It is important to find what you are passionate about, and to take strides towards acting upon that passion in your daily life. Bertilia Tavarez is passionate about being a role-model and helping people achieve their goals. As a Peer Tutor, Bertilia assists students who face difficulty in Chemistry and Biology courses. As a Teaching Assistant she is able to guide students through the content of Biology 117. Bertilia also mentored students who were new to Binghamton University as a Peer Mentor. As a Senior graduating with her degree in Biology, Bertilia’s goal is to become a doctor. Although it may appear that Bertilia has had a pleasant journey through college, her journey has been anything but easy. Like many students, Bertilia doubted her own ability to be successful. Although she lacked self-confidence, Bertilia overcame her struggle through the support of family, friends, SSS and peers.

As a sophomore, Bertilia joined the Louis Stokes Alliances for Minority Participation program (LSAMP). LSAMP aims to assist students from historically underrepresented minority groups graduate in math, science and engineering majors. LSAMP later exposed Bertilia to the Northeast Regional Alliance (NERA). NERA is a collection of medical schools that aim to assist underrepresented populations and economically disadvantaged students pursue a career in the medical field. The program allows students to receive free MCAT test prep, as well as shadow doctors in various settings. It was through NERA’s summer program that Bertilia first learned all that is expected from a doctor. After completing the summer program, Bertilia doubted her ability to be successful as a doctor.

Bertilia remembers the Fall semester after the summer program being stressful, as she tried to manage her social, professional and family life. Bertilia began to doubt herself because she could not imagine living the life of a doctor. She remembered feeling “scared, confused and trapped” during this time and was unsure of what to do. The self-doubt became so strong that Bertilia considered switching her major.

Self-reflection helped Bertilia remain focused and determined to reach her goals. Through self-reflection, Bertilia was able to remember what helped her become successful during her time at Binghamton University. By reaching out to peers in the NERA program, Bertilia found that she was not the only person who doubted their own ability. Family, friends and peers all encouraged Bertilia and made her believe that she was capable of becoming a doctor. The encouragement she received removed the nagging thoughts in her head about not being adequate enough. It also helped her understand that she was not alone in her struggle. Because of this support Bertilia is now a senior and will be entering medical school in Fall 2018.

Bertilia wants her peers to know that college will not be easy and that they may experience feelings of self-doubt as well. However, Bertilia recommends sharing these feelings with others which helps eliminates feelings of isolation, and also allows others the opportunity to point you to appropriate resources. Tutoring allows Bertilia to help students through their own self-doubt and encourages them to succeed. Bertilia will carry these lessons with her as she enters Medical School.

Please congratulate Bertilia for being selected for our second Student Spotlight. Congratulations Bertilia!