



Assessing Our Progress in the Community

“EduTutorVA is an organization that is facing head-on the challenges we are facing following COVID-related school closures in 2020 and 2021. By matching Virginia K-12 students that are falling behind in math and reading with aspiring educators, they are helping to solve two of the biggest challenges in the education sector: learning loss and teacher shortages.”

Senator Mark Warner



In early March, EduTutorVA gathered founders, supporters, and, most importantly, tutors for a discussion of the educational needs of students in Northern Virginia’s Title 1 schools. We were honored to be welcomed by the remarks by Senator Mark Warner. He concluded his talk by saying he was looking forward to seeing EduTutorVA’s expansion across the Commonwealth and to bringing high-impact tutoring to more students in need.

During the program, we heard from four of our outstanding tutors. Here are some highlights from the panel presentation ably moderated by former President and CEO of The National Association of State Boards of Education and FCPS School Board Chair, Kris Amundson.

Joseph Rolen, one of EduTutorVA’s more recent tutors, is now working at Walt Whitman Middle School in Fairfax County. He will be transferring from NVCC to George Mason University next year where he will be majoring in Elementary Education. Joe told the group, “I have recently gone back to school after being in the workforce for a few years. I wanted to pursue my passion in life which is working with children and becoming a teacher. I have loved how EduTutorVA allows me to help students who have fallen behind while also allowing me to practice my role as a teacher. My students have already shown growth in mathematics over the last couple of months, and I have absolutely gotten better at teaching and lesson planning.”



Kelly Rodas Hernandez, a tutor at Westlawn Elementary School, also in Fairfax County, is a George Mason student who transferred from NVCC. Kelly is a native Spanish speaker, like many of our students, and is active in community organizations which support underserved populations. She engaged the audience with her personal story: “When I entered elementary school, I was put into ESOL classes, and I worked my way up to IB classes in high school. Now, I am a first-generation college student, and I want to be someone who can guide other students in achieving their goals, climbing the ladder, and taking advantage of their education. Right now, EduTutorVA is my way of giving back to my community’s children.”



Laurie Blakeman is EduTutorVA’s most senior tutor, having joined us from our first month in 2020. A Naval Academy graduate and now a PhD candidate in Math Education Leadership at George Mason University, Laurie tutors at Whitman Middle School and Westlawn Elementary School in Fairfax County. Laurie shares math strategies with other tutors during our office hours and workshops.

Zulmy Hernandez, a second-year tutor at William Ramsay Elementary School in Alexandria, is a native Spanish speaker who plans to transfer from NVCC to George Mason University to complete a degree in Elementary Education. Zulmy remarked that she has benefited from the ongoing professional learning and collaboration opportunities EduTutorVA provides. A unique feature of our program is how our tutors learn from each other through our supportive professional learning platforms, under the facilitation of our Executive Director, Meredith Fortner, a master educator and teacher trainer.

As we plan to expand to our fourth Northern Virginia school system — three new schools in Prince William County — a highlight of our season was a successful fundraiser and delightful in-person contact with our expanding network of support.

If you would like to join us in this effort to support students in Virginia:
Donate online through our fiscal agent-
The Community Foundation of Northern Virginia: <http://www.cfnova.org/donate/edututorva>
or directly, via the donate tab: [HOME | EduTutorVA](#)
or by check to *The Community Foundation of Northern Virginia*, citing EduTutorVA in the memo line at: 2940 Hunter Mill Road, Suite 201, Oakton, Virginia 22124

***With Wishes of Peace for All Children Around the World,
The Executive Board of EduTutorVA***