A starry night on June 2011, I was setting my feet on American soil. As many others in the same situation, I came here with hopes and dreams, but most importantly, with plans to achieve them. My parents were born and raised in El Salvador, a small country in Central America. Unfortunately, they were raised in the middle of the Civil War, which consequently, turned their plans to attain a professional career unreachable and even dangerous. I was born in Queens, New York but was raised in El Salvador. My parents clearly had set a strategy that years later would come into action. Financial struggle should have been a reason for my parents to decide that public schools were the best option; instead, they decided to invest in my education. For this reason, I received my education at bilingual private schools my whole life. From that point in life, I realized how important education was. Education goes further beyond finding a job and earning a salary. Education gives you the opportunity not only to grow intellectually, but emotionally as well.

While I was developing ideas to write about; I received a letter inviting me to join the International Honor Society, Phi Theta Kappa. As I joyfully started reading the letter, tears fell uncontrollably from my eyes as I realized that education is an honor and a privilege; it is something that not everyone has the opportunity to have and I was being granted the opportunity to take advantage of it. Education opens doors that otherwise would be impossible to reach. General education courses help us engage in conversations that once would have been a completely unknown topic. They help us develop ideas and guide us to conclusions. By generating ideas, we are able to change our own lives, the lives of our family members, and also the nation. Coming to the United States without speaking fluent English and not even knowing the process of applying to college, yet being able to succeed, is a clear example that hard work is rewarding.
Education is so important that we need to set it as a priority; there is a verse in The Bible that says: “for wisdom is more precious than rubies, and nothing you desire can compare with her” (Proverbs 8:11). Education grants us essential abilities that we can use in our everyday lives, such as thinking more creatively, develop time management skills, speaking with confidence, and formulating relevant and well-thought-out questions. These skills are valued in the workplace and also when developing and maintaining interpersonal relationships. By possessing these characteristics, we are demonstrating we are competent, we are able to achieve higher positions in the workplace and we can acquire fulfilling relationships.

All of us are capable of achieving our goals if we acknowledge that we need to work for them; manual skills, memory skills or communicating appropriately in a social setting require time and commitment; and education is the pathway that leads to endless possibilities. I had the privilege of being invited to form part of a community that keeps pursuing knowledge, and to me that is in itself a key that will open many doors. Being a Biological Sciences major has opened my eyes to things that I would have never imagined. We are made from one small cell and become people who think, act and continue developing throughout our lives. Education goes beyond a classroom; it takes patience, practice and willingness to utilize the resources that nature gives us and transform them to things that will change society for the better. If we set goals and establish plans, we are sure to achieve what we want.

Being the first generation of my family to go to college is an honor that I respect and value. The United States is a country that offers many opportunities for succeeding and I definitely am cherishing every opportunity and every challenge; considering they are making me the person I am becoming. Bergen Community College has provided me the opportunity to continue learning from professors and classmates, every day I learn more about what it is to be a
competent student and being satisfied with the quality of my own work and pursue to be proficient in my area of expertise. It takes awareness and appreciation of education, for us to begin accomplishing goals.