

***Cristal Montanez '11***

*Communication Studies major, Psychology minor / The Bronx, N.Y.*

*Career goal: Advocate for human rights, civil rights, and GLBT issues*

"I so appreciate financial aid for giving me the opportunity to study at Emerson," says Cristal Montanez. "Scholarships make it possible for students to do great things."

"In the neighborhood I grew up in, people were content to graduate from high school," she says. "They weren't even thinking about college." Her mother received a nursing degree from a community college, but Cristal and her siblings are the first in her family to attend four-year institutions, thanks to scholarship donations.

While at Emerson, she's been active with EBONI (Emerson's Black Organization with Natural Interests); Speak Up, a group which promotes multiculturalism; and Campus Conversations on Race, dedicated to enlightenment through storytelling – all while working part-time in the department for multicultural affairs. "I want to use my voice to promote social change," she says of her future career in advocacy. "I'm grateful for the chance my scholarship gave me to study at Emerson, where I feel I'm already beginning to make a difference."