

## Dwight, Strive for College student



Dwight is 17 years old and lives in East New York, Brooklyn, a neighborhood he describes as “rough,” where crime and gang violence make him cautious about spending too much time outside. His family, originally from Jamaica, values hard work and he knows that if he doesn’t go on to college, he will be expected to get a job. In Dwight’s opinion, the academic programs at his high school need improvement, and the school just needs more money. There might not be enough funds for his class to have a prom or senior trip.

Dwight plans to be the first person in his family to complete a college degree; two of his four siblings dropped out, though his sister just started classes again. He is very motivated to go, but he believes that many of his friends are not as interested in planning for the future or getting out of the neighborhood.

Dwight credits his family, especially the support of his father, with instilling in him a strong focus on his education. His father has always told him that education can help him to overcome the particular challenges society places on young Black men. Watching his family members struggle in life has also fueled Dwight’s focus on his studies, which he believes are necessary to achieve long-term success and happiness.

The Strive for College program has helped alleviate a lot of the stress around the college application experience for Dwight, stress that made him feel “on and off” about even going to college for a time. He began the program as an eleventh grader, and is thankful that his mentors have helped him to understand and weigh his options while reminding him not to procrastinate. Art is Dwight’s “passion,” and he sees himself as possibly becoming a commercial artist, working in graphic design or advertising. He thinks the Strive mentors are “cool,” and is grateful to be connected.