**Tia Nazha / Grade 6 D**

**How do people start a business?**

**An inspirational story of a successful entrepreneur**

**Jan Koum: The Inspirational Story of the Founder of WhatsApp**

**Jan Koum was the co-founder of WhatsApp. He used to pick up food stamps for himself and his mother. Today, Koum’s net worth is $9.9 billion!**

**As a Ukrainian immigrant who moved to the United States, met extreme poverty, but still managed to build a billion-dollar company within five years. Despite his circumstances, Koum was a self-starter and quick learner who wasn’t afraid of hard work. Two years after immigrating to the U.S., Koum taught himself computer programming. He also received a hands-on education in cybersecurity by joining the elite hacking group.**

**Jan Koum worked on the security team at Ernst & Young. During this time, he met his future business partner, Brian Acton, while working on a project at Yahoo. The two immediately hit it off. Several months later, Koum applied for a job with Yahoo and ended up working there for nearly a decade.**

**As new technologies emerged such as Skype, Jan Koum began forming an idea of how to improve user experience. He was influenced by his own personal experiences. When he was a teenager, communication with his family was irregular because it was extremely expensive. He wanted to provide a solution for those in similar circumstances by creating an easy-to-use cross-platform messaging app that made phone calls and texts more accessible to friends and families. In early 2009, he consulted with his friend, Alex Fishman, who helped him hammer out his vision for a new app. Additionally, Fishman got him in touch with a Russian developer who could build the front-end of the messaging platform.**

**On February 24, Koum’s birthday, he met his soon-to-be WhatsApp co-founder, Acton. Then he shared his idea for the messaging service. The same day, the business was legally established as WhatsApp Inc.**

**WhatsApp continued to blow up as the team expanded to around 50 staff members. Now, with over 2 billion active users, WhatsApp continues to thrive worldwide.**