

## *2010 Tribute to Women Honoree (Young Leader) – Monica Ibarra*



A Gates Millennium Scholar, Monica Ibarra is a Creighton University nursing student and hopes to be the first in her family to earn a college degree. She lives life with the goal to make a positive impact in the lives of others as she pushes through her own obstacles and challenges.

Born into a migrant farm worker family, Ibarra's serious condition of Lupus brought her family to Omaha where she could be treated without medical insurance. Just last year, as a result of chemotherapy, she lost her hair. Although it was difficult to do so, she discarded her hats with the idea of

educating people about Lupus when they ask about her hair.

Recognized by others as a "change agent," Ibarra helps people grow in awareness of misconceptions or biases. In the process she has a positive impact in the lives of others. Ibarra, who did not learn English until she started elementary school, has worked to create awareness in groups that she is a member of such as Creighton's highly selective, Freshman Leadership Program (FLP) and Campus Ministry. She also has a strong leadership role in planning and implementing the annual Creighton University Latino Student Association (CULSA) Banquet. At South High School she increased Latino pride for all students as an officer for Latino Leaders.

Ibarra continues to show generosity of spirit, giving back to the community and encouraging others. She continues to mentor other female students and volunteers at Gates Weekend Workshops to help others in getting through the application process. Without limits to her passion for mentoring, she also serves as a Peer 2 Peer mentor for Student Support Services (SSS), a federally funded program for low income and first generation students; Peer 2 Peer helps entering freshman make the transition into Creighton.

Ibarra is action oriented and if she sees a problem, she is determined to find a solution. Recognizing the need to encourage Latino high school students from South Omaha to attend college, Ibarra and a few of her peers created a conference for students and parents called *College is Possible*.

Twenty year-old Ibarra has garnered the Heartland Leadership Conference Scholarship and the Student Support Services Ambassador Award and continues to excel in the community in spite of obstacles and challenges. Ibarra, this year's Young Leader, is positive, compassionate, ambitious and committed to helping others.