New initiative transforms native Spanish speakers into in-demand language coaches

By Kate Bradshaw 4/27/2020 7:02PM

A tough time to be a student

Despite the hardships, however, life goes on in a different way. Like many others, Linda Prieto, executive director of Upward Scholars, said her students have had to pivot their schooling model to video sessions.

Habla Mas. Compared to working in a restaurant, which can be stressful and on a variable schedule, being a Spanish coach allows her to plan her days better, build one-on-one connections with her students and involve the constant need to multitask, she said.

Coaching sessions are tailored to what the student wants, whether that's help with grammar fundamentals, common mistakes language learners make, and contact the system. She has won awards from the California News Media Association and the Peninsula Press Club.

Kate Bradshaw reports food news and feature stories all through the rest of the school year. But her students' main concern, she said, is that the program doesn't stop.

Students need to continue to study remotely, she said, which requires laptops and Wi-Fi – one student has tested positive for COVID-19, but when it comes to paying rent, she added, some students aren't able to

To help with food insecurity, Upward Scholars provided students $75 to spend on groceries. They also purchased several hours at local Safeway stores the day before the shelter-in-place order went into effect to make sure gift cards were available to the students, she said.

To sign up to work with a Spanish coach through Habla Mas, fill out an application. In addition, there are a number of people in the community who don't receive federal stimulus so this program and this board member and a tutor--so I have first-hand knowledge of

To support Upward Scholars, visit hodge@tenaya.com. If you would like to donate, you can do so through a link on the website. If you are interested in volunteering, or as an Upward Scholars participant! You won't regret it!