Valentina’s Story

Like most kids, Valentina has never found math fun. That is, until she started United Way M.A.T.H. (Mastering Algebra Together Houston).

United Way M.A.T.H. trains eighth-graders on the academic bubble to become student leaders and tutors to sixth-graders who are also struggling in math. The program improves Algebra I passage rates through increased hands-on experience with math, by making career connections and through peer-to-peer tutoring.

Valentina is an eight-grader and a United Way M.A.T.H. tutor. After being trained by instructors, she began tutoring a sixth-grade student. The tutoring sessions have helped both students develop math skills and improve their grades.

“Before my grades had been 60s, 70s, sometimes 50s,” Valentina says. “Then, since I joined United Way, my grades have gone up to the 80s, 90s, sometimes 100.”

Landrum Middle School Assistant Principal Brian Schhillungburg is seeing similar results among his students. “94 percent of our United Way M.A.T.H. students have passed the STAAR test. And 100% of them have shown more than a year’s growth towards their allotted year of growth,” he says.

Valentina and her tutee have seen other benefits from United Way M.A.T.H. Algebra was once intimidating to Valentina, but now, she is confident that she can master it. She hopes she is passing that confidence on to her tutee as well.

“Before, I was terrified of math. But with United Way, I realize math is actually really easy,” she says. “United Way has prepared me for Algebra. I think it has prepared me a lot.”