



NEWS RELEASE

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Fontana Unified Middle School Students, Teacher Recognized by Learning Company for Improving Math Skills

FONTANA, CA – Truman Middle School eighth-graders Iris Tovar and Keila Molina Hernandez have been recognized 2021 Houghton Mifflin Houghton (HMH) 180 Award winners – an honor given to just 30 students across the country – for their perseverance in overcoming past struggles with math and displaying academic progress.

Tovar and Molina Hernandez were lauded for exhibiting engagement, consistency, and perseverance in class, where Truman Middle School math intervention teacher Sahar Yahya uses the HMH Math 180 curriculum to help students learn and grow through a digital framework that provides daily goals and instant assessments.

“I enjoy the HMH program because it gives examples to make it easier and shows you how you can use math in real life, and how math is important in every part of your life,” Tovar said. “I wouldn’t be able to accomplish this without the commitment of Mrs. Yahya. HMH has helped change my whole mindset about math.”

Yahya was also recognized as a 2021 HMH 180 Award winner, one of just 20 educators in the U.S. to receive the distinction. Yahya was one of the first Fontana Unified teachers to implement Math 180 into their curriculum, introducing the program to Truman in 2013.

“This is very encouraging to me. I can see how the program is changing the attitudes of my students. The award will push me to do even better,” Yahya said. “Math 180 is about developing a growth mindset in students who feel they can never succeed. I am so proud of Iris and Keila. They are rising to the challenge and pushing themselves hard. It’s a wonderful thing to see.”

Tovar was recognized for completing 46 sessions in Math 180, with a minimum of 50 minutes per session since the start of the school year. Molina Hernandez completed 46 sessions with a minimum of 41 minutes per session.

“I think Math 180 has helped me see that I am good at math,” Molina Hernandez said. “My word problems always get solved in a very easy and fun way with Mrs. Yahya. I enjoy Math 180 because I can do my best and earn good grades.”

Yahya is used to students admonishing her to not even try teaching them math, because they are certain they will never learn. Math 180 is embedded into her math intervention class, which provides 1:1 individualized guidance and instruction in a more relaxed setting and allows students to work at their own pace, getting real time feedback and assessments.

Even students who have displayed behavior that has held them back academically become motivated enough to work from bell to bell, Yahya said, adding that she occasionally hears from former students who are now in high school and thank her for helping them bolster their math skills and strategies.

“Congratulations to Iris and Keila on receiving this well-deserved recognition for their dedication to learning, and to Sahar Yahya for her commitment to helping every one of her students succeed,” Fontana Unified Superintendent Randal S. Bassett said. “Their stories demonstrate that with a growth mindset and the support of Fontana Unified’s teachers and staff, no goal is out of reach.”

PHOTO CAPTION:

FUSD_HMH: Truman Middle School eighth-graders Iris Tovar and Keila Molina Hernandez and Truman math intervention teacher Sahar Yahya have been recognized by Houghton Mifflin Houghton as 2021 HMH 180 Award winners.

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