



The "Up Close" column highlights an outstanding nursing student. Send nominee ideas to [nsna@nsna.org](mailto:nsna@nsna.org).

By Dinah Walsh

## From Prevention to Care

As 2009 ushers in the historic change in our country's leadership and political horizon, a more subtle change is occurring in the nursing profession. The face of nursing is no longer one that is predictable. John-Paul Griffin is the perfect example of one of the new faces of nursing. At 31, he is a second-career nursing student and one who brings a combination of real world work experience, leadership and commitment to service.

John-Paul serves as his Junior Class President at the Nell Hodgson Woodruff School of Nursing at Emory University in Atlanta, Georgia. His interest in nursing came from his experiences in non-profit management services that aided communities by providing awareness and prevention measures for suicide and AIDS. Working with clients in a preventative capacity fueled his interest in direct care of and for the people. His choice of school was solidified because of his exposure from previous work experiences. Emory's close relationships with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Lillian Carter International Foundation for Community Health also served to direct him to the university.

He also expresses that being a nurse will also "help me be a better parent, when that day comes," and doesn't think his children will be able to "easily pull the wool over my eyes, as I've seen others do." Currently in his Pediatrics/Obstetrics classes and clinicals, he is already becoming adept at holding babies and changing diapers, both of which he claims are new experiences.

His time at Emory is exceeding John-Paul's expectations and the bonds of the students and faculty bolster his drive to become a nurse. "We all try to support one

another," he says. "And when someone struggles, there is usually someone else nearby ready to stand up and help out. It is very much like an extended family."

One of his many influential professors is Dr. Sally Lehr, who John-Paul describes as "a phenomenal ball of energy." Dr. Lehr serves as his mentor and has guided him through the maze of psychiatric nursing and other subjects. He lists her energy and tireless efforts as major factors contributing to his success in the program.

John-Paul also enjoys his participation in the school's student nurse association and the NSNA. The student nurse association participates in a nursing student exchange program with Korea. Nursing students from Korea visit for about a month in an exchange of culture, ideas, and knowledge. Nursing students from Nell Hodgson Woodruff are selected to visit programs in Korea and Canada. Other international opportunities are available to allow students to practice their nursing skills during spring or fall break in countries such as Jamaica, Haiti and the Bahamas.

As he sets his sights for a proactive career in nursing, John-Paul hopes to promote positive changes, especially in the perception of men in nursing. "We are still bound somewhat by stereotypical perceptions," he states but remains hopeful that change is slowly happening.

He hopes that, as other men enter into nursing, progress will continue along the path of positive perception. "It can only happen with support, proactive efforts, and cohesion within the nursing field. It all starts from within." By all indications, the chances of these positive changes occurring seem good. John-Paul Griffin serves these hopes, not only by expressing them, but by leading by example. ☺

