Five students in the School of Nursing Baccalaureate program provided medical assistance and health education in Fonfrede, Haiti from February 17–24.

The school’s five students worked and lived with members of the Fonfrede community, a remote, rural area in the South of Haiti with a population of roughly 20,000 people. Severely impacted by the catastrophic earthquake in 2010, residents face extreme poverty in an economy where healthcare is expensive and largely inaccessible, leaving many residents susceptible to malnutrition, malaria, tuberculosis, cholera, and more.

Monroe’s “Culturally Competent Care in Community Health” course within the Baccalaureate Nursing program provides students with diverse clinical experiences outside of the hospital setting. Having previously focused on the Bronx community, this is the first year that the clinical experience took place outside of the U.S. The school has partnered with CapraCare, a nonprofit organization whose mission is to develop sustainable community health programs for children and their families in Fonfrede, Haiti.

Monroe students worked at the CapraCare clinic and made home visits in the community to provide wound care, physical assessments, and procedures such as blood pressure, weight and height checks, and diabetes and vision screenings. They also gave presentations – translated into Creole, Haiti’s native language – designed to teach individuals in the local community about important issues, such as breast self-examination, STDs and nutrition, in addition to hygiene and HIV/AIDS.

The nursing program provides students with a variety of real-world clinical experiences that are integral to their development, education and understanding of the nursing profession. In the past, we have directed our efforts toward initiatives within the Bronx community, but this year, with the help of CapraCare, we had the opportunity to lend our support to a Haitian community in great need of health and medical assistance. Students are well-equipped to put their knowledge and skills to use, and undoubtedly received a great amount of fulfillment and satisfaction from helping make a difference in the lives of others.

Students were accompanied by Chair of the School of Nursing, Deborah Little, and Professor Laura Penalo. Also on the trip was a Manhattan-based pediatrician, and a Professor with students at CUNY’s graduate Public Health Program. This was truly a cooperative venture.

Prior to the trip, the Monroe College community of faculty and students, including a number of student clubs, contributed supplies and money to help support this medical mission.
Career Services Networking Event

Career Services, the School of Allied Health, and the School of Nursing sponsored the second speed networking event called “Meet Your Match”, geared towards Allied Health and Nursing majors. Students and alumni first had the opportunity to learn about the art of networking and received some great coaching from a Career Advisor. They learned about how to prepare an “elevator speech” (a brief statement that will gain the attention of someone you meet), the necessary elements of a good elevator speech, and some extra tips on how to make a positive impression.

Participants had a chance to practice their speeches with each other and then with the employers who were present. A variety of allied health facilities were represented. Students had a chance to sell themselves every seven minutes with a different employer and then they could sit with whomever they liked. Employers and students were still engaged in conversations at 8:00 p.m. It was a great event.

Honors for Dr. Basil Wilson

Dr. Basil Wilson was honored at the 25th Anniversary Malcolm/King Scholarship Breakfast at John Jay College. Professor Wilson was recognized for being one of ten founders of the event.

The Malcolm/King breakfast was conceived by African American faculty and administrators in 1990. Through it, John Jay College affirms its community, renews its spirit, and remembers those who blazed the trail. Also recognized and honored are the many forms of struggle that have taken place in the battle for equity and justice.

Dr. Wilson began his academic career at John Jay College in the African American Studies Department where he taught from 1974 to 1990. From 1990 to 2006, he held the position of Provost and Senior Vice President of Academic Affairs. He was then appointed Professor in Residence at the CUNY Graduate Center where he taught in the Department of Sociology from 2006 until his retirement in 2008. At that time he was appointed Dean of the Graduate MS Program in Criminal Justice at Monroe College and where, in 2013, he was appointed Executive Director of the King Research Institute at Monroe College. Dr. Wilson has authored several studies and publications.

Present at the event were many administrators and academic leaders of Monroe College who echoed the words of praise directed at Dr. Wilson.

Lunch and Learn

On February 19, 25 members of the IT Students’ Association (ITSA) participated in a Lunch and Learn with an IT Leader program – an inspiring talk from Joyce James, a Global Delivery Project Executive at International Business Machines (IBM) Global Technology Services.

Before the event, Joyce explained that she always wants to give something back to Monroe College – a place where she got her start 30 years ago, earning her associate degree as an IT Major.

“I was lucky that IBM had a relationship with Monroe and they came on campus to recruit,” she said. “They hired me as a data entry clerk and I spent all my extra time – lunch hours and after my shift – in the computer room, learning how things were done and helping out where I could. When a position opened up as a computer operator, I was the natural choice because they knew I could already do the job. I didn’t get paid for those hours – my payment was in education”.

Joyce explained to the students what it takes to land a job and then keep it. “You have to constantly update your skill set”, she told the students. “A company like IBM expects you to stay current in everything related to IT”.

“I like to change positions every 18 months”, she continued, “I’m always learning new things”. Through IBM, Joyce has developed systems for companies like JP Morgan Chase and Panasonic, and currently is working for Philips Healthcare where she and her team have a 5-year contract to manage all of Philips’ IT needs.

Joyce returned to Monroe in 2000 to get her BS in Information Technology and again in 2012 to get her MBA in Business Administration.

“My job is not a nine to five job”, she told the students. “No IT job is. If you think you’re going to be sitting at your desk all day, that’s not going to happen. I have a passion for IT so it never seems like I’m working. If something goes wrong, I have eight hours to fix it otherwise IBM has to start paying money back to the client. I only deal with contracts that are over one million dollars so if I mess up, IBM loses a lot of money. My team knows that and we work hard to make sure we do things right. I must be doing something right because I’ve lasted at IBM for 30 years”.

While the ITSA club students still need to complete a lot of coursework before they head out into the job market, the advice they received should propel them into successful careers.

“Find out what you’re passionate about”, Joyce told them, “and then do everything you can to make it happen. Set goals for yourself and then review those goals to see if you’ve reached them. If you haven’t, change what you do. Those are the ingredients for being successful.”
Why Monroe College Stands Apart from Other Colleges

Black Star News conducted Q&A’s with leaders of local area colleges and universities. The following is an excerpt from the session with Marc Jerome, Executive Vice President, Monroe College.

What sets Monroe apart from other colleges and universities in the New York region?

Monroe College is a national leader in urban and international education. Since 1933, our success has been predicated on developing a learning platform that supports our students’ success. What sets Monroe above other local institutions is as much how we teach [not just what we teach].

Our student-centric higher education approach prioritizes hands-on academic experiences, practical and relevant academic programs, flexible learning schedules, small class size, and committed and engaged faculty to ensure that students are well positioned for career success upon graduation.

We awarded more undergraduate degrees to black and Hispanic students than any other college in New York State in 2010, and have remained among the top three institutions to do so year after year. In a recent annual study by Diverse: Issues in Higher Education magazine, virtually all of Monroe’s associate degree programs, and two of its bachelor’s degree programs, ranked among the Top 10 in the nation for graduating minority students.

Monroe works diligently to ensure that students have the resources and assistance they need to remain engaged and on track with their education. We reach out and work with the students to identify their challenges, discuss their solutions, and find a workable option to keep them in the classroom.

We adhere to a 3-semester schedule, enabling students to complete their studies and ultimately receive their diplomas sooner. Our tuition and fees are among the lowest of any private college in NYS, as recognized by U.S. News & World Report in 2013.

Please give a brief history of the school — how it’s grown in terms of student body and campuses and the time frame.

Monroe College was founded in 1933 under the guidance of teacher Mildred King on Boston Post Road. It began as the Monroe School of Business, consisting of four small classrooms and seven students. In 1936, Harry Jerome joined the school, bringing with him a commitment to education. Before long, the seven initial students became 145. Tuition was just $5 for an evening session and $10 for a week.

By the end of World War II, Monroe found itself adapting to a new audience, including veterans and women who needed the skills to begin new jobs and find their place in a post-war society.

By 1966, the first computer arrived, prefacing an increase in the school’s size and the 1967 opening of the Fordham Campus. The original campus closed in 1977 and, a year later, Stephen Jerome became president of the college.

In 1983, Monroe celebrated its 50th anniversary with the opening of a branch campus in New Rochelle. This campus became an educational destination for county residents along with those from more than 20 states and an increasing number of international students.

Monroe is recognized as a national leader in urban and international education, providing a focused, career-oriented, quality education to students.

Which companies or agencies have been the best in terms of hiring Monroe graduates?

The following have been the top employers of Monroe College graduates in the past four years: JP Morgan Chase; Montefiore Medical Center; New York City Board of Education; New York City Police Department, NYPD; Mount Sinai Medical Center; New York Presbyterian Hospital; Open Door Family Medical Centers, Inc.; New York City Department of Corrections; and Bronx Lebanon Hospital Center.

Any other relevant information?

In 2011, Monroe College implemented a financial literacy program, DREAM — Debt Reduction, Education, Assessment & Management, which encompasses all areas of money management, career development and general life skills. The program provides students with in-class financial literacy sessions, online tools and peer assistance in managing student loans and finances in general. It has received national recognition for “Excellence in Debt Management” from USA Funds, a company that advocates for underprivileged students.

In 2014, Monroe College was ranked the number one regional university for exceeding predicted graduation rates, ranked as having one of the best online bachelor’s degree programs in the nation and was recognized as having one of the best online bachelor’s degree programs for veterans by U.S. News & World Report.

Washington Monthly magazine ranked Monroe College among the top 100 Master’s Universities in the nation.

Monroe College’s athletics program boasts an impressive record in terms of championships and recruitment. Its NJCAA athletic program serves as a stepping-stone for athletes, enabling them to improve their academic credentials, build up their athletic résumé, and increase their recruitment appeal to NCAA Division 1 schools.

This past season, Monroe’s women soccer team won the NJCAA Championship and the men were runner-ups. Earlier this month, two of Monroe’s football players signed with Oklahoma and Idaho, both of which have significant football programs.

The NSCAA, National Soccer Coaches Association of America, last month named Monroe coach Jon Garbar as Coach of the Year and Monroe student Lorina White as Player of the Year.
Elmhurst Celebrates Black History Month

Elmhurst Hospital Center celebrated Black History Month with the theme *The Future of Tomorrow*, and invited Monroe College’s Director of Undergraduate Admissions from the Bronx Campus, Dr. Cecil Wright, as the keynote speaker. His speech highlighted a few of the great African Americans throughout history who have fought to pave the way for future generations and then focused on the topic of *Shaping the Future through the Power of Education*.

He shared the findings from his study of 24 black males who grew up in the inner city and determined that their success relied on support systems and education. He also shared the sobering statistics of young black men who are not able to complete their education and the statistics of young black men who are incarcerated or imprisoned in the US. With the power of education and the proper support, we can help change these grim statistics. The three elements to create a brighter future through education: collaboration and access; expanding diversity; and providing equity. Education is indeed the “powerful tool to change the future.”

Monroe and Chamber of Commerce Launch ESL Program

Monroe College and the Greater Flushing Chamber of Commerce announced the establishment of *English Now!* a new intermediate and advanced-level ESL (English as a Second Language) literacy program designed to help the Flushing community. *English Now!* is designed to meet the needs of non-native English speakers who wish to improve their English language proficiency at an advanced level both professionally and socially. The goal is to help students expand their oral and written communication as well as their professional and social etiquette — with an emphasis on strengthening skills necessary for success in America’s workplace.

“Language is one of the major challenges facing our business community and we are proud to take a leadership role in addressing this issue with resources from our own network,” stated Simon Gerson, Managing Principal of Gerson Properties and Co-Chair of the Greater Flushing Chamber of Commerce.

According to a January 2015 report by the Center for an Urban Future, in NY, “the number of residents who speak English less than very well, grow by 14% — or 273,000 residents — between 2005–2013. But the number of state-funded ESOL seats across the state declined by 32% during this period.” Queens County has 600,000 limited English proficient (LEP) speakers — the highest number of any county in New York.

“This is a great partnership between the Flushing Chamber of Commerce and Monroe College to create *English Now!* is an example of what we can accomplish when business and community come together,” said Senator Toby Ann Stavisky.

*English Now!* will focus on the four links to fluency: universal topics; dynamic vocabulary; essential grammar; and confident communication. Course instructors will review real world scenarios where a strengthening of skills will improve professional and social communication. Class topics will include: *Global Topics* (students improve their English skills by discussing global issues); *Dynamic Vocabulary* (students acquire and expand vocabulary through word families and useful expressions); *Essential Grammar* (instructors teach grammar through innovative techniques focused on the needs of each student); *Confident Communication* (frequent and fun exercises will build your confidence utilizing newly acquired language skills); *Introductions, Negotiations and Networking; Workplace Etiquette; Digital Etiquette*; and *Phone Etiquette*. All instruction will take place at Monroe College’s Queens Extension Site Campus, located at 135-16 Roosevelt Avenue in downtown Flushing. Students who complete the courses will obtain a certificate of completion and a free career counseling session with the Office of Career Services at Monroe College.

Chamber of Commerce Education Award

On February 26, Monroe College was the recipient of the Education Award from The Bronx Chamber of Commerce at its annual Awards & Scholarship Banquet at the Marina del Rey.

Executive Vice President Marc Jerome accepted the award on behalf of the College and noted its 82 year history as a valued Bronx institution. He also referenced the thousands of individuals who have been educated at Monroe who can now make meaningful contributions to this borough and to the City.

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