

The COVID-19 Whisperer

JAEOK JACKY KIM



Though Jaeok Jacky Kim is still learning more about her role as a Community Engagement Specialist in Brooklyn, her friends have already coined her as the COVID-19 Whisperer.

“My loved ones just can’t get enough of me spouting facts and data about the virus,” she said.

Each day brings even more knowledge and opportunities for her as she works to fight the virus. She combines what she learns with her field experience as a social worker in schools, and public defender offices in juvenile, municipal and criminal courts.

Her work has taken her as far as Western Alaska where she was recently providing therapeutic services to Yup’ik children in rural villages scattered across the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. That’s where she began to venture into pediatric neurodevelopment disorders and public health.

But the COVID pandemic interrupted her experience as she watched her family, friends and community in New York begin a battle against the virus.

“It was agonizing to be so far away in a remote area while so many people were falling ill with COVID-19,” she said. “I desperately wanted to become a part of a team that would be instrumental in safely opening up our city and returning to normal.”

She returned to New York, and while she was isolating applied and was hired to become a tracer. She now has an opportunity to harness her skills and experience in various patient screening and assessment tools to protect her community.

“I am looking forward to going into communities and speaking to New Yorkers to provide them with all the resources needed to guarantee their good health and safety, whether that may be access to medical treatment, food, housing, or just someone to talk to during these uncertain times,” she said. “I am mostly looking forward to assist in bringing back the livelihood of every New Yorker that’s been affected by COVID-19.”

For now, she continues sharing information on hand hygiene, social distancing, gathering and sharing PPE and hand sanitizer, and encouraging people to test for COVID-19.

“I am preparing for my role by living by the words I preach and constantly keeping up-to-date with the most current news related to COVID-19,” she said. “Like many of us, I am truly looking forward to be able to interact with people.”

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