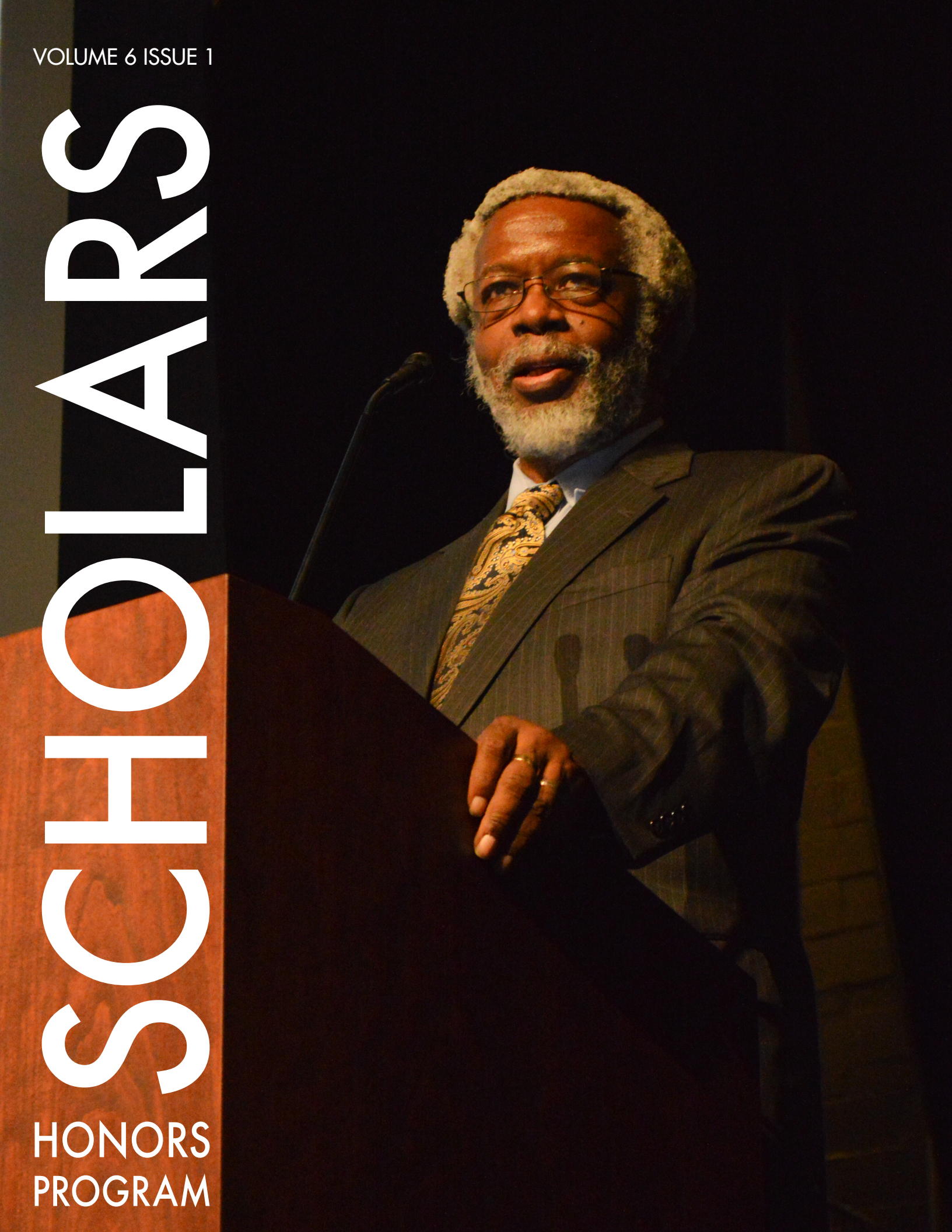


VOLUME 6 ISSUE 1

# SCHOLARS

HONORS  
PROGRAM





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CONFERENCE





Attending The 13th Annual CUNY BMI Conference

STEM Diversified

Christopher Navarrete

The City University of New York Black Male Initiative (CUNY BMI) is a citywide initiative that focuses on providing and encouraging leadership opportunities and educational success to men of color, especially African, African American/ Black, Caribbean, and Latino/Hispanic males. CUNY BMI aims to assist underrepresented students by increasing their enrollment and matriculation, increasing their retention, improving their overall grade point average, and increasing their graduation rate. It should be noted that CUNY BMI programs are available to all who are academically eligible, without regard to gender and race.

On October 5, 2018, CUNY BMI welcomed students to their 13th annual CUNY BMI conference titled, Diversifying the STEM field: Exposing and Promoting Pathways. It featured a morning keynote by former National Science Foundation Director Dr. Cora Marrett, an afternoon keynote by the Chancellor of Fayetteville State University Dr. James Anderson, and an evening keynote by distinguished Ford Professor of Mathematics at Brown University Dr. Sylvester Gates. The conference also included morning and afternoon panel discussions on the history of STEM and women in STEM among others. Overall, the conference encouraged participants to begin or continue a STEM career by discussing helpful resources and personal stories.

CUNY BMI's conference took place at City Tech's new Academic Complex building, located at 285 Jay Street. Upon entry, I was greeted with smiles from the staff and given a CUNY BMI bag with free merchandise and information about the event. It was the first time I entered the new building, so I was surprised by the simple yet modern entrance. The interior was mostly sleek white and very spacious, leaving little room for someone to be lost. Unfortunately, the building was packed with conference participants and the first of my conferences was about to start, so there was not much time for exploration.

I walked to the second floor for the first panel titled, Undergraduate STEM Success Testimonials. It focused on two successful former BMI STEM students who "shared their journeys, frustrations and triumphs" from City Tech and beyond. The first former student, Javier, is currently working towards his master's degree in mathematics at New York University. The second former student, Jasmin, is also looking to complete her master's degree, but at John Jay College of Criminal Justice for forensics science. Jasmin was first introduced to forensics science in a STEM program at her high school. She decided to focus on it during that summer because it appealed to her the most compared to other fields. Jasmin stated, "I wanted to use science to promote a safer society. My goal was to

become a ballistics expert, but my path has somewhat changed, and I am now more focused on the toxicology branch." Overall, Jasmin hopes to use her passion of science to give back to the community in any way possible. Conversely, Javier decided to pursue mathematics because he believed that numbers are a great tool to connect with people that did not speak the same language. Coming from a Spanish speaking country, the originally strong language barrier quickly weakened for him, and he was able to finally help his fellow students. Javier described math as the "language of all science... you can always branch out to chemistry, physics..."

They later discussed how working towards their master's degree in a STEM field has affected their lives. Jasmin stated that after graduating, she became more outspoken; she was originally very shy and did not speak too much, but was later able to make connections with numerous well-established individuals after participating in several conferences. She said, "It's good to go to grad school, you never know when that one introduction (with another student or professor) will take you years down the line..." She currently regularly reaches out to professors with PhDs.

Javier and Jasmin then both discussed the difficulties they faced, specifically with their thesis. They believed that the thesis tested them as students, "you learn more about yourself... how you organize your thoughts, how you organize your paperwork. You learn more about yourself as an individual and how to become a better student each and every day." Javier added to this by quoting a lesson his friends and mother taught him, "work hard now so you can relax in the future." Jasmin and Javier later finished attending the conference after answering several questions.

As the afternoon panel ended, I made my way to the auditorium for the evening keynote address with Dr. Sylvester Gates, where he discussed his life story. After Dr. Reginald

Blake introduced him, Gates began. He first explained how his father and grandfather both used mathematics in their daily lives, "Mathematics goes back at least two generations (in my family)." First, his grandfather was a sugarcane farmer who could neither read nor write. Regardless, he used arithmetic to help others buy and sell farming equipment. Most trusted his knowledge because he was acclaimed for his skill in mathematics. Gates' father, conversely, was a soldier who never graduated from high school. Despite this, he studied trigonometry and calculus because it was important to determine the angles of a canon shell. From this introduction, Gates wanted to show that mathematics could be used as a practical skill, and not something to torture students.

Afterwards, Gates explained how his interest in science first developed. At 4 years old, his mother took him to watch a science fiction movie titled Spaceways. It influenced him so much that Gates dreamt of becoming an astronaut and scientist. He comically said he tried to explain how rockets worked to his father after viewing the film. Although the movie had poor production value, he learned that "if you do this thing called science, you're going to have adventures in your life." Four years later, Gates' interest for rocketry was still strong. One day, his father brought him space travel books that gave his mind a "big bang." He realized that "the spots at night are not lightbulbs, they're places.... I begin to wonder how far away they are if they look so small." At just age 8, Gates wondered about how big the universe must be. Gates then ended his keynote by showing how proud he was of his daughter and son. They are both currently in the STEM field and have a strong passion for their respective majors.

The 13th Annual CUNY BMI Conference was a great experience that I believe motivated countless students to continue or pursue a career in STEM. The stories I heard at this event were inspirational and full of passion. I recommend all City Tech students to experience the next CUNY BMI conference if possible.



I view nurses as superheroes and role models; they inspire and motivate me to be on the front line advocating for and assessing the needs of my patients. I strive to be as amazing as the nurses I have met at Memorial Sloan.

# Showing Care & Compassion

Naomi Paul

“Mom, I got in” were the first words I told my mother when I found out I was hired for a position as a patient care coordinator at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center. I applied at Memorial Sloan because the cancer center means a lot to me. When my grandmother was diagnosed with ovarian cancer, the doctors and nurses saved her life. Witnessing my grandmother’s miraculous recovery at just 7 years old inspired me to pursue a career in nursing; I too, wanted to save the lives of patients. Looking back, I could never have anticipated how much providing patient care at Memorial Sloan would transform my life.

At the cancer center’s bone marrow transplant unit, I had the opportunity to work with patients for the first time. Despite my initial struggles, I quickly adapted through trial and error. I developed the wisdom, compassion, strength, and skill necessary to support my patients. I learned that it was important to become empathetic and not sympathetic; I had to be strong for my patients and always be there when they needed someone. For example, I helped a female patient reschedule her PET scan after she could not get anyone on

the phone for hours. I went directly to the office and had that appointment fixed as quickly as I could. The woman seemed grateful. She gave me a smile that touched my very core.

In addition to always being there for my patients, I made it an objective to connect with them at a personal level. I would ask them about their hobbies, preferences, and families. I remember one man in particular was not feeling well because he just had a procedure done. I knew it was his birthday, so I ordered a cake, a birthday card, and balloons for him. He cried because I not only acknowledged his birthday, but I chose to celebrate him. He told me how grateful he was and that he would never forget what I did. Unfortunately, this was the last time I saw him because he passed away a few days later. I still get chills to this day thinking about him. The man taught me a very valuable lesson: to never be afraid to show someone care and compassion. For the first time, I saw patients as more than another person who needed care. I saw them as individuals with unique qualities. I saw mothers, fathers, sons, and daughters with amazing stories to tell and a strong will to survive.

The nurses that I worked alongside with at the cancer center were incredible as well. They not only provided answers, support, and genuine care for our patients, but they also understood the battle they were going through. They knew that cancer is a war, and that it can be conquered with radiation, chemotherapy, and even human emotions. I feel blessed knowing that I was given the opportunity to work with and learn from such knowledgeable, skillful, and fearless nurses. I remember one time I walked into a patient’s room, and thanks to the nurses’ teachings, I recognized something was not right. I immediately contacted the nurses for help and later learned that the patient was having a chemo reaction. The nurses knew what to do and worked as quickly as possible. So many thoughts were going through my head as this was going on, but what really stood out to me was the fact that I helped save this patient’s life. Moments like this are why I view nurses as super heroes and role models. They inspire and motivate me to be on the front line advocating for and assessing the needs of my patients. I strive to be as amazing as the nurses I have met at Memorial Sloan.

Currently, I am pursuing a nursing degree after being on hiatus for several years. I have found returning to school to be one of the most character-defining moments of my life; I am facing many challenges including struggling to juggle my finances and responsibilities between family and school. My hardships are in large part due to my poor performance at Pennsylvania State University almost 10 years ago, where my academic journey began. At the time, I lacked focus and did not know what I wanted to accomplish in life. As a result, although I graduated with a degree in biobehavioral health, I accumulated a low GPA and lost confidence in myself. I decided to go after a career in nursing in 2016 because I remembered the great experience that I had at Memorial Sloan. Since then, I have been doing the best I can. With the training, passion, and motivation I gained at the cancer center, I earned a 3.7 GPA in my first semester.

I am also working part-time, participating in volunteer work at Doctors Without Border and joining medical mission trips abroad to gain hands on experience in the field; I have gone to Peru, Jamaica, and Haiti. In Peru, my first medical mission trip from 2009, my group and I observed and assisted medical clinics in low-income areas. I could not believe how much I took the United States’ medical system

for granted. The people of Peru faced numerous health care challenges including reusing medical equipment and waiting in extremely long lines just to be seen. After observing Peru’s medical clinics, one of my assignments was to teach women the importance of personal hygiene and reproductive health. I also assisted the doctors at their offices. I later traveled to Jamaica to work in Teen Challenge, a faith-based program that rehabilitates teens with life-controlling issues. At Teen Challenge, I helped with medical resources, physical labor, and education. The participants I helped reorient back into society were in the program for drug rehabilitation.

For several years, I did not know what I wanted to do with my life, and my grades were reflective of my confusion and nonchalant attitude. However, working at Memorial Sloan has changed me. It has given me the will of hope and opportunity. I have learned so many medical and life skills from both the nurses and patients, and I will never forget them. One patient at the cancer center told me, “Naomi, you can do anything you want to do in this life. I know that I will die soon. Do not let life pass you by. You are meant for greatness and success. Do not let anything stop you.” His words will forever resonate with me. He passed away five months later. I will do whatever it takes to ensure his wishes are granted. In the end, I have worked in many departments at Memorial Sloan, and each experience has taught me to become more empathetic and dedicated. I face many adversities, but gladly endure them all for the mission of helping patients.

I believe being in the Honors Scholars program will give me the tools and resources I need to be successful in the nursing program. I know this journey will not be easy, but I will work my hardest to excel. The great, Florence Nightingale, pioneer of modern medicine, once said, “I attribute my success to this—I never gave or took any excuse” (Selanders, 2012). I refuse to give up on my quest to being a compassionate and loving nurse to each patient I encounter. My goal, besides finishing my major, is to earn a master’s degree in public health, and become a pediatric nurse practitioner. I have a strong passion for both the medical field and health education. I plan to continue to remain focused and study diligently. I now know that nursing is what I am meant to do; I am confident that I will one day transform into a nurse that will make a difference in the life of my patients.

# Finding my Passion at Maxwell

Fyaad Nazim



Photo Credit: Maxwell Hotel



What is hospitality? It is not just the interactions between one another or the greetings that a person sends out; it is a generous welcoming service that workers provide to guests on a daily basis. Such service requires a tremendous amount of awareness and communication to understand a guest's needs and wants. During my summer internship at the Maxwell Hotel, I realized that hospitality must be learned through experience, not observation. In other words, to succeed in the field, you must be a people person. I became a Hospitality Management major because I always enjoyed the company of others and wanted to express my love for it. With the passion and drive that I brought, I knew I would excel and become a sales director, my dream career.

Although some of my friends and family were in the hospitality field when I changed my major, their presence did not inspire me to pursue it. The hotel workers did. As a child, I was fortunate to have the opportunity of visiting numerous hotels and resorts, and experiencing their best qualities. The warm welcoming feeling that I received at each hotel was especially memorable; it felt great to know that the workers would serve me with top-of-the-line respect and courtesy at every moment. From then on, I was inspired to join the hospitality field because I wanted others to experience the same joy and satisfaction that I felt. This experience alone made me realize that you can make someone's trip unforgettable by treating them well and making them feel at home.

Years after being inspired to join the hospitality field, I signed up for a summer internship with the Maxwell Hotel, a Starwood property managed by Highgate, a hotel management group. Although I was there for only two and a half months, I can say without any doubt that it was one of the greatest experiences of my life; I accomplished more than I ever could have. For example, I learned how to use the Lightspeed/Galaxy operating system, check people in, upgrade rooms, settle accounts, post adjustments, add comments, and countless other tasks. I was also able to perform jobs such as opening and setting up a restaurant, pre-shifting teams to get them going in the morning, becoming a hostess, and assisting bus attendants. Despite the fact

that I worked 10 to 12 hour shifts almost every day, I always made an effort to be the first to arrive at 5 AM and give each assignment all I had. I was excited and passionate to get all suited up to work in that glamorous, well-polished hotel.

While working at the Maxwell Hotel, I built a strong bond with my coworkers and guests by being trustworthy and loyal. I accomplished this by never letting anyone down and getting back to them as soon as possible. For example, when a manager needed something done, I made sure to complete it on time. If a guest had an issue or question, I was always there to guide them. Not all guests were the nicest or easiest to work with, but I learned how to manage. After all, the way you manage tough situations reflect your true colors. Because of my experience at the Maxwell Hotel, I improved my communication skills, became a more professional person, and networked with the other workers.

I learned a variety of skills in the hospitality major as well. Courses such as culinary, baking, dining room and cost control helped me understand the importance of one's attitude and appearance. In order to satisfy your customers, you must manage situations with the upmost of care, have proper work ethic, and be as professional, positive, and accommodating as possible. In addition, the courses showed me the proper setting of a restaurant, and provided me with a better understanding of food inventory. Overall, the courses in the major provided an excellent foundation and prepared me for the future as they helped me get through the toughest days at the Maxwell Hotel.

The Maxwell Hotel was not just work; it was like a second home to me. It was a place where I had fun, learned new things and discovered that I am a perfect fit for the hospitality field. In order to pursue my career as a sales director, I will continue to learn, grow, and gain as much experience as possible. My advice to anyone reading this is to go out and do whatever it is you are passionate about. The possibilities are endless, and the only person stopping you from doing what you want to do, is you. Time is limited, so whatever you do, make sure you become the best because you will not be the only one competing for that spot.



# From Injured to Inspired

## Propelling Toward Medicine

Christopher Magaloire

My name is Christopher Magloire. I graduated from City Tech in 2015 with a bachelor's degree in nursing and I am currently enrolled at City Tech as a liberal arts and sciences "pre-med" student. After experiencing a life-changing accident, I discovered my passion for medicine and decided to become a pain management specialist. I applied to the Honors Scholars Program because I am interested in becoming more involved in medicinal research and hope to one day become an active member of the research community.

In December of 2015, I was in a tragic car accident that resulted in multiple injuries, including a torn meniscus and several herniated discs in my neck and back. I needed surgery, but decided against it in favor of

autologous stem cell injections and platelets, a less traumatic and less scarring alternative. Athletes with similar injuries commonly use this procedure to regrow damaged cartilage and decrease inflammation. Although most participants of this method reported successful outcomes, I was still nervous about what the future would hold for me.

After taking part in the procedure, I found the stem cell injections significantly improved my level of functioning, pain, and quality of life. I was finally able to accomplish previously impossible tasks with ease. As a result, I quickly began to see the importance of medicine and the amazing effects it could have on others. I decided I wanted people to experience the same life-changing effect medicine



Scientissimum Logo, <https://www.scientissimum.com>

has had on me, so I joined the medical field as a registered nurse (RN) to engage in research on the efficacy of pain management techniques. I later returned to school to pursue a career in nursing.

Working full time as an RN and returning as a student has been a challenging experience because I have not been in school for two years. My time management skills, study habits and mental fortitude are currently all being tested by my difficult 12-hour work shifts and demanding coursework such as organic chemistry and physics. Fortunately, courses that I took years ago such as chemistry, anatomy and physiology, pathophysiology, and advanced nursing have all prepared me for such hardships because they pushed my skills and abilities to the limit. In addition, my professors, including Prof. Hellman of the English department, Prof. Alcendor of the Biology department, and Prof. Hernandez of the Nursing department, continue to inspire me to push through the hardest of times. I remember how when I doubted myself, lacked focus, motivation, and most importantly self-belief, they believed in me. With their guidance, I was able to make the Dean's list for several semesters and maintain an exceptional GPA. Because of my previous courses and professors, I am now more mature, determined, and optimistic about where I am headed on my journey in life.

Throughout these past couple of years as an RN, I have made strides to benefit the medical community. For example, I published a research paper regarding specialized physician shortage in rural communities in the IJSRP, an international journal for scientific research. I have also assisted in creating a non-profit organization named Scientissimum, an internationally connected internet group comprised of medical students, pre-medical students, and doctors. Scientissimum's objective



BrainBook Logo, <http://www.realbrainbook.co.uk>

is to help economically disadvantaged and underserved communities through education, volunteering, and mentoring. We also hope to become a reputable non-profit organization with the means and resources to contribute to the medical field. I currently function as Scientissimum's board executive advisor, which entails bringing in ideas to the organization and deciding the best method to implement strategies that reach as many audiences as possible. Despite our small numbers, we have made amazing progress, including partnering with the Treat the Stroke Foundation, Neurodocs, Brainbook, and most recently, The Global Neurosurgery Foundation.

While working for Scientissimum, I learned that we have the power to affect people's lives in more ways than we realize. Recently, we received a direct message from one of our followers on Instagram; he explained that because of our educational content, he is now interested in becoming a neurosurgeon. I was shocked and happy by how the group I helped create was able to directly affect a person in such a significant way. I use this example as motivation to continue educating and inspiring as many people as possible on the possibilities of medicine and the positive influence it can have.

Although the car accident had initially set me back in life, it later propelled me towards medicine, my calling. In joining The Honors Scholars Program, I plan to engage in workshops, seminars, and research to prepare me in becoming a better advocate for healthcare. I also plan to be a benefit to the program by contributing my experiences, ideas, work ethic, and passion. In the end, I learned and believe that there is no such thing as not being smart enough to achieve one's aspirations. As long as one works hard and is determined and consistent, he or she can reach their goals.



# Using the Law to Fight for What is Right

Tiffany Sooden

I began my educational journey in the Borough of Manhattan Community College (BMCC), where I received my associate's degree in arts in criminal justice. I originally wanted to become a police officer and later a detective for New York City. However, I found myself becoming more interested in law after taking several amazing law-based courses at BMCC. I realized that my main goal in life is to be able to say "I helped this person fight for what is right."

I am now pursuing a career as a lawyer by majoring in law and paralegal studies with a focus in immigration law and family law. Both are important to me because of my experiences during my childhood. Regarding family law, I have seen countless innocent children living in dangerous homes because they were placed in the wrong hands. I always wished I had the power to help them. I plan to use my abilities as a lawyer to get these children a proper home, family, and education.

On the other hand, immigration law is important to me because both of my parents are immigrants who migrated to the United States from Trinidad and Tobago. They wanted to give my sister and me a better life. Immigrants are the foundation

of this country, and the diversity we have due to immigration is mind-blowing. My goal is to help this group of people become citizens of this country. They deserve the same rights as everyone else.

I strongly believe that studying and working in the law and paralegal studies field is for people who have a clear devotion for helping others. I am eager to become more involved in this field of study because it is my greatest passion. Whether I become an immigration attorney, or a lawyer working pro-bono to help those who cannot afford an attorney due to life's circumstances, I will be content with myself in life knowing that I was able to help someone in need.

# Striving to Succeed

## From a Nepalese Woman's Perspective

Jesina Singh Dangol

I am a 23 year old woman who was born and raised in a small town in Nepal. As a girl, I had a difficult childhood because Nepal is a third world country full of traditional beliefs. For example, there is a saying that when a boy is born, he is born in wealth, but when a girl is born, she is born to do household work. Growing up, I went to school and was always forced to do chores because my parents were both uneducated and stuck in this old mentality. Despite the fact that this mindset held me back, I was able to receive my high school diploma in Nepal.

Years later, my father had the chance to come to the United States, and I was fortunate enough to come with him. Once I was here, I quickly saw how different the United States was compared to Nepal. It felt like a land of dreams and opportunities. People had the freedom to choose which career to pursue. I took advantage of this and decided to further my education by first enrolling at LaGuardia Community College, then City Tech.

I was very active when I arrived to the United States. Besides going to college and working part time jobs, I volunteered at animal shelters and was part of the Nepalese Association Group and

Student Government when I studied at LaGuardia. While serving in Student Government at LaGuardia, I was mostly tasked with raising awareness for the program and creating meetings for team members. I feel very fortunate to have received these opportunities because I improved my leadership and communication skills greatly. I believe that these experiences will help me achieve my goals by making me a more professional person.

Currently, I am majoring in computer information systems. I have been working hard to finish my education to prove to myself and others that every woman can make a difference in our society; they can perform and be just as successful as men. In addition, I would like to be the first in my family to graduate from college because I want to make them proud.

Unfortunately, my family's economic situation is troubling. I am working multiple part time jobs to support them and my education. Regardless, I plan to fulfill my dreams of being successful in the computer information systems field, and make a difference in my family's life. I will also work towards women empowerment and dedicate my life towards helping those in need.

