

CNR Alumna's Path Brings Her to COVID-19 Research



Our world may be a bit safer thanks to the hard work and long hours of the team of researchers at Pfizer, including Jellicia Green CNR SAS '17. She is working at Pfizer's Research and Development campus in Pearl River, New York, as part of the vast team working on the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine against COVID-19.

Originally from Jamaica, Green moved to the U.S. in 2010 and has taken her fate – financial and educational – into her own hands ever since. “I put myself through school,” she said. “I worked full time at a hair salon for 8 years.”

Green says she has loved science since she was a child, and originally intended to become a dermatologist, getting her undergraduate degree in Biology. “I’ve always liked experimenting, writing reports, I like to analyze how things happen.” The College of New Rochelle (CNR) offered her an intimate environment in which to learn, fostering important relationships with professors. One relationship in particular – with a professor of organic chemistry – really stands out.

“My professor saw more in me than I saw in myself. She always challenged me. She’d give me the hardest question in an assignment. I’d be called up to the board in front of the class and I was freaking out, and surprisingly I did it. She pushed me to believe in myself. She helped me realize an untapped potential that I didn’t even know I had.”



That same professor told Green about a job opening at Pfizer, through another contact who had graduated from CNR. She was nervous: “I called but didn’t get a call back. A month later I went online, submitted my resume, and got an email

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about an interview. I hadn’t been on one in years; I’d only been working at the salon and didn’t know what the corporate world was about. I got there nervous, and so sweaty I had to apologize. I didn’t think I’d gotten it. A few

weeks later they called to let me know I did.”

She’s been at Pfizer since 2018, and since the pandemic has been part of a team developing the vaccine, work she said involves “long hours, dedication, and sacrifice.” A family member died of COVID-19, and another relative was sickened. Green was at her job by 7 a.m., sometimes laboring through the night as the vaccine work progressed. “We saw the bigger picture,” she said, “so that propelled us to push even harder. It was emotional when we saw it was working for people, and we knew we had contributed.”