

I aspire to be a role model and a guide to encourage the youth to pursue higher education. My goal is to become a teacher because I feel it is the best way to motivate younger generations to achieve the best education possible. I am studying to be a Spanish teacher because I have been really enchanted by all the culture and the countries that come with it. I find myself wanting to study the struggles of Latin American countries to be able to understand the history and culture that can stop us from believing we cannot succeed. I have had many role models in my life, most of whom have made me believe I am able to do much more than I think I am capable of. The first, Jason Dufenhorst, who was my elementary school teacher, whom was full American and studied abroad in Argentina to learn the Spanish language and Latin American culture. He was one of three bilingual teachers at my school. He made me and the rest of my classmates understand our worth and privilege of having two cultures. He helped us celebrate our roots and encouraged us to learn about others. Because of him I have never felt like an outsider until I became aware of the way others were affected by their biculturalism. I had learned the basics of my culture through my education and upbringing but never experienced it the way my peers did. Because they had bigger families and were more intimate with their roots, I began to want be more involved with the Latino community. I aspire to teach and understand the different types of cultures and struggles Latinos go through and how, along with generations, these issues and concepts have grown. In high school I took Spanish as a language course because I thought I could use the improvement in my grammar and I hoped for an easy class. However it became a lot more than just an easy class, I was brought aware of historic events and cultural aspects I had never heard of. I was in awe of our history and the brightness of our culture. Furthermore I took Spanish literature my senior year and became much more intrigued by all the beauty and depths the writers had to offer, about history, struggle and independence. It was then that I realized I wanted to know more and that I wanted to teach.

My family includes myself, two older siblings, two younger siblings and my parents. My parents did not have a high school education, and although they tried to learn English, our necessity for money did not give them the time to finish learning. I help them by making phone calls for them and making sure their concerns are known. I attend their doctor appointments and parent teacher conferences for my younger siblings with them whenever I can and help them communicate and understand any issues at hand. My father has struggled to find jobs as he reaches his retirement age, he has had to find any work that is at his reach. Currently, he has held our household by doing his own yard services on the weekends and during the week, working at a construction company individually owned by his brother. My mother has also been working part time jobs and with their salaries together they still come short when paying the rent and bills. I have worked since the age of fourteen, my freshman year in high school, it began as a summer job but eventually stuck throughout the school year. I was motivated to work because I understood that my parents were working part time jobs and learned that we were a low income family. I felt guilty asking them for lunch money and for not being able to treat them to dinners because they deserved it. I continued to work throughout high school and helped my family with buying groceries and anything else that I could. Currently I have taken on responsibilities for some utility bills to relieve my parents from some stress. Financial resources are extremely tight, however, these obstacles have challenged me to prioritize my responsibilities and helped me

manage my time. My efforts to achieve my educational goals has had these challenges and continues to do so. The obstacles that I face in reaching the college degree are the financial issues and the family ones as well. My father has worked extremely hard, maintaining a family of six and I being the second out of four children to be off to college, he has really big dreams for my siblings and I and does all he can so that we can achieve them. Financial resources are extremely tight, I was not able to afford a car to go to work and to come to school until recently and have had to work a bit harder to keep myself financially stable. While I tried to save up for a car my siblings and I have had to rely on public transportation or walking to get to school and work. I am able to assist my family financially with the little work I do and I struggle with the idea of how they will survive when I leave to CSU Monterey Bay. Being at CSUMB is such a great opportunity and I am thrilled to finally be able to take classes that inspire me and encourage me to receive my degree. Although it is scary to finally be living on my own and paying rent, I intend to find all the means possible to stay in higher education.

I am a transfer from De Anza College, I was a shy student who kept to herself and let herself pass by through her classes. However, when I joined the Puente Program, I began to open up and began to allow myself to become a part of a community. In doing so, I was able to learn new ways of communicating with my peers and administrators and even helped me become a better employee in the workplace. Joining Puente helped me grow academically and personally and allowed me the chance to reach out and become part of a Latino community and have the “big family” I had always hoped for. Community is a concept I have always aspired to achieve, my family seldom participates in social events and strongly believes that being independent is important. For the most part I agree, but I believe a community builds support and allows us to have the opportunity to learn from one another and motivate each other to succeed. The Puente Program gave me the opportunity to be involved in endless opportunities, I found myself wanting to be a part of every event, I volunteered in mentor dinners and student-mentor activities. I volunteered in the Annual Latino Conference and was proud to represent the Puente Program at De Anza’s Open House this year. Being part of the Puente Program granted me access to utilize the SSRS services and it was such a helpful resource, being able to use the computers and printing services helped me struggle and stress less in accomplishing my assignments. Not only that but I had the opportunity to meet students from FYE and Sankofa. The SSRS became part of my college life, I created friendships that I am extremely thankful for. In essence, I have become part of a community that helps and motivates one another. Here is where I found a community that taught me the importance of lending a helping hand and that it is possible to build a community wherever I go. Through these experiences I have become motivated and encouraged to continue on to higher education and aspire to be an influential role model like many of the people who have inspired me. Receiving a scholarship would help me worry less about being a financial burden to my family and would assist me in my financial needs here at CSUMB. It would serve as a motivation to achieve my dream of being a successful Spanish teacher to it’s full potential. Also, receiving my education is motivation to succeed and show my gratitude to my family, mentors and community for everything they have done to help me achieve my dream.