

## Celebrating Our Community

### Edly Destine, '14: How Sweet It Is to Become a Dentist



Second-year dental student Edly Destine has an ironically sweet past. He once worked as a quality-control sugar chemist at the Domino Sugar refinery in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. He said he never seriously considered the humor in this until he completed Dr. Mark Wolff's cariology course recently at NYUCD.

"I thought about dentistry after majoring in chemistry at Bethel University, in Tennessee, where I went to college on a soccer scholarship. But, it was hard to think about affording dental school since my wife and I were settling down with our first child."

It's been six years since Edly worked for Domino Sugar. Afterward, he worked through the Archdiocese of New York in Harlem, teaching math and science to high school and middle school students. While he loved teaching, he still harbored dreams of becoming a dentist. The doors of opportunity opened when his parents relocated to the United States from Haiti several years ago, and moved within a block of Edly's Harlem apartment.

"Since this is a full-time program, I became a lot more comfortable knowing my parents could help out with the kids," says Edly. "It was the perfect time to jump in and finally do this."

Edly and his wife, who is also of Haitian descent, have two children, ages 12 and 4. While his parents are recent immigrants, Edly, 33, came to the United States when he was 12 years old and was raised, along with his two younger siblings, by his grandparents.

"My whole goal is to support my family as a dentist and then to help others. I still have family in Haiti and you can only imagine what hell it's like there now. To be able to go down there someday as a healthcare professional is very important to me."

With all his family responsibilities, course work alone would be enough to fill Edly's plate. However, his commitment to help other underrepresented students has led him to become very active in advocacy work on campus. Currently, Edly serves as Vice President of the NYUCD chapter of the Student National Dental Association (SNDA), which focuses on representing underserved populations.

"After I take my boards, I plan to go down to the Maryland shore area, where a lot of Haitians have relocated since the earthquake," says Edly. "I want to help get healthcare screenings going down there."

Said Ms. Madiha Bhatti, Assistant Director of Student Affairs and Diversity, "The fact that he has so much going on and he still wants to give back so much- really, when does he sleep?"

**-Stephanie Susnjara**

