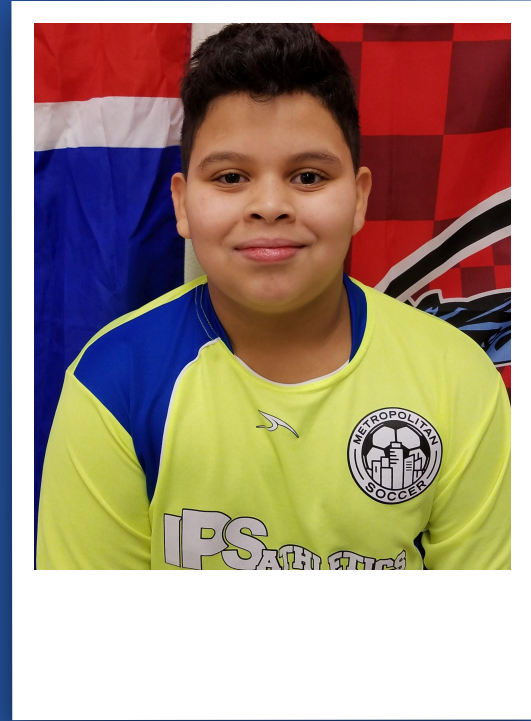


Emanuel Villatoro



Mrs. Villatoro (Mother)

Thank you to GPA @ Riverside 44, the teachers, students, and support teams. My son Emanuel was a student who had a hard time finding motivation to wake up to attend school Monday-Friday, and lacked the confidence to try in his academics let alone his social interactions with his peers. He was a student that suffered an emotional battle, fighting himself to find the confidence, pride, and love for who he was. After attending GPA, we saw a huge difference in him both academically and socially. He joined Futsal team and other athletic teams, seeking opportunities to be involved. He transformed into the student who not only was up early in the morning to attend school, but also on weekends waking us up early to drive him to school so that he can attend his games. He loves his school, his teachers, and his coaches. They all have wrapped their arms around him and have taught him how to love himself, and how to find his confidence in things he feels successful.

We are extremely proud of him in his transition over the past 2 years and we are looking forward watching him grow as a leader in the classroom, but now on the court as he has become not only a student, but a student-athlete.







Austin Bolyard (GPA Futsal Coach)

Last year GPA was introduced to futsal for the first time. After learning about the history of the game and learning the basics of how to play, GPA had 3 (4th-6th grade) futsal teams compete in the IPS league. We had one "Varsity" team and two "JV" teams.

At first Emanuel was on the JV team. He was the one student who always asked how he can do better and how he can play on the varsity team. I told him to keep practicing and that he also needed to improve his behavior in class. Emanuel use to have behavior problems with his classmates which affected his grades.

He practiced everyday after school during boys and girls club and quickly improved. He also started to improve in class with both his behavior and grades. He was doing his best to earn a spot on the varsity team. Futsal was and still is his motivation. It gives him something to work for, he loves the sport.

Austin Bolyard (GPA Futsal Coach) Continued

Emanuel got into one fight with a teammate on the futsal team. Usually if a student gets in a fight, they get removed from the team. But I gave Emanuel the chance to prove to me that he deserved to continue playing on the team because I knew how important futsal was/is to him. His punishment was to work 25 volunteer hours in the gym after school.

I never thought I'd see a kid so thankful to work 25 volunteer hours. Emanuel and his parents were very thankful that we gave him a second chance. Every day for weeks he would come to my office after school and ask what his job was for the day. He quickly worked his hours off and got his spot on the varsity team. The rest of the year his grades improved and he didn't get into any fights and still hasn't to this day. (He just recently got student of the month for 6th graders and is on pace to earning his leadership jacket.)

Emanuel became one of our best players out of all 30+ futsal players. He got to play in multiple futsal tournaments including the 2017 IPS Playoffs, 2018 US Futsal Midwest Regionals and the 2018 Mayors International Futsal Cup. Emanuel also had the honor of doing the ribbon cutting for our new GPA Futsal court. We're now getting ready for year 2 of futsal and he is one of the team captains!

It's amazing to see how a sport can impact a student athlete in so many ways. I'm extremely proud of Emanuel and look forward to helping him continue to grow in futsal and as a GPA student.

