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### Journey to the Goal

I emigrated from Haiti in the early 1990s. I was brought here by my family to obtain opportunities that would lead to a better life. Like most immigrants, the dream is to come to America, get a well-paying job, buy a house, and support our families so that they will have a better life than we did growing up. What no one mentions to you until you get here, is how difficult it is to achieve those goals. As a youth coming to America, experiencing a culture and language that was quite different from what I used to, it took some time to get accustomed to. I can honestly say that I was naïve about the amount of trust I put in others. It was not until I was robbed a couple of times and jumping from job to job that I knew I had to change how I interacted with people in the city.

When I initially came to New York, I had recently started a career as a laboratory technician. When I got here, I thought that I would be surrounded by tubes and vials filled with specimen samples I collected to use as part of the research I was helping with. However, that was not what I ended up doing. Instead, I was employed in a factory making Chia Pets. Due to the differences in the educational system, I was informed that I could not use the degree I earned in Haiti to get a job in the same field without redoing the courses again in America. This took its toll on me as I now had to figure out if I wanted to continue as a laboratory technician or try something else. It was at this point that after some careful consideration I decided to begin the

journey to becoming a nurse. I decided to pursue nursing because growing up I was responsible for assisting the elderly in my family and community with various tasks. My history of helping others and desire to make a difference in the lives of the people around me furthered my desire to be a nurse. My love of science played a big part also. While the journey is far from over, here is what led me to my current position.

It was after having my two daughters that I decided to go to college to get my nursing degree. I enrolled at Medgar Evers College and that is where my struggles began. The first problem that I had was the language barrier. Growing up I spoke French in school and Haitian Kreyol at home. Coming to America and learning English was difficult, but with the support of my family I was able to do it. However, even though I could read, write, and speak in English now, I had another problem. The new issue was applying what I learned to the standards of higher education. After many remedial classes and issues with the college's staff related to advisement and the progress towards getting my degree, I had enough.

With things in school not going in the right direction, I decided to put my education on hold to continue caring for the small children I had at home. It was at this point that I learned that at times it is a bit impossible to get everything that you need. Not wanting to give up, I tried something else. I was already working as a Home Health Aide, so I enrolled in a Medical Assistant program. During this time, I learned that I wanted to be more involved with the care of my patients. From there I went on to become a Certified Nursing Assistant and then a Licensed Practical Nurse. I did this not only for my family but also to prove to myself that I can say that I succeeded in what I put my mind to. We all know children are a priority in parents' lives. We brought them into this world and now must take care of them to the fullness of our ability. Like they say, "children do not ask to be born." It is upon to the parent to do the necessary with help of our almighty God.

However, it was seeing my oldest child graduate school with not only a bachelor's in Human Biology, but also a bachelor's in Nursing, that I stopped to ask myself, "what are you doing with your life?" After obtaining the Licensed Practical Nurse certification more than 10 years ago, I have not done what I could to become a Registered Nurse. Since becoming licensed, I have applied to various nursing programs, but anytime something unexpected happened I put off the process and continued with my daily life as normal. But seeing my daughter face challenges on the road to getting her degree gave me the urge I needed to get my own. I was a little scared of going back to school at my age, but the number of times I have seen people older than me graduate from high school or college on the news. I know my age will not stop me. I must always believe it is never too late to try. Being a nurse is my dream and I will achieve it.

One evening after work, I had a discussion with my husband about returning to school. I asked him, "what do you think about me going back to school?" He replied, "it's about time." That filled me with relief knowing that I had his support. He went on to say, "you know the girls will help you out, don't worry so much." After hearing that, I went to my eldest and asked her to help me with finding a school and the application process. Which brings me to where I am now. Currently enrolled in college, working during the day, and attending classes in the evening. Now if I have my things my way, I will be in the nursing program at City Tech in the Fall of 2023 and complete the program so that in the next three to four years to have my degree in Nursing like I always wanted. It is a process, but I can do it. If I just work hard, the doors to my future will open. Knowing that I will be a nurse, doing what I can to help others with my years of experience is all that I could ever want.