

Janane Al-Maliki didn't take an easy path on her way to getting her psychology undergraduate degree. The Palatine High School graduate attended William Rainey Harper College for two years, transferring to Northern Illinois as a junior. Combining work and college, Janane didn't miss a credit when she transferred, managing to graduate in four years.

"Janane definitely beat the odds," observed Miriam Castro. "Not many students can transfer and graduate in four years. She's a strong, capable student," observed Miriam Castro, a counselor at Palatine High School and EB211 mentor. "She is an amazing young woman, self-motivated and the most humble person I know. Janane won't complain about anything, but she had her moments, picked herself up and moved forward."

Sacrificing a typical college experience of fun and friends, Janane would return to the suburbs from NIU each weekend to work as a waitress. Yet, she found time to volunteer at DeKalb-area's *Universidad para Padres* (Parent University), a free program that empowers mothers, fathers and grandparents to take active roles in their own personal growth as well as their children's academic success.

Financial and time management challenges, admits Janane, often made her feel she should give up her goal. But then her cousins would encourage her to keep going or Miriam would come up with just the right motivation or help find another source of financial aid, and Janane would get right back on track.

"There were times when I felt like I should quit so I could work full time and save money," said Janane. "But having Miss Castro in my cheering section made me feel like I could keep going. She made me feel like I didn't have to give up."

Aware that she might benefit from more experience with children, this summer she is working as a pre-school teacher.