Poster Child for Overcoming Adversity

“Hey, Tawyna, I saw your picture on a billboard!” That’s a phrase Tawyna Henry, Medical Laboratory Technician graduate, has heard many times. She was selected to prove it. She tapped into that gift with the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention at the Out of the Darkness event at Waterfront Walk in Louisville, KY. By Tawyna Henry.

Tawyna Henry found herself in a field she loved. Today, Tawyna works in the laboratory at the University of Louisville Hospital and teaches phlebotomy.

In spite of her family obligations (taking care of her mother, younger sister, and older sister with Down’s Syndrome), Tawyna decided to continue her schooling at Spencerian College. The Medical Laboratory Technician AAS program was a great fit because it combined science and medicine, she could help people and the job market was good. She felt this career could give her job security as well as the enjoyment of working in a field she loved.

At Spencerian, she liked the smaller class size, and the teachers were the best she ever had. “Their willingness to instill knowledge and their passion for what they did made me excited about my career choice.” Tawyna said. “The teachers already had experience in the field, and they prepared me well for working in the clinical sites.”

Tina Lewis, Tawyna’s program director, recognized Tawyna’s outstanding performance “as an excellent student who overcame many hardships and tragedies in her determination to succeed” and nominated her for a scholarship. Tawyna graduated with a grade point average of 4.0.

So the next time you see Tawyna’s picture on a Spencerian ad, know that you can overcome obstacles in your life and become a Spencerian Poster Child!

Eight years ago, Medical Massage Therapy student Tiffany Saffold was in the center of the “Triangle of Death.” Serving in the Sunni Triangle in Iraq, Saffold witnessed multiple rocket and mortar attacks, and watched as people died all around her. Although most nights she slept with a M-16 and a gas mask, she was fortunate to survive, suffering only white phosphorous burns from one of the mortars. However, the emotional burns from her experience nearly killed her.

At first, life after her tour of duty was great. She was selected for a position at Headquarters Company, Human Resources Command- St. Louis. She graduated in the top one percent of her Basic Noncommissioned Officer Course; she studied for, and was inducted into, the Sergeant Audie Murphy Club, which is studied for, and was inducted into, the top one percent of her Basic

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However, the stresses she encountered on and off the battlefield mounted within her. It became increasingly difficult to cope and suicide had crossed her mind more than once. Fortunately, her supervisor recognized the warning signs of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder and arranged for help. She credits Army Suicide Prevention with saving her life.

Today, she’s married to an Army Sergeant, and her 4-year-old son is happy to have his mom back. She recently passed the promotion board for Sergeant First Class and her story is featured on the new Army Shoulder to Shoulder: I will never quit on life suicide prevention video.

To watch the video visit http://bcove.me/Ihkvtpy.

Saffold agreed to let her story be shared with Spencerian students in hopes that it might help someone else suffering emotional trauma. “Don’t be afraid to talk about what’s wrong,” she advises. “Get the help that you need. You can become stronger than ever because that’s one thing that’s not weighing you down anymore.”

Her next goal is to earn her AAS in Medical Massage Therapy. Tiffany learned early that touch can be medically effective when her mother, who suffered from asthma, had Tiffany pat her back so that she could feel better. She continues to use this gift with her son, who has allergic asthma. There is a dramatic difference for the better after the treatment, and she has the photos to prove it. She tapped into that gift in her studies in the Massage Therapy program. “Massage,” she says, “is more than just rubbing on someone.”

With her AAS in Medical Massage Therapy, Tiffany hopes to one day specialize in treating post-traumatic stress disorder and others who have suffered from trauma.

On November 5, 2011 she walked, or as a cop, with her twin son, Kaydn,22, and Kaydn’s twin brother, Jason, 22, in the Out of the Darkness Walk at Waterfront Park in Louisville, KY. “It’s a survivor walk,” said Saffold. “All proceeds from the American Foundation for Suicide Prevention at the "Out of the Darkness" event at Waterfront Walk in Louisville, KY. Saffold agreed to let her story be shared with Spencerian students in hopes that it might help someone else suffering emotional trauma. “Don’t be afraid to talk about what’s wrong,” she advises. “Get the help that you need. You can become stronger than ever because that’s one thing that’s not weighing you down anymore.”

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