

## Career Panel: Alondra shares her experience

In January, EVkids students were invited to participate in a virtual Career Panel, organized by the EVkids Youth Council. **Alondra O.**, a longtime EVkids program participant and Youth Council member, currently studying Health & Society at UMass Dartmouth, reports back:

Attending the recent career panel was a valuable and insightful experience that highlighted the importance of hearing directly from professionals across diverse fields. Career panels provide students with firsthand knowledge about various career paths, challenges in the professional world, and actionable advice for navigating our futures. This panel was particularly impactful due to the diverse backgrounds of the speakers and their candid reflections on their journeys.



[EVkids Board Member] **Kenaya Washington** is a licensed child care provider. She talked about how, even though she misses her old job, she's happy where she is now because she's making a meaningful impact on children's lives. Her story emphasized the importance of finding fulfillment in one's work.

**Valerie Basnight** is the Director of Giving at EVKids. She gave great advice about exploring different career paths. She said it's okay if you don't have good examples to follow, don't let that hold you back. She emphasized the importance of not being afraid to explore different paths, even when we may lack role models or clear examples to follow.



*Alondra in her senior year of high school with Grace (BC '25), who stepped in as her tutor for her final semester*

**Juan Concepción** is the Senior Legal Director of Global Employment at Boston Scientific. His mantra, "If it's meant to be, it's up to me," was particularly inspiring, highlighting the importance of personal accountability and determination. He talked about how having a mentor helped him a great deal and how his faith gave him peace and direction. One aspect that stood out was his experience as a highly successful professional who often faces assumptions that discredit or belittle his achievements. His advice to stand your ground and hold your head high despite these challenges was both empowering and encouraging.

Each of the panelists shared stories that left a big impression on me. Their advice was inspiring and gave me practical ideas for handling challenges and exploring my career path.

**You can help other EVkids students access resources to help them succeed at school and at life: give today!**