**Chasing my Passion for Dentistry Across the World**

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*student*

"Wake up! Wake up"!  Were the first words I would hear my mom yell at me on the last Sunday morning of every month. The early morning wake up calls were not for church or grocery shopping, they were for a dental checkup that would be in our local township of Nairobi, Kenya. Every few months, the Nairobi Community Center in Nairobi held free dental check ups. Therefore, every Sunday we waited for hours and hours to get a glimpse of the oral health care provider but, as soon as we got near the front of the line we were told the office was closing.

My fascination for the dental profession goes far back to my years of elementary school in Kenya, East Africa. I was born in and raised in a third world country where primary health care had always been scarce but dental care was something that had mostly been ignored. My aspirations to become the best oral health care provider allowed me to be so open-minded; I insisted upon meeting the local dentist and volunteered to carry her bag around. I asked so many questions and learned from Linda Onyange that the oral health care personnel ratio to the population ratio was 1: 378,000 in the public sector. Although I was young, my hunger for knowledge pertaining to oral health care kept me there asking more questions and feeling so relieved that Linda was doing a better job than most of the physicians. After learning so much about the need in the health care condition and noticing that the rest of the nation was so oblivious to this environment, I chose to break free of the common tunnel vision that we were all born perfect to.

At a young age, I realized the importance of oral health care and education and the vital role it plays in my life. Due to the lack of educational opportunities in Kenya, I decided to move to the United States to pursue my dream in the field of dentistry. After my bachelors in Biology, I obtained a degree in Dental Hygiene. Currently, I am pursuing both a Masters in Oral Biology and Doctor of Dental Medicine.

My passion for dental hygiene directly affected my captivation of the DMD program here at the University of Louisville. The hygiene program was an excellent program and it fueled my desire to learn more and continue my dental education. To this day, it has become my most valued priority and helped me achieve my ultimate life goal to be the best dentist.

While I’ve truly enjoyed my time here at the University of Louisville for the past eight years, I have had to make many sacrifices to be here. Living apart from my family, my husband and now my 8-week-old baby, is one of the toughest things I have ever had to do. I have had my ups and downs, but quickly realize that I have a greater purpose to serve in life. Mostly each day goes by and I am thankful to God, my friends and family who support me in every way possible to help me achieve this goal.

As Eleanor Roosevelt once stated, “The future belongs to those who believe in the beauty of their dreams.” Believe. Learn. Live. Most importantly, don’t ever give up on your dreams!