

# Embudo Valley Tutoring Association Newsletter



## Creative writing and confidence-building motivates!

SEPT. 2025

Reign Snell, EVTA remote tutor since 2024, has celebrated success with two neurodivergent teenage students. The boys have different curricula, learning styles and challenges. This tutoring match has lasted over a year and is going strong. The brothers are home-schooled and Reign tutors them remotely via Google Meet.

The younger student is 14 years old and one of his challenges is dyslexia. He perceives printed words in a different way from average learners. However, if he hears the word, he will understand and be able to use the word appropriately in contexts. Spelling is a challenge because of the common dyslexia issue of transposing letters. Reign, who is an author in her own right, uses creative writing and extra-sensory exercises to help this student identify words and word families. For example, he needs to see the word first, tell the tutor what he sees, and then he is coached through what the word looks like and then he writes it down. The process is called, Hear - Say - See words. In Reign's words, "getting it wrong is part of the learning and allows for room to grow."

To identify authentic writing subjects, the student chooses his topics and then makes a pitch to the tutor, advocating for his chosen writing topic. This allows for creativity through self-direction.

The older sibling is 16 years old and as Reign shared, "he is an absolutely brilliant young adult." This brother does not have dyslexia. His neurodivergence shows up in his challenges

with verbal expression. Writing isn't an issue for him and he creates art as well. To help her mentee, Reign chooses images as inspiration for his writing assignments. It has taken some time to build confidence and a learning relationship between mentor & mentee through processing and then expressing in a safe environment."All



children need this and neurodivergent students more so. Growth comes from his ability to think critically and express himself," explains Reign. He is now taking an extra-credit college class at UNM-Taos. This school year will be a journey to expose him to most every form of writing that is found in higher education. In anticipation of future challenges, "We will be exploring different kinds of academic writing and the expectations of college professors," Reign says.

*The following information was submitted by Ida Marie Martinez who tutors at the Peñasco Independent Schools.*

"What stood out (in my practice) is that students enjoyed learning and benefited from using math games. I especially liked that mentees took the initiative at times to share and explain their thinking on how they solved a math problem which would be beneficial to working with a partner," reflects Marie.

### **Case studies: Mentee 1**

At the beginning of the school year a particular 5th grade student was shy and lacked self-confidence. She knew multiplication facts for 0,1, 2, and 5. She struggled with division facts, was unable to read 6 digit numbers, and had difficulty with understanding and solving multi-step word problems.

Luckily Ida (Marie) has a large bag of tricks and practice techniques in her knowledge bank from years of teaching. Everyday Mathematics Multiplication/Division Card Games, timed multiplication and division facts practice using worksheets (education.com), and skip counting using a number chart were used to improve fluency. Using a hundred thousands place value chart with number cards 0-9 helped with fluency in number recognition and reading the number correctly. I saw a dramatic improvement in both multiplication/division fluency( facts 0-11) and she exhibited improvement in her self

confidence (as a math student).

### **Mentee 2**

At the beginning of the school year this 1st grade student was unable to count 100. She didn't know how to say teen numbers 13-19. Addition and subtraction within 10



*Ida Marie Martinez*

was challenging and she lacked the understanding of number place value. With practice, by the end of the year, this student was able to count to 100 fluently! She made improvements adding/subtracting numbers within 20 as well. I used Magnetic Ten Frames. Practice Worksheets (education.com), first grade Everyday Mathematics Card Games, number bonds, and hundreds-tens-ones place value charts using counting blocks, rods and cubes.

Marie's responsiveness and sensitivity to her students' needs are the key to her their success and positive growth.

# HOW TO CONTACT EMBUDO VALLEY TUTORING ASSOCIATION

## FOR SERVICES:

1. If your child attends Dixon Elementary, Velarde Elementary, or Anansi Charter School, please ask your child's teacher to contact EVTA by e-mailing [info@evtanm.org](mailto:info@evtanm.org)
2. If your child attends Enos Garcia or Penasco community schools, please contact your community school coordinator.
3. If your child is homeschooled or attends another school not mentioned above, please fill out the contact form on EVTA's website. Go to [embudovalleytutoring.org](http://embudovalleytutoring.org). Click on "Contact Us" at the top of the Home page to access the form. OR e-mail EVTA directly at [info@evtanm.org](mailto:info@evtanm.org)



## To make a donation:

1. Access EVTA's website at [embudovalleytutoring.org](http://embudovalleytutoring.org) and click on the "Donate" button on the Home page.
2. Send a donation through Paypal at [paypal.me/tutoringassociation](https://paypal.me/tutoringassociation)
3. Send a check to Embudo Valley Tutoring Association at P.O. Box 267, Dixon, NM 87527

For further information:

- 1 Website: [embudovalleytutoring.org](http://embudovalleytutoring.org)
2. Check out our page on [greatnonprofits.org](http://greatnonprofits.org) by searching for Embudo Valley Tutoring Association.
3. Contact Eva Behrens, EVTA's director, [eva@evtanm.org](mailto:eva@evtanm.org)



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