



Help create health and wellness, grads urged

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Karen Jeffrey, center, of Brooklyn, an acupuncture graduate, celebrates at the 2014 New York College of Health Professions' commencement at the Melville Marriott on May 4, 2014. (Credit: Johnny Milano)

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New York College of Health Professions 2014 graduation

CLASS OF 2014: New York College of Health Professions

Number of graduates 230; 170 associate degrees, 50 bachelor/master joint degrees, 10 certificates

Commencement speaker Musician George McKenzie Phillips Jr. spoke about performing with family members in the R&B group Starpoint and writing songs for performers such as Milli Vanilli. He composed a song for the college, "New York College, Where You Get the Knowledge," which debuted Sunday.

"You all are now in a unique position, with the education and skills, to have the opportunity to combine the utilization of ancient interventions of healing with some of the most exciting technology of today . . . as you go on to help people make significant changes in their lives that will have great impact on their wellness, the wellness of their families and the wellness of the people in the world community," said Phillips, who works as a behavioral health administrator in Maryland.

From the graduates:

Angus Towse, 43, oriental medicine

"This is so much more rewarding on a personal level than making things for people who already have too many things," said Towse, of Sea Cliff, who worked as a carpenter before becoming a massage therapist. "I'm going to expand my practice, to offer more services to people."

Demi Braddy, 21, massage therapy

"My passion is to make people feel better . . . I already have a [massage] table in my basement and I plan on working for myself," said Braddy, a postal worker from Laurelton.

Steven Fisher, 35, massage therapy

"Massage therapy brings wellness to the client, and it's a field that goes hand in hand with being a personal trainer, which was what I was doing before going to school," said Fisher, of Rosedale.

Giuseppe Palazzolo, 22, massage therapy

"Working in a pharmacy led me to want to study alternative medicine," said Palazzolo, of Staten Island. "I just thought there has to be a better way to help people." He said he hopes to work in a detox center in Costa Rica.

Casey Ottens, 24, acupuncture

"I love to see people smile, to have them tell me I've made them feel better," said Ottens, of upstate Rhinebeck, who works as a massage therapist at the Waldorf Astoria hotel in Manhattan. She earned her associate degree in massage therapy from the college in 2010.