

My name is
**Kathy Danielle
 Valladares**

I'm a first generation student who takes extreme pride in being a Latina, a C.A.A.S.E student, and someone who is thriving regardless of the low income background I come from. I'm heavily involved with E.O.P. I'm starting a club in order to better help minorities and allies on campus. For example, creating outreach programs that would allow us to enhance and diversify this campus. I'm a peer mentor for the students I was leading during Summer Bridge. Seeing my students and their continuous growth makes me smile. Their maturity, love and willingness to help communities and the unbreakable will to help their families and people like them, astounds me. Being a Summer Bridge leader was such an incredible experience. For 11 days I got to be a cheerleader for students just like me. I'm a direct resource to them, not only academically but emotionally and mentally.

We, as a community, have a very specific experience and although they vary between individuals, having someone to share your frustrations regarding serious topics like economic status, the color of your skin and even immigration status, changes your perspective and motivates you to do everything to ensure your success. To see someone who shares your story, tells you "I can do this to," it's an empowering feeling. One that I'm honored to give my students, as my leaders and advisors do for me.

With my majors I intend to go into prison reform, changing the system into one that focuses on rehabilitation as opposed to reducing inmates to socially ostracized members of society that, by the end of it are completely dependent on the concrete walls they've been subjected to, is key. Recognizing the society we live in has broken them down and truly made them believe that, living a life of crime or not amounting to anything, is all they're meant for, is key. Converting these monopolies into reentry programs, compact with finance plans, modern upgrade education, counseling and just feeling wanted and human again, is key. With the system we have, we choose to continuously punish the people who, from the very beginning, have been neglected, abused, and exposed to toxic patterns. Why wouldn't we help those that need us the most?

I'm from San Francisco, where one experiences all walks of life; Sonoma was different. There are many people who don't think like me, believe what I believe and refuse to hear me out. It was difficult, but E.O.P taught me the power of empathy. I'm bettering the world by putting myself in their shoes and not immediately labeling them as bad people. This ties into my positive experience, E.O.P has taught me so much about myself and how to approach topics in order to educate both myself and the other person. Communication and education will allow us to speak to one another with the intention to understand each other and open our minds to seeing why we have different points of view.



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