



EASTERN

From the Baseline to the Front Line: Cidric Trinidad

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The COVID-19 pandemic has produced much uncertainty across the country, but one thing it has unequivocally reaffirmed is our respect and adoration for the many officials and health care providers dedicating their lives to keeping others safe. In our new series From the Baseline to the Front Line, we'll honor members of the USTA Eastern community who also happen to belong to that heroic group. Here we speak with Cidric Trinidad, a tennis player and nurse who works for NYU Langone Orthopedic Hospital (NYULOH) and the Visiting Nurse Service of New York (VNSNY). For VNSNY, Trinidad has been assisting COVID-19 patients in their homes in the East Elmhurst neighborhood of Queens, one of the areas hit hardest by the virus in the country.

What can you tell us about your experience on the front lines of this pandemic?

Trinidad: I work two jobs. I work [as a recovery nurse] at NYULOH and as a homecare nurse with VNSNY. [At NYULOH], we usually care for patients recovering from orthopedic surgeries [like hip replacements]. But the main NYU Langone campus was all full during the pandemic, so our hospital treated COVID-19 patients as well. It's really, really hard working in the hospital because you see these patients who are having shortness of breath, who are alone, who are physically and emotionally very weak. As a nurse you're there to take care of them, give them antibiotics and fluids. And of course, you have to provide moral support. No families are allowed to visit. Some of these patients are there by themselves for two or three weeks. When I see patients, I make sure they know they're not alone. I say, "The doctors and I are your family here—anything you want, let us know." But it's very difficult. We had two very important coworkers—one nurse practitioner and nurse educator—who passed away due to complications from the virus.

You've also been making home visits to COVID-19 patients who have been discharged from the hospital. What has that been like?

Trinidad: The work is fulfilling, but it is scary. However, I wear PPE so I know I will be okay—I pray to God that I will be okay. One patient I see [at home] is 87 years old. His wife passed away a week before he [was discharged]. There are seven family members living with him in this multi-generational house—all of them are COVID-19 positive. They didn't really know what to do in terms of how to treat their grandfather, my patient. They're very happy that I can teach them breathing [exercises], signs and symptoms [to monitor] to know if they should go to the hospital. I've also helped reinforce how they can prevent transmission in their community.

New York was undoubtedly hit the hardest by the pandemic, but there is a sense that the city is—for now—past the worst of it. Cases, while still high, have trended down, and some areas are starting to reopen. Have you felt that trajectory over the last few months?

Trinidad: Yes, it seems to be trending down. But I'm always



telling my family and friends that you should not be putting your guard down. Make sure you wear a mask when going out. That's very, very important. Use hand sanitizer, wash your hands, don't touch your face. Always maintain social distance. I think these are very important things going forward until we get the vaccine.

How are you staying mentally tough during a very prolonged, stressful situation?

Trinidad: Well, I love my job. I know this is a time that I can really help the community, my patients and their family members. I want to be a role model to my colleagues, and I want to motivate people and inspire people. My mental strength really comes from that. I also think I get a lot of mental toughness from tennis. When you play in a tournament, if you lose the first round, you're done. Even if [a match] is only an hour or two, you have to be on point throughout. You could be leading 6-1 in the first set and 4-0 in the second, but once your opponent gets to 4-2, you can see a shift in momentum [if you let up].

Tennis is clearly a big part of your life. When did you first pick up a racquet?

Trinidad: When I lived in the Philippines, I was an altar boy, and my parish priest in our community was actually the one to teach me how to play tennis. That started everything. Then I came to the United States in 2002, and my sister lived right by Flushing Meadows. I've been playing ever since. I play in USTA men's tournaments, and about three years ago I started playing in GLTA [Gay and Lesbian Tennis Alliance] tournaments, which is fun. It's like a vacation and a tennis tournament at the same time. I admire [Roger] Federer but I love the mental toughness of [Rafael] Nadal.

What do you love most about tennis?

Trinidad: I love that it's an individual sport. I love that you have nobody to blame—except yourself. For me, it helps me stay mentally tough, helps my sportsmanship. If I play well and still lose, I'm still patting myself on the back. For me, tennis is not about winning. It's about how you play.

June is Pride month. As a member of the LGBTQ community, what does Pride mean to you personally?

Trinidad: Pride is the same as any other holiday, like Christmas or New Year's. It's a celebration. It's a celebration of everyone, whether you're straight, gay, bisexual. For me, it's not just for the LGBTQ community. It's the entire world embracing one another—which is especially important during this pandemic. I think people should embrace love and tolerance—whether you're Asian, Black, White or Latino. I think we should be helping each other. That's what Pride means to me.