**Teen Living With Multiple Disabilities Determined To Become Software Engineer**

Eighteen-year-old Tyrone Darby is determined to fulfil his dream of becoming a software engineer, despite the challenges that come with living with multiple disabilities.

“My journey into this world has always been one that is filled with many obstacles,” the Knox Community College student tells **JIS News**.

The Manchester-born teenager was diagnosed with cerebral palsy shortly after birth, after his mother, Chantel Mullings, his main source of motivation, spent many hours in labour.

But the health challenges for the young man, who also suffers from a speech impediment, did not stop there, as Tyrone earlier in March was diagnosed with scoliosis and now needs to do corrective surgery to fix his torso, which is twisting towards his right.

Facing these obstacles with grit and determination, Tyrone was able to successfully complete his Caribbean Secondary Education Certificate (CSEC) examinations earlier this year while attending Troy High School in Trelawny, achieving Grade 1 in Information Technology; Grade 2 in Mathematics, Biology, Principles of  Business and Principles of Accounts; and Grade 3 in Social Studies, Chemistry, Physics and English Language.

For his achievement, Tyrone earned an award from the National Child Month Committee in November, given to CSEC students from non-traditional high schools who overcame challenges and had done well in their examinations.

Before his March diagnosis, Tyrone had been experiencing serious back pain, but when told of his condition, he was devastated.

“I felt like my entire world had been shattered, [given] the fact that I had cerebral palsy dealing with already,” he says.

“I found out that my entire trunk was leaving my body and that I was tilting towards the right,” he tells **JIS News**, adding that he quietly asked himself: “How much more can one young person go through?”

Tyrone says the back pain had also affected his ability to sit up and to study, but he was determined to pass all his nine subjects, which he did.

“Being faced with these challenges, I was always a lover of the computer and technology.  Therefore, when COVID-19 came I used it to my advantage and used it to study and do my schoolwork at home, even though I had to share a computer with my mom,” he says.

The teenager, who is undoubtedly very proud that his hard work has paid off, says during his early childhood years to secondary school, “I kept my focus and did not allow my physical challenge to affect me mentally”.

“It was very difficult, as living with a disability can be challenging and complicated. Sometimes I am unable to do things on my own, due to pain, or I may jerk at times,” Tyrone says.

Added to that, he has had to deal with discrimination. “There are times when people will laugh at me or tease me,” he says.

But the very determined and focused young man tells **JIS News** that he has had to rise above those challenges,  and that he remains motivated by his mother, a struggling teacher and single parent, who is willing to work with him and his desire to become a software engineer.

“At Troy High School I worked to the best of my ability to get my work done, even though at times my fingers would hurt, and travelling in the taxi and carrying my school bag filled with books was a burden, but the sky is the limit and once there is life, there is hope,” he shares.

Tyrone says he is grateful to the staff at Troy High School for the assistance they provided.

Despite his unwavering will to succeed, Tyrone says there have been times when he questions his existence and gets discouraged.

“Sometimes I wonder why I am like this; sometimes I feel like giving up,” he tells **JIS News**.

However, he says it was “the great Marcus Garvey who said ‘If you have no confidence in self, you are twice defeated in the race of life’, and as long as my life lasts, I will work very hard to achieve my goal of becoming a software engineer”.

Furthermore, Tyrone believes that he can do all things through Christ, who strengthens him.

To other members of the disabled community, especially the youth who are experiencing similar challenges like himself, Tyrone advises: “Just stay focused; don’t mind what people will say about you”.

In the meantime, the young man says he is trying to relax, as his mother tries to make arrangements for him to do his surgery.