

An Alumni Success Story To Inspire You

## ***Maribel's Story***

### **An essential step toward higher education**

"The EMP is an essential program for young people in foster care who want to earn Bachelor's Degrees. I know because I was one of those students! I attended SUNY College at Old Westbury in Long Island and graduated with a Bachelor's Degree in Psychology in 2013."

### **I had somewhere to go**

"I faced many challenges during my time in college, but the one that stands out most and was almost crippling was facing homelessness. My foster mom wasn't guaranteed to receive payment for allowing me to stay in her home after I aged out of foster care. I had nowhere else to go during school breaks. Thankfully, the EMP stepped in and made sure I was covered. They provided my foster mom with some financial support to allow me to remain in her home for the rest of my time in college. This was a game-changer for me. I was able to focus on school and make it to graduation, because I didn't have to worry about possibly being homeless. I was able to just be a student."

### **I went on to get a Master's in Social Work**

"After college, I worked for non-profit organizations in the child welfare sector. I'm currently a Social Worker for the Dept of Education. I also serve on the Board of a non-profit organization that supports other youth who have experienced foster care. My personal experience has always driven me to want to help young people live better lives."

### **Growing and giving back**

"In 5 years, I can see myself developing in my career as a Social Worker – and figuring out different ways to continue to support OHFF. I hope to also find ways to give back to my community and support other students who were in my shoes."

### **Work with a long-lasting impact**

"The EMP makes a huge difference in the lives of those students lucky enough to participate in this program. I'm so grateful for all the support I received. As with many other EMP graduates, that support changed my life...changed the way I show up....changed my future and my family's future."

