

Winner: Middle School Second Place



by Mary A. Vidaurri
Seventh Grade

What Tutoring Means to Me

Tutoring is so much more to me than walking into a classroom talking to some kids and explaining things to them. A part of it is making a child smile and learn something at the same time and other little things like that. When my little, fourth grade tutees learn something new and proudly display the new skill they've just learned, my heart melts. I think to myself then, I just prepared him just a tad bit more for the future. Tutoring to me means teaching my tutees, but learning in return, preparing them academically and to have a passion for what I do.

There's a little exchange of knowledge going on between me and my tutees. I teach them to excel in reading, grammar, science, and occasionally math and science. In exchange, unknowingly, they teach me valuable life lessons found only in a child's heart. They've taught me to smile more often, say good morning or good afternoon to someone who passes by or to just be me. I don't try to impress anyone for them to be my friends or act like a different person. They've taught me that friends are only friends if they accept you for who you are. It's strange how being around children who haven't experienced that much peer pressure are different than those who have. There's so much to learn from them. That's just part of being a tutor.

The main goal of tutoring seems to be to prepare them academically, and I'm doing my best to do just that. I especially want them to read more. I discovered the joy of reading chapter books in second grade. They're in fourth grade and haven't yet read a chapter book. The teacher says they're not prepared. But one really bright tutee named Carlos* asked me one day: "Mary I've read some short chapter books at home, and I really liked them. I was wondering if I could check one out some day." I responded, "I think you can, but just to make sure, I'll ask the teacher." The teacher said "No he can't, he'll probably fail the test." I know he won't, in my heart, but just to please the teacher I am going to work him up to a fourth grade level. That's two levels above his, and I'm making it my goal to have my tutees be at a normal reading level.

Another thing tutoring means to me is to have a passion for it. If there's no passion, what will feed the flame you feel to make your tutees succeed? Passion for what you do is fundamental in every career path and organization. Without passion you will lose your tutees' interest and won't get across to them. You might as well be speaking another language.

Tutoring to me means so much to me, it's hard to fit it all in one essay. Teaching might be my calling, but I'm not so certain right now. One thing is for sure, I love tutoring!



*name changed for privacy