**Name:** Karla Mendez

**Year in Course:** 1st (Sophomore)

**Topic:** Child & Adolescent Psychology, Negative Behaviors, Motivation,

**Mentor:** N/A

**Title:** An Investigation into the Impact of Youth Experiences and their Influence on Negative Behaviors in Children and Adolescence

**Bio:**

Karla Mendez is a sophomore at Pawling High School and has enjoyed her journey while being in the Science Research Program. Along with being in the Research Program she is also in an AP class, both classes helping her build her work ethic. Science has always been one of her favorite classes to take and along with her interest and passion for psychology she saw that taking Science Research was a good decision. If not reading, Karla is on the Varsity Dance team for winter and spring, with all of the rigorous work dance is a great way she distresses. Not only is dance good to blow off steam but the other members of the dance team have become family. Karla is part of the art club at her school. Being part of the art club includes painting murals, doors, and set pieces for drama club, visiting art galleries, and creating our best pieces of art for the end of the year Night of the Arts. She has been in the school art club since the 5th grade. She is also part of literary society where the members create any type of literature and then after being approved the work is posted on the website the club has put together. Drama club is another activity she enjoys, she has been in drama club since the 8th grade. In drama she is in the stage crew, moving all of the set pieces at rehearsal and at the shows. In the future Karla hopes to become a child/adolescent psychologist and work in juvenile detention centers or privately, but I want to help struggling youth overall.

Her interest in psychology began when she started to explore mental illness in youth and possible reasons why youth struggles with their mental health. She started to read more into youth psychology and saw that there was not much research on youth that has committed crimes and youth with concerning negative behaviors. Therefore she set out to investigate how experiences and influences the youth has can affect them in a negative way and how this can lead to them committing crime and the youth’s motivation for crime. Taking in consideration the motivation, upbringing, influences, experiences, and external environment.