

Sweet Success

Do you have a big goal? Want to aid people or animals who need help? Get some tips from these girls whose passions are making the world better.

Meet Mikaila, Bee Sweet Queen

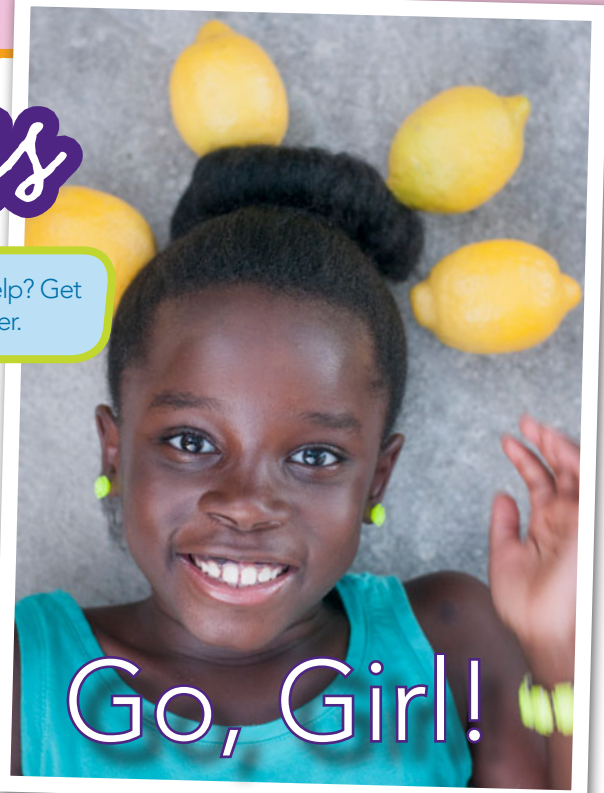
When Mikaila Ulmer was 4, she got stung by bees—twice in one week! But after her parents asked her to research bees so she wouldn't be afraid of them, those stings paid off. "I discovered that the bees were dying and one way to help them was to buy local honey," says Mikaila, now 9. Local honey was an answer to a problem, too. Mikaila was looking for unique ingredients to add to her recipe for the local Lemonade Day, which like other Lemonade days around the nation (see lemonadeday.org) helps kids learn how to start a business.

Along with honey, Mikaela added an inspiration from a 1940s cookbook her great-grandma Helen had sent her—healthy flaxseed—along with the bounty of mint from her garden. That tasty recipe was the bee-ginning of Bee Sweet Lemonade, which has grown into a family company headed by Mikaila. For the past five years, she has been at the fore every step of the way, running her stand at countless events, entering (and winning) competitions for kids, and talking with thousands of people about her delicious product.

Life's busy for this 4th grader—there's school (and homework) and practice with her Ballet Afrique dance troupe, too. But Mikaila is involved in every part of the business, from meeting with storeowners and the media to giving bee-saving workshops to overseeing Bee Sweet's bottling production. "I like doing all of it," she says, "but I especially like using money I earn to help the bees and meeting new people."

Mikaila's many successes—she's now in local Whole Foods Market stores along with a slew of other central Texas markets—are making life better for bees. "I donate 20% of my profits to organizations that help bees," she says, including the Texas Beekeepers Association and Heifer International, an international organization that gives beehives to poor women so they can sell honey and wax. Learn more at BeeSweetLemonade.com.

Girls can really help save the honeybees by buying local honey and supporting local beekeepers. You can plant bee-friendly gardens and flowers, and don't use pesticides that can kill bees. You can make seed bombs—just add water to a bowl of dirt and clay and compost and wildflower seeds until you can form balls. Let them dry, and then throw them in your garden or on roadsides so that more wildflowers can grow and provide nectar for bees. Donate to organizations that help bees, and whenever you learn something interesting about bees, tell people!
—Mikaila



NMG asked Mikaila to share some advice for girls who also might want to start a business that does good. Thanks, Mikaila!

- You should have courage, so you can speak to people and be interviewed. You'll need to talk to all kinds of kids and adults so you can promote your business.
- Make sure you have a unique product—more people will want something that will really pop out and be different.
- Be a social entrepreneur and donate some of your money. That way, you'll help solve a problem at the same time that you grow your business.
- You need perseverance so you can keep making your business bigger and stronger.
- The more passion you have for what you're doing, the easier it will be and the more fun you will have while you are doing it!



Photo (top right) thanks to Bret Brookshire