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The Obstacles of Aid

NYU DOCTORS RECALL DAYS ON THE GROUND IN HAITI AFTER THE 2010 EARTHQUAKE



by Sally Lauckner / GSAS '10

Last January, the world watched in disbelief as hundreds of thousands of Haitians were left dead or severely injured after a devastating 7.0 magnitude earthquake ripped through the Caribbean island. For Patricia Poitevien, the horrifying images of felled buildings and smoky rubble were personal—her parents are Haitian and still live there. After Poitevien, a pediatrician at NYU’s Langone Medical Center, ensured that her family was safe, her next instinct was to organize a relief effort. “It was a no-brainer,” she says. “I felt that was the very least I could do for my home country.”

On January 22, just 10 days after the quake struck, Poitevien was part of an interdisciplinary team of seven NYU medical professionals—including orthopedic surgeons, an anesthesiologist, and a nurse with war experience—who arrived in Haiti to assist with urgent health needs. Among them was Fritz François (WSC ’93, MED ’97, ’07), a Haitian-born physician and assistant professor in the department of medicine, who left Port-au-Prince for the United States when he was 10 and had never returned. While François could recognize major landmarks, he was shocked to discover his home country almost entirely

transformed. The scene that greeted him as the plane touched down was worthy of a postapocalyptic novel; in the distance the ground was teeming with bright flames and dense smoke swallowed the air. Save for a smattering of generators, the island was without electricity.

For both Poitevien and François, the conditions were emotionally and physically draining. L’Hôpital Général, the country’s largest hospital, was severely damaged and the threat of another violent aftershock destroying the building led hospital personnel to set up tents for treating patients outdoors (only the operating room and the intensive-care unit remained inside). The adjacent nursing school had collapsed, trapping people under rubble, and François recalls the putrid scent of decaying bodies as he walked past the debris. Due to a scarcity of running water and a lack of medicine, children were dying from highly treatable conditions such as dehydration or an asthma attack. “That was particularly upsetting,” Poitevien says. At night the team returned to a campsite for relief workers organized and run by Partners in Health, a global nonprofit organization.

Hanging over the physical destruction were more daunting questions about Haiti’s future. How would an already-downtrodden nation rebuild not only homes and hospitals but the spirit of its people? One of François’ biggest regrets is that the NYU coalition didn’t have a mental-health professional on the trip. In the immedi-



A HAITIAN NURSING SCHOOL REDUCED TO RUBBLE.

PHOTOS: P. 20 COURTESY FRITZ FRANÇOIS MD, MS; P. 21 © MARGARET AGUIRRE/COURTESY INTERNATIONAL MEDICAL CORPS



WITH PORT-AU-PRINCE'S L'HÔPITAL GÉNÉRAL DANGEROUSLY UNSTABLE, HOSPITAL PERSONNEL SET UP A MEDICAL TENT CITY FOR TREATING PATIENTS OUTDOORS.

ate aftermath, people who suffered shock but didn't have any visible ailments were overlooked, he explains. Six months after the quake,

percent of its total budget for Haiti on mental health and psychological support.

While the NYU coalition has

Services-sponsored committee to rebuild the infrastructure of Haiti's health-professions training. The country is a major exporter of

eration so they can take over," François explains.

Despite their worries about the earthquake's enduring legacy on the island, Poitevien and François were both inspired by how they saw the islanders responding to the disaster. "We have a difficult history and a difficult present," Poitevien explains. "But Haitian people pick themselves up and keep going no matter what. Watching people go to the marketplace and put their wares on tables and picking up debris from their old homes was very touching for me. That's what is so remarkable about the country." ■

“If we are going to sustain this effort, then we have to involve the next generation,” says Haitian-born NYU physician Fritz François.

Partners in Health reported that many Haitians suffered from psychological trauma, including hallucinations, insomnia, and severe anxiety. The organization estimates that it will spend only 1.8

no concrete plans to return to Haiti together, Poitevien intends to make a second, solo, relief trip to the island. Meanwhile, François is representing NYU on a U.S. Department of Health & Human

health-care workers, so it's also crucial to supply incentive for future medical workers to stay and practice in their country. "If we are going to sustain this effort, then we have to involve the next gen-

global

FIRST CLASS

STUDENTS FROM AROUND THE WORLD FLOCK TO NYU'S BOLD ABU DHABI EXPERIMENT

by Jason Hollander / GAL '07

Since NYU announced in 2007 that it would create a brand-new sister campus in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates (UAE), there has been no shortage of opinions from students, faculty, and alumni. Some believe it's a transformative step toward building a truly global university, while others wonder how well NYU's Village culture will jibe with the state's Middle Eastern perspective. But one thing is indisputable: The school, in its debut year, has attracted some of the best students in the world.



The numbers say it all. NYU Abu Dhabi's inaugural class includes 150 students from 39 countries. Though some 9,048 applicants sought admission, only 2.1 percent were accepted. Of this group, the average SAT critical reading score was 770 (ranking fifth among U.S. universities) and the average math score was 780 (ranking sixth). About one-third of students hail from the United States, with the UAE, China, Hungary, and Russia comprising the next most popular countries of origin. As one would expect of such an international crowd, 87 percent speak two languages and nearly half speak three or more. President John Sexton called the incoming freshmen "arguably the most selective and internationally diverse entering class in the world."

The new class started courses this September at a temporary location in downtown Abu Dhabi, while a full campus on Saadiyat Island is scheduled to open in 2014. There they will receive a classic liberal arts and science education, much like their brethren in New York—albeit with student-faculty ratios of about eight to one.

Here's a peek at four members of NYU Abu Dhabi's Class of 2014:



MADHAV VAIDYANATHAN

Kodaikanal, India

Goal: To be an international business leader in biochemistry and technology

Honors: Ranked in top 1 percent in India's National Mathematical Olympiad; awarded "Best Batsman" at St. John's State Cricket Tournament

Activities: Helped the poor and blind through the Akanksha Foundation for four years

Languages: English, Hindi, Tamil, and Sanskrit

Favorite music: Trance, hip-hop, and electronica

Favorite recent movie: *Frost/Nixon*

What you should know about him: "I'm a very open person, very easy to approach. And I do whatever I can to earn people's trust."



LAYLA AL NEYADI

Abu Dhabi, UAE

Goal: To make art that will influence and educate people, such as Al Gore's *An Inconvenient Truth*

Honors: Elected high school's assistant deputy head prefect for environmental issues

Activities: Tutored students in biology and English

Languages: Arabic and English

Favorite music: Rock, such as Kings of Leon, Muse, Radiohead, and Oasis

Favorite recent movie: *Avatar*

What you should know about her: "I was raised by a British mother and an Emirati father. I experienced both the Western and Arab perspective, so I try to really understand other people without judging them."



FLORENCIA MARIA SCHLAMP

Recife, Brazil

Goal: To become a biologist and conduct research in the oceans and the rain forests

Honors: Recognized by city of Recife for raising awareness of environmental issues

Hobbies: Avid scuba diver and regional folk dancer

Languages: Spanish, English, and Portuguese

Favorite music: Argentinean salsa and *cuarteto*

Favorite recent movie: *Avatar*

On starting college: "I can see myself sharing traditions and exotic customs with friends from all over the world, and calculating how many Argentinean *alfajores* (cookies) and Brazilian *brigadeiros* (chocolate pastry) I should cook for them."



MUSBAH DILSEBO ORMAGO

Addis Ababa, Ethiopia

Goal: A career in the Ethiopian diplomatic service

Honors: Ranked in top three on national exams; represented Addis Ababa at the African Union Youth Conference

Volunteering: Worked as translator and teacher for the NGO Voice for Street Children Ethiopia

Languages: Siltigna, Amharic, and English

Heroes: Nelson Mandela, Abraham Lincoln, and Ethiopian PM Meles Zenawi

Favorite music: James Blunt, Enrique Iglesias

Favorite recent movie: *The Hangover*

Personal history: "I am the only boy in my family to graduate from high school. They are very proud of me. I carry all the responsibility to change my family's life."



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BEST OF NEW YORK

NYU FACULTY, STAFF, AND ALUMNI OFFER UP THEIR FAVORITES

by Renée Alfuso / CAS '06

DHOONYA DANCE

FOURSQUARE



EMBRACE AUTUMN WITH APPLE PICKING UPSTATE OR TRY OUT SOME APPS BUILT FOR THE BIG CITY

STREET SMART PHONES

With an app for just about everything, the days of using cell phones simply to make calls are numbered—just ask Shawn Van Every (TSOA '04), who teaches mobile development at Tisch's Interactive Telecommunications Program. "They're becoming part of us," he says. "We're carrying around sophisticated little computers that add sensory capabilities to our daily existence." The technology is especially handy for New Yorkers overwhelmed by so much to see and do. An app like UpNext, with its interactive 3-D maps, can help users explore the city for nearby attractions, venue info, and reviews. "We're in a walking culture and we can multitask because we're not driving around in our own little bubbles," says Van Every, who carries multiple devices with more than 200 apps—ranging from a public bathroom finder (SitOrSquat) to a social media game that rewards loyal customers with discounts for frequent patronage (Foursquare, co-created

by Dennis Crowley, TSOA '04). To navigate the labyrinth-like subway, he uses iTrans NYC for train schedules, service advisories, and directions between stations—and it even works underground. But Van Every's favorite app is **URBANSPOON**, which he recommends for discovering new restaurants. Just choose the cuisine, price point, and neighborhood, then shake the phone to start the screen whirling like a slot machine and up pop the eateries that match your appetite.

APPS AVAILABLE FOR DOWNLOAD AT APPLE.COM/ITUNES

DANCE REVOLUTION

Each year the massive Hindi-language film industry known as Bollywood releases hundreds of musicals in which a simple kiss isn't enough—when two people fall in love onscreen, entire crowds break into splashy, elaborate dance numbers. The films still don't translate to a wide American audience, but thanks to the success of last year's Oscar-winning *Slumdog*

Millionaire, Bollywood dance is one of the hottest new workouts in the West. To find out what makes the style so infectious, we sent our work-study student—and NYU dance team member—Elisabeth Brown (CAS '11) to **DHOONYA DANCE** in Chelsea. Since age 4, Brown has been classically trained in ballet, jazz, and hip-hop but says that she had no idea what to expect from her first lesson in Bollywood. The high-energy choreography is rooted in traditional Indian dance and incorporates forms such as kathak (storytelling), pop bhangra (Punjabi folk), and even yoga for a graceful yet upbeat style. The technique entails acting out the joy or love in a song with facial expressions and *mudras* (hand movements), so a simple motion can translate into blessing someone, as in the interpretive wedding scene Brown learned. "It was really cool to see that integration between the culture and the dance," she says. Dhoonya Dance instructors are Bollywood experts—several even performed a routine on *The Oprah Winfrey Show* in 2009—but students can choose from a range of

class levels. They also offer sessions for children, online classes by subscription, and discounts for NYU students. "It's a really fun way to dabble in a new culture," Brown says, "but it's also a good form of exercise."

DHOONYA DANCE, 347-644-0052; WWW.DHOONYADANCE.COM

FALL HARVEST

What better way to celebrate autumn than the annual free apple festival at the Queens County Farm Museum in Floral Park, New York? The city's sole working historical farm offers hayrides, a three-acre corn maze, and pick-your-own-pumpkins throughout October—and it boasts the nation's largest apple cobbler baked on site. However, for a harvest-season escape from the Big Apple, head two hours north to **STONE RIDGE ORCHARD**. Greg Albanis (WSC '78, WAG '80), senior director of university events, has been visiting his weekend retreat in the Catskills for 14 years, always stopping at the orchard's gourmet farm market to pick up apples and fresh-pressed cider. Stone Ridge has been farming the fruit for more than two

PHOTOS: COURTESY DHOONYA DANCE; WWW.FOURSQUARE.COM; ISTOCK; COURTESY BUTCH BAKERY



STONE RIDGE ORCHARD

BUTCH BAKERY

centuries, and the mountain climate provides ideal growing conditions for their more than 1,000 trees. The sustainable farm also includes organic tomatoes and sweet corn, plus cherries, peaches, raspberries, and other fruits. What really makes it worth the schlep, however, is the pick-your-own-apples deal, with more than 13 varieties to choose from. In addition to usual suspects such as McIntosh and Golden Delicious, Stone Ridge offers Honeycrisp and Macoun, a Northeast niche apple rarely found in grocery stores. “It’s a nice day out because the orchard’s punctuated with streams and a lake, so you can bring a box lunch and have a picnic,” Albanis suggests.

3012 ROUTE 213 IN STONE RIDGE,
845-687-2587;
WWW.STONERIDGEORCHARD.US

EDITORS’ PICK: COCKTAIL CUPCAKES

The *NYU Alumni Magazine* office was buzzing about **BUTCH BAKERY**, with its oversize cupcakes in one-of-a-kind flavors such as Rum & Coke and Mojito. So when we discovered that founder David Arrick was also an alum, it was the ic-

ing on the cupcake. Arrick (TSOA ’89) was working at a law firm on Wall Street when the economy collapsed in 2008 and he was laid off. Living in the West Village, where cupcake shops abound, and frustrated with his unemployment, he noticed the long lines outside Magnolia Bakery. “They were always busy and I thought, How can I get on the cupcake wagon?” Arrick remembers. So he decided to offer an alternative to the typical dainty cupcakes in pink and pastel hues. His “mancakes” come in sophisticated flavors such as Kahlúa-soaked vanilla cake with Baileys Bavarian filling, chocolate beer cake with crushed pretzels, and the nonalcoholic maple cake sprinkled with bits of bacon. All come topped in edible camouflage, wood grain, or marble. Until Arrick finds a downtown storefront, the delectable creations are only available online, but they will soon ship nationally and he’s planning to expand baking operations to Los Angeles and Chicago. “I didn’t realize how cutthroat the cupcake market is,” he says, “but there’s room for all of us.”

BUTCH BAKERY, 646-221-3477;
WWW.BUTCHBAKERY.COM

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