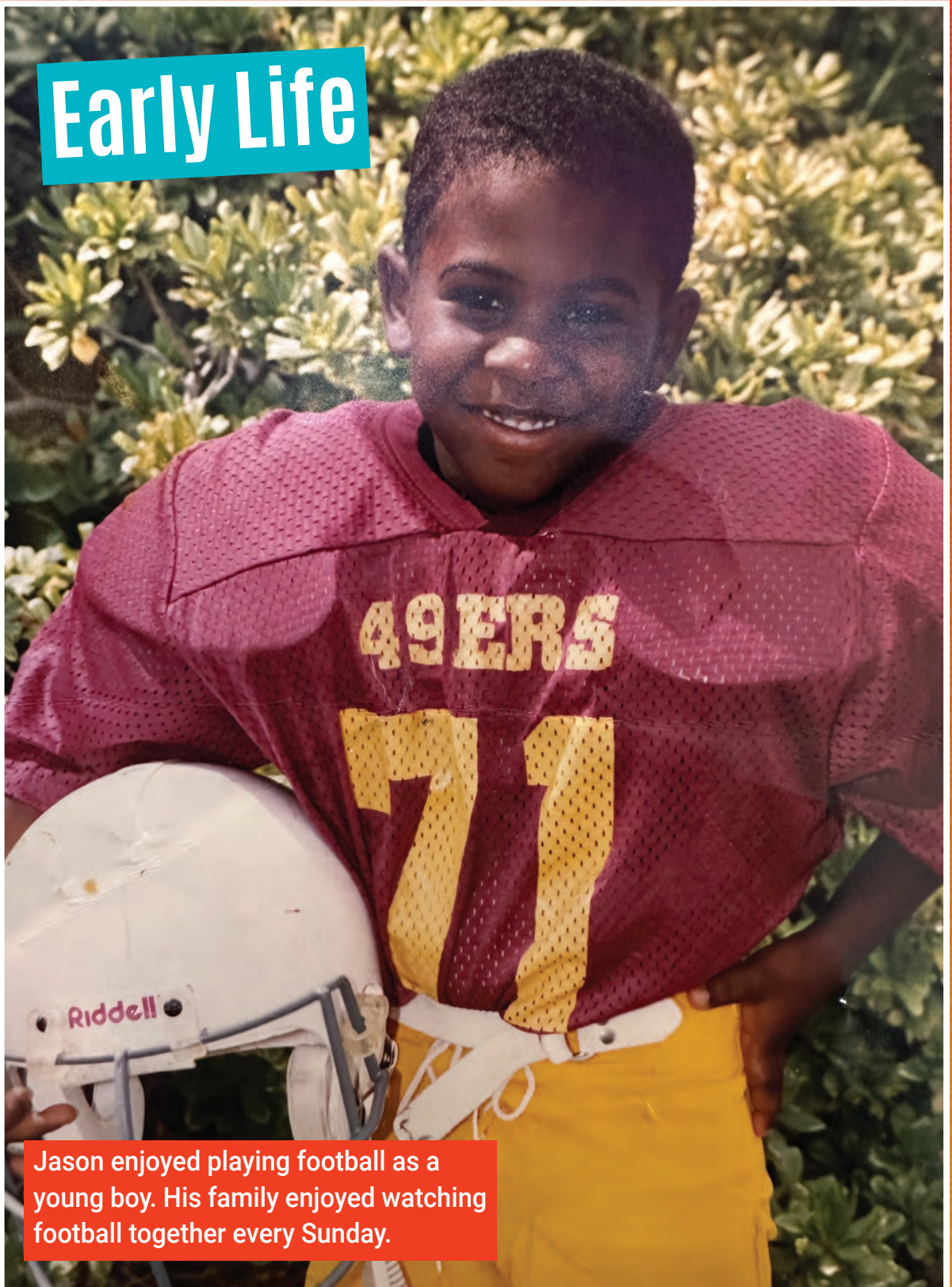
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Early Life



Jason enjoyed playing football as a young boy. His family enjoyed watching football together every Sunday.

Jason Derulo was born on September 21, 1989, in Miramar, Florida. His parents were both **immigrants** from the country of Haiti. They moved to the United States hoping to give their children a better life. Jason had a large family with many aunts, uncles, and cousins. They often enjoyed Haitian food and music together.

Growing up, Jason's parents taught him and his older brother and sister, Joey and Kim, about the importance of hard work. Jason was **inspired** by their **work ethic**. His mom also taught Jason about the "power of the tongue." She believed that if you said positive things about yourself, then good things would happen. She told Jason that he should never talk badly about himself.



Jason's mom was supportive of him when he told her he wanted to be a performer.

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immigrants: people who move to another country
inspired: encouraged someone to do something
work ethic: a belief that hard work is worthy of reward

A Born Superstar

When Jason was four years old, he saw a musical performance on television by Michael Jackson. Jason couldn't look away. As he watched the King of Pop dance and sing across the stage, he knew that he wanted to be a performer too.

He wanted to entertain people and inspire audiences.

But Jason didn't just dream about being a superstar. He got to work and started practicing. Learning how to dance and sing was a start. Then, he wrote **lyrics** for songs. He even had singing competitions against his brother, Joey. His cousins, Harry and Henry, were the judges. Jason always won.



Jason (bottom right) with some of his biggest supporters: cousin Henry (left), brother Joey (center), cousin Harry (right), Dad (back left), and Mom (back right).

lyrics: the words of a song

Soon, Jason started attending the Dillard Center for the Arts, a performing arts high school in Fort Lauderdale. The school was 40 minutes away from his home. He had to wake up every day at 4 a.m. to catch the bus. But Jason didn't mind. The long trip gave him more time to practice his skills. Jason would rehearse dance routines on his way to the bus stop. On the bus ride home, he would write song lyrics. His positive attitude helped make the commute more bearable.

Make It HAPPEN! Create a Routine

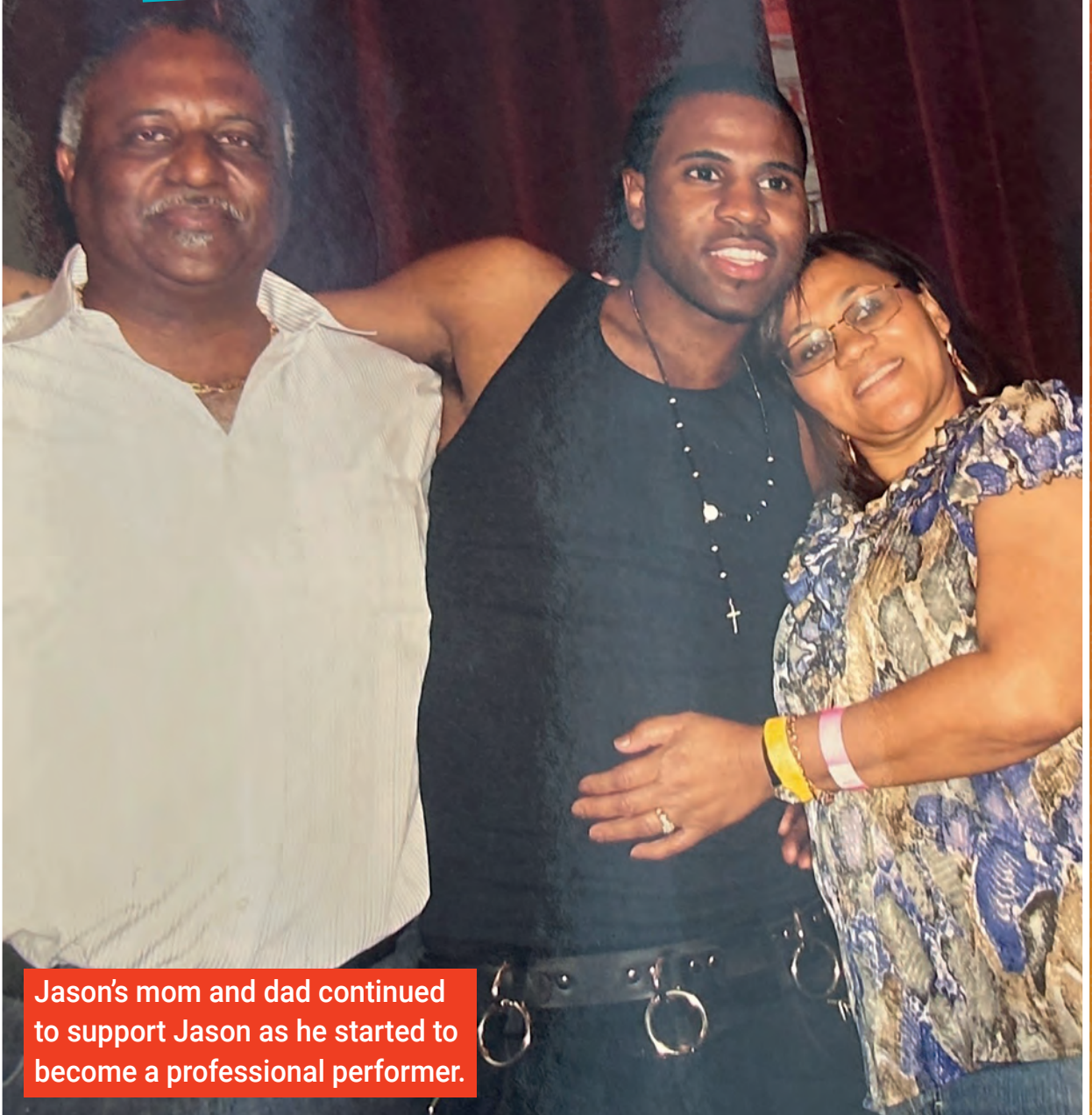
Jason had to find time in his day to write songs and dance. Creating a routine can help you find time to practice the things that are important to you.

- It can take weeks or even months to build a habit. Stick with it and do not give up!
- Set an alarm to remind you when to start or stop.
- It can be easy to say, "I'll just do it later." Ask a friend to practice your new routine together. **Encourage** each other to keep going.

Setting a routine takes work. Take time to reflect on what is stopping you from succeeding. Then, work out a plan to keep moving forward with someone you trust.

encourage: help someone feel courage, spirit, or hope

First Steps of the Journey



Jason's mom and dad continued to support Jason as he started to become a professional performer.

Jason's family was always supportive of his dream. This helped to build Jason's **confidence**. Unfortunately, not everyone believed in Jason. Some teachers warned him that his dream might be too difficult. Many kids would be discouraged. But Jason stayed positive. He knew that if he worked hard, he was going to be a star.



Jason practiced performing on stage in front of an audience from an early age.

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Jason stayed focused and **determined**. He joined the jazz band. He studied classical music. He took theater classes and practiced his acting skills. When Jason was 16, he moved on his own to New York City to attend the American Musical and Dramatic Academy. "The goal mattered more to me than other people's words," he said. Jason refused to quit.

confidence: the feeling or belief that you can rely on someone

determined: wanting to do something very much, and not letting anyone stop you

Jason's Big Break

Jason's big break came in 2006. He made an appearance on a television show, *Showtime at the Apollo*. Jason was **nervous**. But his performance impressed the crowd and the judges. Jason won the grand prize. Soon after, Jason signed his first record deal with Beluga Heights Records. His hard work and positive attitude were paying off.

Jason began writing songs for other artists. He wrote the single "Bossy" for rapper Birdman. He worked on **collaborations** with other famous musicians, like Pitbull, Lil Wayne, and Cassie. Jason got to learn more about the music business. He saw what it was like to record an album and go on tour.



Jason performed alongside celebrities like Adam Lambert, Shakira, and Leighton Meester at the Y100 Jingle Ball in 2009.

nervous: feeling unsure or fearful
collaborations: when two or more people work together

Soon, Jason was also recording his own music. Jason released his first single, “Whatcha Say,” in 2009. It was the moment he had been working toward his whole life! “Whatcha Say” was a huge hit. It was number 1 on the Billboard Hot 100. By the end of the year, Jason was opening for Lady Gaga on tour.

Make It HAPPEN! Songwriting Collaboration

Jason wrote songs for many other artists. This helped him build his career. Working together to achieve a goal requires leadership and cooperation. Try collaborating to write your own song.

- **Brainstorm** what you'd like to write about. Focus on something you love. How does your topic make you feel? Write down the first words that come to you.
 - Now, take those words and combine them into sentences. It's okay to repeat the same words and ideas.
- Repetition** is a part of almost every popular song.
- Share your lyrics with your friends. If they were going to sing your song, what changes would they want to make? Work as a team to complete your song.

brainstorm: to solve a problem or come up with a new idea by taking time to think it over

repetition: The act of doing something multiple times

How did your song turn out? Did you like working alone or as a group better? Did your collaborators have any good advice or suggestions?