

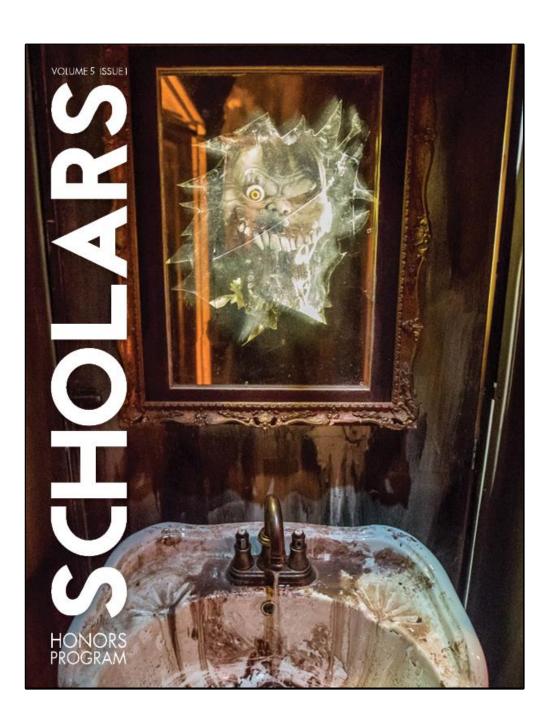
# **Chronicling the Achievements and Activities of** Honors Scholars at City Tech

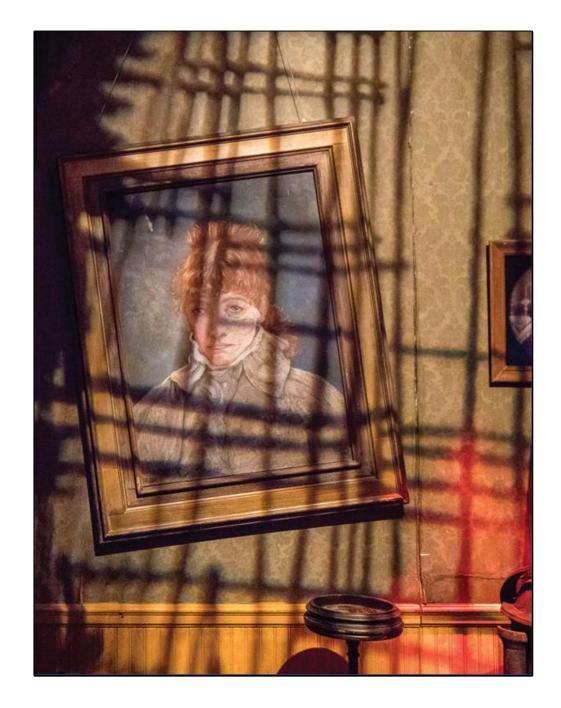
Savannah Blodgett and Cherishe Cumma Faculty Mentor: Dr. Reneta D. Lansiquot

# Abstract

Scholars, the Honors Scholars Program newsletter articles, student achievements, contains and experiences as well as information on program activities. A student-driven publication, volume 5, issue 1 continues to showcase our skills serving as photographers, graphic artists, technical writers, and reporters. Responsibilities crucial to this major interdisciplinary project include going to scholarly presentations, attending workshops, conducting interviews, creating layouts, editing texts, taking photos, meeting deadlines, and integrating feedback.

# Current Issue









# Finding Purpose throug **Personal Hardship**

Malika Ikramova

My name is Malika, and I am currently a junior at City Tech. At the age of nineteen, I never thought I would embark on this journey of fighting for my life. During the summer of 2016, I started to develop abdominal pain around the upper left corner of my stomach, coinciding with gas, bloating, and frequent belching. However, since the pain and other symptoms were not very serious, I did not pay attention to the warning signs and focused on my schoolwork. Near the end of my semester, my symptoms started to become more serious. I noticed that I began to have blood in my stool, high fevers, fatigue and sharp pain in my stomach.

My symptoms were starting to get worse, and it was at this point that I realized something serious was happening to me. Doctors and nurses did everything that they could possibly do to figure out why I was experiencing these symptoms. They performed various medical exams like MRI, CT-Scan, Ultrasound, and GI-Endoscopy with hopes of discovering the reason for my discomfort. It was around the end of December 2016 that I was told there was a tumor in my stomach, and surgery must be performed immediately. The specific tumor that the doctors discovered is called Gastrointestinal Stromal Tumor (GIST), which usually occurs in people older than 50, which is why my case was so rare. Laparoscopic surgery was performed before 2017, and luckily the tumor was not cancerous.

was so happy with the news that not only was the mor benign, but also that I would recover quickly, and be able to continue my spring 2017 semester. I took the month of January off so that I could gain back my strength, and rest as much as necessary to get ready for the new semester. It was of course not an easy decision for my family to let me go back to school after what I had gone through. However, I was very persistent with my decision, thinking that going back to school would keep me distracted from negative thoughts. So, after getting a sufficient amount of rest, I returned to school thinking that I could handle the semester, but I was wrong. I was very exhausted on my first day of school and was very tired when I got home. It scared me how drained I was feeling, but I refused to give up. Thanks to the support and kindness of my mentors, professors, and friends in college, I was able to attend classes three times a week. In addition to my classes, I also had an opportunity to continue working on a research project with my mentor, which kept me busy enough not to think of the past, and nstead focus on the future. Unbelievably, in the midst of all that was happening to me, being able to go to school helped me to feel normal and happy again.

Three months had passed and I was not showing any signs that I would fully recover. I was losing weight rapidly, and it was difficult for me to consume or digest food. My stomach was also bloated and gassy whenever I tried to eat. My gastroenterologist, and other doctors decided to conduct more medical exams, including a Gastric Emptying Study, Video Capsule Endoscopy, Colonoscopy, and GI upper Endoscopy so they could narrow down the reasons for these new complications I was experiencing. However, all the test results came back fine, which was suspicious to me. Around the end of May 2017. we went to a specialist who had more experience with this type of tumor, for a second opinion. Once again, I was subjected to examinations and tests to find out what was the real cause of my symptoms. This time

I was informed that there was an infection found in the small intestines of my stomach, which required immediate surgery. Hearing this shocking news once again was very hard to cope with, and I struggled a lot mentally and emotionally. However, everything went well, and the surgery was successful. Having put my faith in God and knowing that everything would be fine, I started my six weeks of treatments, where I was under observation and was required to consume 1,500 calories per day. These were very challenging times for me, but I must say that it saved my life. My health has improved a lot ever since, and I am happy and able to eat and digest well. However, knowing the fact that the tumor might come back, and there might be a high probability of having stomach cancer in the future, I decided not to look back-to "keep moving forward!"

I am very thankful for my supportive family, my mentors, professors and all the friends who were there for me throughout this journey of fighting for my life. I could not have stayed strong throughout my sickness without their support. During the previous semesters that I was ill, I was working towards my Bachelor's degree in hospitality management. Upon degree completion, I planned to become a pastry chef and turn my passion for baking into a profession. However, my recent experiences in life have taught me that all the unexpected challenges are the opportunities for us to learn and grow. After everything that I have been through, my goal for the future is to become a nutritionist/registered lietitian. These serious health concerns required me to seek a new study focus; therefore, I decided to continue my education in studies of dietary needs and nutrition, so that one day I could help individuals to make better choices about their nutritional health. In doing so, I will be able to help others with their dietary needs, while also promoting a healthy lifestyle.

# Decisions

Luke Domond

#### so that you have a better life than this. Education will be your way out." Growing up in a working-class

trouble pushed me harder to seek

success in life. I learned from my

sister's mistake, and I used that

pursuit of this new-found interest,

psychology was a field that I really

everything in this world because it is

the study of behavior. Each person

person behaves, thinks, and functions

As I kept on learning psychology

at the library, I was approached by

in understanding life.

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psychology has a connection with

wanted to pursue. I believed that with his race.

like hers.

family, my parents, who immigrated to the United States from Portau-Prince, Haiti, instilled in my two older brothers that night, but brothers and me a commitment to I had trouble sleeping because of the winter air filling the unheated education and the mindset to take apartment. Just as I was on the edge advantage of opportunities. Hence, my determination to succeed was of falling asleep, I was awakened by two cockroaches climbing up my born. As an underprivileged family, legs and several others crawling in we could not afford certain amenities I have lived in approximately seven my bed and on the floor. I shot up, that were readily accessible to homes, one in Port-au-Prince, Haiti immediately calling my mother at children with means. This led my

and another in the cramped basement work to tell her that I could not live eldest sister to commit larceny to of a house in Brooklyn, New York. there. Weeping, I continually asked obtain those items. She went into However, the move to East Elmhurst, why we had to move so often. That juvenile detention because of her Queens when I was seven had the night, beyond witnessing the stark crime. Upon hearing this, I was greatest impact on me. On my first reality of my living situation, I heard determined to not make the same night there, my mother and father the sorrow, strength, and compassion mistakes as her, and I worked to left for their regular night shifts in an in my mother's voice. She told me, obtain those same amenities, but elderly care center and as a taxi driver, "This is all that we can afford; I am the right way. Seeing the adversities respectively. I went to sleep with my doing my best. Just focus on school my sister faced after she got into SCHOLARS

to computer engineering may seem drastic, but I do not see it that way.

In retrospect, I have learned that the quality of life is based on the decisions we make and how these her offer. Upon acceptance in decisions help to push us to our goals. this program, I gained a deeper Working as a computer engineer is understanding of the field and the all about making decisions, about way psychology is used in the real connecting wires and circuits to world. In the years that followed, I reach a goal so that the computer decided to change my major from functions at its maximum capacity. psychology to computer engineering Engineering, much like psychology, because of my high-school teacher, observes how different aspects of Mr. Chester. During my years in high life work, so that the best outcome knowledge to keep me on the right school, Mr. Chester had a major results. I have used my experiences, track. My sister's detention motivated impact on my life. He encouraged and the haunting memories of my me to pursue my dreams so that I me to do my best, while also playing sister being in detention, to push would never end up in a situation major roles in my life such as being me towards the best outcome for my mentor, my physics teacher, my my personal/academic life. I am robotics teacher, and my support determined to pursue a higher Witnessing my sister's encounter with system. He believed in my ability to education, as well as getting a job the juvenile justice system sparked excel in any subject I put my mind in computer engineering because my interest in psychology. In my to, and he also wanted me to prove my mother's advice that "education other students wrong, and to show will be your way out" has stayed with I went to the nearest library. After them that a young, black male can me. In light of this, I have earned a doing my research, I realized that be successful regardless of the 3.6 GPA, and I have interned at Con negative stereotypes associated Edison so that it will be easier for me to get a job there after I graduate. While I reflect on the circumstances Currently, I am a student at New that have led me this far, I am grateful York City College of Technology, and more fortunate than most to have has his or her own unique behavioral majoring in computer engineering learned the value of hard work and traits, and I feel that knowing why a because my goal is to work as an engineer at Con Edison. This change the results of cheating. As a black, in a certain way plays a major role of major occurred after passing my male immigrant, I understand the physics and robotics classes in high struggles of growing up not having school. With the help of Mr. Chester, everything I need or want, and I am I narrowed down my real interests dedicated to helping those who are and realized that my passion for struggling so that they do not make a librarian who insisted I join an computer engineering outweighed my the same mistakes as my eldest sister afterschool program that included a passion for psychology. I know that and that they can generate the best psychology class. I gladly accepted my change of major from psychology outcomes in their lives.

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