

Student Testimonial
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High School in the Community - New Haven, CT

School wasn't important to me until I got to high school. I was just going along, trying to finish, so that eventually, I too, would be like the rest of my family, get a job and work. Dreams, of ever going to college, were not stressed nor seemed important because we always somehow managed to make ends meet. This all came to a halt in my freshman year, when I met my nice math teacher, Lynn, who was recruiting students, especially females, for her CPEP program. My plans changed at that point and attending college, it didn't matter which one, became important.

Ironically, I was not even one of her students, but I listened as she gave a presentation before the entire student body, describing the program and the benefits of being a part of it. I became intrigued and because I liked her (the CPEP teacher) I decided to join.

For the past three and a half years, I have learned and watched Lynn encourage us to expand our horizons beyond our nucleus, and see our potential. My focus had always been on New Haven, never venturing beyond those boundaries or limitations. But with CPEP, I saw a different side of life. She took us to UNH twice for Engineers week, and we were able to meet professors and talk about the different types of engineering degrees you can receive. We had the opportunity to visit the train station and speak to train engineers. We also look at various bridges in developmental stages. We spent an inordinate amount of time viewing videos on the environment and discussing potential changes or contributions we could make to our world. More importantly, Lynn provided the means for tutorials for upcoming tests or exams to ensure our success while in the program.

From this program, my love for math grew to the point where I am currently taking pre-calculus class which I would have NEVER thought of doing in the past. My self-confidence grew and I started thinking *bigger* and about life beyond New Haven. Although my choice of being an accountant does not seem like such a big deal to others, to my family it is! I come from a long line of cleaners, fast foods restaurants workers, or retail shops workers, never aspiring to do anything further than collect a paycheck.

With the exposure to CPEP, I dreamed bigger and better dreams and with Lynn's encouragement and help, I knew I was capable of achieving my dreams. Also, with Lynn's' encouragement, I also joined student council and have been a member for the past three years, finally become president in my senior year. The self-esteem and confidence gained while building my projects and competing at CPEP over the years have enhanced who I am as a person.

Lastly, I am the first in my family to be accepted at a major university, and would like the opportunity to set the stage for my family by succeeding and achieving what they have only talked and dreamt about. I know if I make it a part of them is making it too.