



**‘I was kind of confused. I started there because I wanted to continue school and I wanted to get some qualifications.’**

**Determined to continue her education: May Laya Godínez-Oliveros with her son, Lance. Picture: ANDREW GORRIE**

COLIN PATTERSON

**B**ECOMING pregnant is no excuse to stop learning, says May Laya Godínez-Oliveros.

In 2005, May Laya quit her seventh form year at Heretaunga College and moved to Paraparaumu. “My boyfriend forced me to move in with him. It was quite a nightmare.”

Within a few months, May Laya found she was pregnant. With the relationship with her boyfriend at an end, she gave up her job in a bakery and moved back home.

Becoming a young mother was not in her plans and May Laya was unsure what to do with her life.

Fortunately for May Laya, the Titiro Whakamua Hutt Valley Teen Parent Programme — which was attached to her former school — helped young parents, or intending parents, to continue their education.

Both her midwife and a step-sister — who was a past student — recommended the school.

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started there because I wanted to continue school and I wanted to get some qualifications.”

The birth of son, Lance, in January 2006 hardly interrupted May Laya’s determination to get ahead. When school started for the year a few weeks later, she was there with Lance.

“Studying wasn’t difficult because everyone was supporting me. I just wanted to do it.”

With Lance being looked after in the school’s childcare centre, by the end of 2006 May Laya had completed three level two national certificates in retailing, tourism and travel, and in busi-

ness administration and computing.

Last year, May Laya completed level one accounting and Spanish by correspondence.

“They were things I wanted to study as a hobby.”

Through Heretaunga College’s Gateway programme, she worked

one day a week doing accounting at Upper Hutt City Council.

“I really enjoyed it. It made me think of accounting as a career.”

The experience encouraged May Laya to apply to study for a diploma in accounting at WelTec’s Petone campus.

Once accepted, May Laya applied for a WelTec secondary school scholarship.

“I applied real early. It was a long process.”

But her perseverance brought rewards, with a letter telling her she had been successful. May Laya said the scholarship “pays a bit of my fees”.

If she finishes the two-year course, May Laya hoped to find a job in accounting. “It’s something I really enjoy doing.”

Though tertiary study had been “a bit stressful”, May Laya had no regrets about the choice she has made.

“It’s a big opportunity. It’s a step to a good future.”

She said some teenage parents give up on education too easily.

“If you are really keen, you can do it. Some of them are not that keen and they just give up.

## Juggling baby and education