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ONE OF US: She's on a mission to mentor a new generation

By The Times-Union

Elexia Coleman-Moss has the resume of a woman who had some very good mentors growing up.

Coleman-Moss, who was born in Jacksonville and raised in Sarasota, was as a high schooler a member of the student council, National Honor Society and YMCA Black Achievers Program. She was president of her junior and senior classes.

At Florida A&M she majored in psychology, minored in criminal behavior and began doing volunteer work with children.

Along the way she got married -- her husband, Jake Moss, is an Allstate insurance agent -- and landed a job in human resources and marketing for a Jacksonville restaurant company.

Now Coleman-Moss, 30, is on a mission, determined to be a mentor to a new generation of women.

Helping teenage girls become mature, polished young women is how she spends much of her spare time.

Her non-profit corporation, Empowerment Resources, has three programs aimed at young women, including Journey Into Womanhood.

Journey Into Womanhood is aimed at girls ages 12 to 17, with the emphasis on what Coleman-Moss calls "the in-between teenagers." She's referring to economic status, the daughters of the middle class who don't qualify for enrichment programs aimed at impoverished neighborhoods but who can't afford private schools and country clubs.

For them, Coleman-Moss offers a 20-week course twice a year, 20 Saturday workshops designed to teach the skills that can lead to healthy, happy lives. There's emphasis on self-esteem, health and fitness, academic skills, abstinence, drug and alcohol prevention and spirituality, Coleman-Moss said.

The cost of the program, which begins its next session in January, is \$40 per girl. Coleman-Moss generally enrolls 25 girls per session. She also offers two other programs that emphasize academics, Math Power! and Reading Power!

Coleman-Moss also teaches a parenting class each Tuesday night in Jacksonville at the Family Nurturing Center, serves on committees for the YMCA and JCCI, does yoga and pilates and loves to cook (Cuban food especially; her mom's from Cuba).

She fits her husband in when she can. Does he mind all the time she spends on her girls?

She shakes her head no.

"He knows it's my passion."

For more information about Empowerment Resources, you can e-mail elexiaempoweringfamilies.org or call (904) 268-8287.

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