My sister is a helicopter paramedic/emergency nurse and works in towns that border Mexico and Texas. These areas are some of the most violent areas in the U.S. and perhaps the world. Despite risking her own life daily, my sister fiercely serves people, saves lives and does it well. In my first semester here I struggled tremendously and wanted to give up. In expressing this to my sister she replied in a way I will never forget–she said “Every day I have to make choices that can save or take lives- these moments are life altering opportunities. It is these moments that no matter how much you have prepared or done means nothing if you can’t deliver- now get yourself together, see this through and deliver!” This for me is the essence of a true public health practitioner. Education and preparation in order to deliver

As I think in my own journey I was only able to deliver because I am I am surrounded by people who care enough to take the time to understand. For me, the example that my faculty and peers, specifically my rock and partner in all my crimes Emily Field, have given through their commitment to people inspires me daily. I have to mention Emily because this award is more hers than mine and she has seen me through this whole experience bearing my burdens with me. Thank You.

My education at AUB has been more than an academic exercise. It has taught me that despite the absurdity and corruption that adulterates our lives and permeates everything we do, we still find it within ourselves to work hard and care. We hope. We see the best in people. We create a space of love amiss all the pain and sometimes we heal. I use to think life is full of moments that can either lead to opportunities or disasters. But in my time here, I have gained the invaluable lesson that life is not black and white and in those disasters, like my sister says, are opportunities- you just have to commit to seeing it through. And how do we get this strength to endure? The answer is in the art of public health practice- it is the skill of being able to see that most likely where the biggest problem lies, no matter how life shattering, is most often where the greatest opportunity is born. And as Dr. Makhoul says- it always begins with putting people first.