

Just a few weeks ago, we said goodbye to student Jailenes Santos as she set out to attend college. Jailenes joined Reading Connections in April of last year. When she first entered the program, she told us how much she wanted to attend SCAD (Savannah College of Art and Design) to earn her Master's in Graphic Design. Jailenes studied English in Puerto Rico where she is from. She just needed a little push and guidance in improving her confidence and her skills to apply to SCAD.

Jailenes was matched with Tutor Patricia Anderson and they met nearly every week for 15 months to improve Jailenes' confidence in speaking and conversation, reading and writing, and even worked to submit Jailenes' college applications. Jailenes shared with us that a particular TED talk that Pat introduced to her was a significant point in their tutoring sessions which helped build her confidence in speaking English. Pat helped her see just how much English she really knew.

Pat had this to say about her student, "Jaily has been a delight, always thinking and inquisitive. She is like a sponge, the way she absorbs information. While she started at a very high level, she was looking for lots of practice in speaking and conversation. We did a fair amount of practice reading aloud, but also lots of plain old talking. I know I learned as much from her as she did from me!"

We are so proud that Jailenes accomplished her goal and was accepted to SCAD, but that's not all. During her time at Reading Connections, she improved her reading over three grade levels! Jailenes hopes to finish her program by 2021 and though she's unsure of what type of position she would like to pursue, we know that she will accomplish whatever she sets her sights on!

*Anna Ridener, High Point Program Coordinator*