

## **NANCY LOPEZ**

**Alliance/Merck *Ciencia* Scholar Class of 2011**

**Studying human biology and psychology at the University of California, Los Angeles**

**Interned at The National Institutes of Health**

Nancy was raised in South Central Los Angeles and commuted to one of the better schools in Venice Beach. She was always a strong student and was thrilled when her hard work paid off with an acceptance letter to UCLA and as a recipient of the Alliance/Merck *Ciencia* Scholars award. As the first one in her family to attend college these news were a victory for the whole family.

As an Alliance/Merck *Ciencia* Scholar, Nancy was accepted in UCLA's Clinical AIDS Research and Education (CARE) program. CARE sponsored her participation in the Annual Biomedical Research Conference for Minority Students (ABRCMS), where she won an award for her poster presentation.

Nancy's intelligence is coupled by her warmth, integrity and deep love for her family. During her sophomore year, Nancy moved back home following her parents' divorce. Nancy's mother, in addition to raising Nancy and her brother, adopted four of Nancy's cousins when her own sister became ill. Between working and raising a family, the emotional trauma of the divorce was too much for her mother to handle on her own. Instead of parties, Nancy now attends parent-teacher conferences. She takes her cousins to the movies and to the park and commutes to school.

With the support of the Scholars program, Nancy was selected to be an intern at the prestigious National Institutes of Health (NIH) in Bethesda, Maryland last summer. At the NIH, she worked in the Diabetes, Digestive and Kidney Diseases Institute (NIDDK) researching the impact of oral hypoglycemic medications on the bone health of diabetes patients.

Although Nancy was worried about leaving home, she had lots of support in making her decision. "My brother, my mom and my boyfriend: they're the reason that I'm here." When she's stressed out, Nancy and her brother have a ritual. He makes her coffee and they talk while dunking animal crackers into their cups.

Between school, work and spending time with family Nancy doesn't have much time for herself. "My friends are like 'Aren't you tired of spending time with your family?'" But Nancy says she wouldn't have it any other way.

Nancy will be taking the GRE exam to apply to graduate school programs and hopes to ultimately become a physician's assistant so that she can help sick children.