



The Hope Online Class of 2011

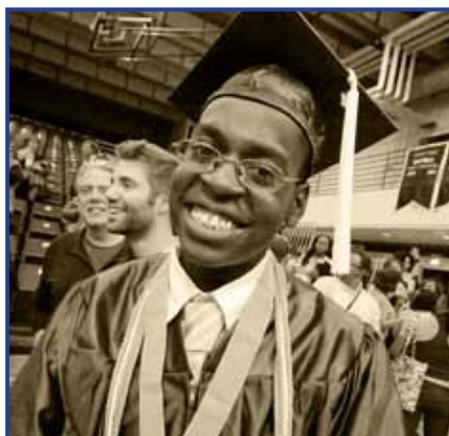
Walking In Hope: The Class of 2011

Escorted by the supportive parents, directors, mentors and individuals who affirmed their potential and dreams of graduating, members of the Hope Online Class of 2011 proudly entered the Auraria Campus Events Center on Thursday, May 26th as a full-capacity crowd rose to acknowledge their achievement.

Hope Online Chief Academic Officer Sherida Peterson officially presented one hundred fifty-three graduation candidates at the formal commencement exercises. The celebratory evening was punctuated with uplifting student testimonies of obstacles overcome while earning their diplomas.

This year's spirited and determined class included several first-generation graduates and many more students who persevered through significant family struggles as well as a variety of learning setbacks. In unison, they applauded heartily as two classmates described how they had discovered hope for their futures by prioritizing their education at the Douglas County School District charter school.

"It has been a dream for my family and me to be in this place with you this evening celebrating my graduation and the continuation of my education," Alvaro Portillo Olivas, a native of Chihuahua, Mexico who studied at Hope Online's IAmAcademy, shared during his student address.



Class Valedictorian Jared Hudson



Commencement Speaker Alvaro Portillo Olivas

Testifying to the heartbreak of leaving his parents behind in Mexico to pursue an education, the newly motivated graduate explained that the sacrifice had only been worth it because, "I wanted to accomplish greater things in life for my family and me." Now, Alvaro will work to earn money for his college education.

Class Valedictorian Jared Hudson's inspirational speech detailed his transformation, after years of bullying and his mother's untimely death, from a "shy, fearful person, closed in a shell," to the charismatic and confident scholar he became at Hope Online's Hillcrest Academy. "I've found my voice and... I enjoy using it," he announced confidently to the audience. Jared plans to study English with an emphasis in creative writing at the University of Northern Colorado.

"Each year, many Hope Online graduates further their education despite their previous at-risk status. That is why we exist – to provide an environment where students are able to learn and acquire an education that promotes confidence and leads to higher achievements," confirmed Hope Online CEO and Founder Heather O'Mara, who encouraged the graduates to acknowledge and emulate those who had helped them achieve their goals by using their education to serve others.



Greetings from the Chief Executive Officer

This past year, and in the five preceding it, I have enjoyed many happy memories of teachers, directors, mentors, staff and other partners in education coming together for the sake of our students and their futures. As

I reflect, I am aware of numerous individuals in our midst who have contributed to our determined and hopeful school spirit. I think of them as heroes.

We love our heroes because they battle through adversity and almost always end up triumphant. We need our heroes because they show us how to persevere with optimism. Heroes grapple with difficulty, and therefore, they have earned the credibility to inspire us toward hope for bigger and better accomplishments. As Walter Anderson wisely reminds us:

“True hope dwells on the possible, even when life seems to be a plot written by someone who wants to see how much adversity we can overcome. True hope responds to the real world, to real life; it is an active effort.”

In other words, true hope is neither elusive nor undefined. Rather, hope is most real and most tangible when it initiates action through practical determination and engagement. Here at Hope Online, I continue to be inspired by very real and positive responses to life in the face of adversity. I witness the power of hope across generations, neighborhoods, leadership, staff and students. I hear stories that make me proud to be part of a team where persevering is a way of life – where our “active effort” responds to many issues and needs on a daily basis.

Recently, I was particularly uplifted by the narratives shared during Hope Online’s My Hero Celebration. Third through fifth grade students’ stories described the hardship their heroes had endured due to illness, sacrifice for those less fortunate, the loss of family members, working several jobs, struggling through financial difficulty and putting others first. Each story conveyed the heartfelt compassion with which their heroes had served others with an uncompromising will to move beyond their struggles.

Isn’t that what Hope Online is all about? Isn’t that what heroes are all about? My challenge for you in the coming year is...choose to be a hero!

Sincerely,
Heather O’Mara



The First Annual “Dancing Across Cultures” Performance

“Dancing Across Cultures,” hosted by Hope Online and presented by Hillcrest Academy, celebrated Mexican and African cultures and the beautiful folk dances that portray their shared history.

Complimenting Janelle Ayon, dance artist and instructor, Hope Online CEO Heather O’Mara commented, “Ms. Ayon did a fabulous job bringing our students together for an affirming lesson in both history and dance. The evening was entertaining and instructional; it was a winning combination for everyone, especially our students.”

Featuring a repertoire of dances from Mexican states, the program progressed from one lively piece to the next. While some dances displayed amazing artistry and poise, others featured “viejitos” (the Spanish word for “old men”) with canes and still others were performed in masks and colorful warrior costumes. The variety of choreography, learned in six weeks, and the enthusiasm of the youthful dancers from Hope Online’s Hillcrest Academy, along with an intermission performance from veteran blues musician Otis Taylor, delighted the crowd of students, parents, teachers, mentors and Hope Online staff.

“I do a lot of outreach to schools. I have never enjoyed a more rewarding experience,” Ms. Ayon explained. “Your students are so talented, so kind-hearted and they genuinely love one another. They are like a big family,” she added to her appreciative closing remarks.



DAC Instructor Janelle Ayon greets an appreciative audience



Historical costumes highlighted DAC performances



Hope Online folklorico dancers perform La Danza de los Viejitos



2011 Prom

"Monte Carlo Night"



The popular Crystal Rose provided a perfectly enchanting ambience for this year's "Monte Carlo Night" prom celebration. Special prize-based gaming, an all-request music deejay, a quick-flash photo booth, delicious banquet fare and all-night dessert and soda buffets made the evening unforgettable for Hope Online students, their friends and dates. In addition to festive formal attire, students wore bright smiles as they participated in the array of evening activities.

"It was so gratifying to hear students commenting on the wonderful time they were having throughout the event," shared Hope Online Administrative Services Manager Melanie Stone.

"In particular, students enthusiastically thanked the Hope Online staff, sharing that they had enjoyed "the best time ever."

The prom king and queen, selected for their academic achievement and community service, were crowned and applauded before the dancing began. Jared Hudson, a Hope Online senior from Hillcrest Academy, was the Prom King, and Laina Broker, a senior from Hope Online's Tetra Academy, was the Prom Queen. Other students nominated to the royal court were Samone Jay, Denaya Martinez, Imani McLean and Deiv'le Gaines all of Hillcrest Academy, as well as Raquel Lobato and Darion Sanchez of Maranatha Learning Center and Eli Payne of Tetra Academy.



Eli and Elise enjoy gaming for prizes



Prom Royalty Queen Laina and King Jared



Imani and Keli exude elegance

Speaking of Persuasion: Second Annual Persuasive Argument Competition

With forty-four energized students from twenty-seven Hope Online Learning Centers competing, this spring's Second Annual Persuasive Argument Competition once again gave voice to the passionate opinions of middle and high school students. Writing and speaking on a variety of subjects, from social issues to humor, contestants were evaluated on both their written essays and oral presentations.

Hope Online Director of Student Achievement Dr. Janet Filbin noted the enthusiastic participation of students across grade levels as well as teachers, directors and mentors again this year. Dr. Filbin also shared, "We expect our students to grow in their critical thinking skills and to become more effective in their ability to communicate a compelling argument as we continue to enhance this event."

Pointing out one of the changes made this year, Special Project Coordinator Jan Kennedy explained, "We expanded our judge

panel to include members of the community with experience in education and communication fields where quality communication is vital. We wanted to broaden our perspective along with that of our students', and we achieved that."

Winners in the 6th-8th grade category were Traven Campbell of Hope Online at Pathway Learning Center (Closed Campus Schools), Thalir Rigney of Hope Online at Life Preparatory Academy (Are You a Visitor or a Student?). Winners in the 9th-12th grade category were Stephen Bapple (The Positive Aspects of Video Game Playing) and Ianna Raspberry Jenkins (That Which is Ideal is Not Always Right), of Hope Online at I Am Academy and Hope Online at Bridges of Silence Academy, respectively.

Contestants, organizers and instructional staff look forward to the next round of competitive persuasive communication next year!

Hope Online *Class of 2011*



*Laina Louisa
Broker*

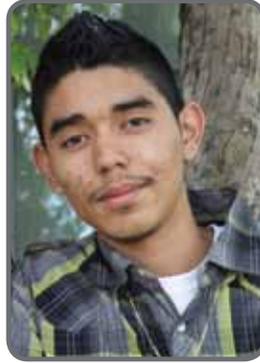
When I heard that Hope Online was designed to work one-on-one with students, I decided to enroll for my freshman year. In middle school, I did not learn much so, upon entering high school, I was afraid I would be way behind my class.

Once enrolled, I discovered that I loved the way Hope Online students work at their own pace. The mentors at Tetra Academy explained areas of academics that I didn't understand. I had two great mentors who were very supportive, and they helped me achieve my goal of earning a high school diploma. I can truly say that I have had an awesome experience at Hope Online.

Graduation is a huge step in my life. I have been through a lot in my teen years with the death of my mother and my father's cancer diagnosis. It was overwhelming at times, and I thought about dropping out because I didn't think I would make it. After graduation I plan to pursue a career in health care, taking online classes when I need to have a flexible schedule. I never believed that I could do it, but here I am – a successful graduate – ready to start my journey!

Congratulations, Laina!

TETRA
ACADEMY



*Gustavo Casillas
Martinez*

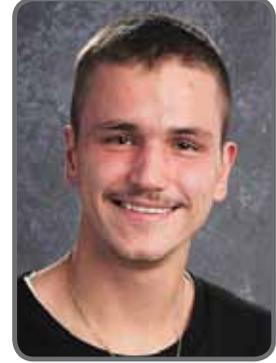
I struggled in a traditional classroom because every student had to do the same thing at the same time. It made it that much harder to stay interested enough to complete all the requirements for graduation. Today, I am happy to be a member of the graduating class of 2011, preparing for a career that I will enjoy.

I assumed it would be hard to focus here because of the poor decisions I had made in the past. But, through online learning, I completed my assigned problems by working at them several times until I figured out the solutions. My teachers' support was the key to my progress. I understood the lessons and could pass my classes with improved grades.

The memories that stand out most to me are of meeting and working alongside new people who made a difference in my life. My high school diploma represents an accomplishment that gives me confidence about my capability, regardless of what others may think. My younger siblings see that they, too, can do it if they put their heart into it. My long-term goal is to succeed in life without struggling as much as people do when they don't have an education.

Congratulations, Gustavo!

COMMON GROUND
LEARNING CENTER



*Sebastian
Axel Gries*

I lacked stability in my life; I spent most of my high school years back and forth between Colorado and Minnesota. Holding down a job and supporting my family were priorities that left little time for school work. At Hope Online's Front Range Academy, I had high hopes of positive changes after being inspired by the graduation plaque of Heather Nicole Burks. Her family was instrumental in my achievements here.

I knew it would take work, but I actually liked being in school for the first time. In traditional classrooms, I had spent more time trying to teach the class because the work wasn't challenging and the slow pace stifled me. At Front Range Academy, the entire staff contributed to my success. My mentor, Cristi, held me accountable for keeping my head in the game every day. Even her discipline helped me more than it "hurt."

High school graduation leads to college and opportunities, which means everything to me. I aspire to become well-educated and contribute to society as my Grandpa George did. He was an old-fashioned kind of guy and, to honor his memory, I didn't want to settle for a GED. I wanted the personal accomplishment of actually finishing high school and earning a diploma. Now my first major life goal is accomplished.

Congratulations, Sebastian!

FRONT RANGE
ACADEMY



*Jared DeWayne
Westley Hudson*

I think of my academic history as one with a steady tenor of normalcy. Hope Online, however, offered me some surprising new opportunities and challenges. At the outset, I looked forward to improving in math and learning more about technology through the online curriculum.

To get past the deadlines, tests and public speaking requirements that I found difficult, I had to apply myself. Friends offered support and mentors and teachers were always there if I needed a hand, which, ultimately, helped prepare me to graduate. There are so many memories – being allowed to go off campus for the first time, field trips, Fridays, Spirit Week – they all remind me that learning is fun!

Graduation is a significant milestone. Seeing my sister graduate gave me strength to pursue my goal of earning a high school diploma and becoming an author. My family will be proud to have another graduate. If school was a book, this would be the last chapter which, I believe, says a lot. Of course, college is the sequel! Graduation is like a new pair of hiking boots, made for the mountain of achievement, that help me climb better and gain more ground. With each accomplished step, I get closer to the top.

Congratulations, Jared!

HILLCREST
ACADEMY



*Alvaro Ivan
Portillo Olivas*

Before Hope Online, I wasn't concerned about my future that much. Even though I had good grades, I didn't care about school or decisions beyond the moment. I enrolled in Hope Online because it was the closest school to my home, but I never thought it would change my life.

Despite the time it took to get accustomed to an online learning program, Hope Online became a path toward earning my high school diploma. At my previous school, I felt like the teachers didn't care. But here at I Am, I had teachers and mentors to help me work harder. The good examples in my family also showed me that I can improve every day and that I can reach all my goals.

Graduating from high school will help me attain my dreams because it will open a lot of doors in my life. I would like to own a company and be part of negotiations around the world. I want to have a big family and help them achieve their goals too. My family has high expectations of me, and they have always done everything for me to do my best. Now, I intend to be a hero to other people.

Congratulations, Alvaro!

I AM
ACADEMY



*Jessica Ruiz
Mendoza*

Hope Online gave me the opportunity to achieve with the help of teachers and mentors who cared about students' lives and future careers. They pushed me forward until I believed that I really could do something with my life. The great things I heard about Hope Online turned out to be true, and here I am, heading to graduation.

Our Learning Center was a family and everyone was part of it. Students, teachers, mentors and parents looked out for one another. Mr. Mike was like a dad who pushed me the most, doing all he could to make learning exciting. I know how important it was to him that I graduate with the Class of 2011.

Memories of my wonderful school include some fun times, sad times, a few ups and downs and great pot lucks. Graduation will finally be the day that I promised my mother would come. She will see me receive my diploma and be able to say, "You did it!"

I hope to attend school to become a hair stylist or a massage therapist. I am thankful to everyone around me, especially the people who pushed me and those who had faith in me. Their investments in my life had a major impact. Just look at me now!

Congratulations, Jessica!

LEARNERS
TO LEADERS

Onward and Upward: I Am Academy

The halls of I Am Academy, a Hope Online Learning Center located at 45th Avenue and Jason Street, are alive with hope. Under the direction of Jane Sanchez, k-8 learners at I Am Academy are climbing steadily toward academic achievement.



I Am student Lizbeth enjoys working hard

“The positive shift and growth of I Am students is absolutely amazing,” points out Student Services Coordinator Michael Udlock. “They have begun to establish a real presence in every way, from winning educational contests to their demonstrated desire to learn and improve in all aspects of their Learning Center. For example, while heritage is still a positive theme at I Am Academy, the bar is held very high for English fluency.”

Aware of the challenges that some of her students have faced, Ms. Sanchez is steadfast in her passion to set and maintain high standards of accountability and progress.

“I have always known that each student here has great potential. My prior experience with a high-performing school proved to me that students on all socio-economic levels can achieve academically.”

“Here at I Am,” Mrs. Sanchez continues, “I have a fabulous team of Hope Online teachers, mentors and specialists, all of them ready to help our students perform well, even beyond expectations,” she says proudly.

Ms. Sanchez’ belief in her students is reflected in the smiles and many daily successes of her students. A well-defined vision for the future, a dedicated staff



I Am student Austin demonstrates computer skills



I Am Learning Center Director Jane Sanchez greets student Jazlyn during lunch

and an infectious enthusiasm among parents are all part of the unmistakable optimism at I Am Academy.

Beginning their day with affirming statements about who they are and what goals they are achieving has helped each student grasp a vision of hope for their future.

“Our students have worked hard to arrive at this place,” notes Ms. Sanchez. “It takes hard work, but the sky is the limit as we remain focused on providing outstanding educational support for each and every child.”

As part of an effort to focus on excellence, I Am will offer instruction in k-8 grade levels this year, eventually expanding to offer opportunities for high school students.

Student Artists Show Their Talent

The Hope Online Art Fair was held May 16th-19th at the Hope Online administrative office. Student art work was enjoyed by judges and friendly spectators alike.

The collection of artistic renderings included an owl meticulously carved from soap, a few “dream” houses, acrylic paintings, pencil drawings and design impressions on canvas. Visitors to the displays were treated to an assortment of art forms and images cast in colors that portrayed a range of moods and sentiments.

Student Services Coordinator Gigi Hill and Student Admissions Manager Ginny Miller were delighted with the variety and quality of submissions they collected for judging. Reflecting on the fruits of their team efforts in organizing the art fair, Ms. Hill noted, “We are so excited about showcasing their hard work. The goal was to encourage students to submit art projects they worked on in their elective art classes.”

Student work was judged according to a demonstration of skill, creative organization and defined design elements and principles. The warm reception of the first Hope Online Art Fair by staff and eager students inspired plans to offer the same opportunity next year in the fall.



Original design impression in acrylic



Esmerelda from Hope Online's Roca Fuerte Learning Academy embraces her Hero Mom



Summer from Hope Online's Cherry Creek Online Learning Center and her Heroic G-Ma



Gabriella from Hope Online's Redeemer Learning Center and her Hero Dad

Hooray for Heroes!

Hope Online third, fourth and fifth grade students know heroism when they see it. Through a series of special lessons, they studied and analyzed the unique attributes of heroes. Making the lessons even more personal, they considered those individuals in their own lives who inspire them to achieve and serve others, as heroes do. Then, in June, students shared original stories about their heroes and honored them at the My Hero Celebration held at the Hope Online administrative office.

Smiles abounded as the students escorted their heroes into the building. Grandmothers, parents, brothers and sisters, bus drivers and police officers were just a few of the heroes who came to school that day. Everyone was treated to big doses of hope and gratitude as the attentive crowd applauded after each moving narrative. The celebration concluded with refreshments and photo ops for students and their heroes.



“It is vital that our students identify individuals they can model themselves after who demonstrate healthy self-esteem, a strong work ethic and service to others through their talents and skills,” Hope Online Director of Student Achievement Dr. Janet Filbin remarked. “Of course, students are particularly touched by those adults who show compassion and care in their daily lives. Many participants had to look no further than their own family to find heroes.”

As well as being fun, the celebration provided excellent practice in qualitative research for young students. Hope Online teachers and mentors will continue advancing students’ skills in these areas as the hero initiative expands next year.

Art Fair Winners:

- Marc Hernandez – Center of Hope Academy – 1st Place People’s Choice – painting on canvas
- Jamie Gallegos – Center of Hope Academy – 2nd Place People’s Choice – pencil drawing
- Sharief Pollard – Hillcrest Academy – 3rd Place People’s Choice – pencil sketched portrait

High School:

- Ryan Pacheco – Pathway Learning Center – 1st Place – textured design on canvas
- DeVon Prescott – Hillcrest Academy – 2nd Place – pencil sketch
- Mark Pierce – Center of Hope Academy – 3rd Place – soap carving

Middle School:

- Gerardo Espinosa – Center of Hope Academy – 1st Place – painting on canvas
- Elijah McClain – Hope Online Learning Center – 1st Place – charcoal drawing
- Isaac Romero – Center of Hope Academy – 2nd Place – pencil drawing
- Luis Triana – Pathway Learning Center – 3rd Place – textured design on canvas

Congratulations to all the winners and participants whose artistic talent caused many admirers to marvel!



A popular tree landscape painting



A pencil sketch featuring Snoopy



A grassy landscape with purple skies



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- Learning Centers located throughout Colorado

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367 Inverness Parkway, Suite 225
Englewood, CO 80112

Hope Online Learning Centers

Below is a list of all 2011-2012 Hope Online Learning Centers. Learning Center visits are a hands-on way to learn about Hope Online's unique model, allowing community members to see firsthand how online learning is helping Colorado students. To arrange a Learning Center tour, please call 303-989-3539.

Action Learning Center
 All Peoples Learning Center
 Belmar Academy
 Bridges of Silence Academy
 Center of Hope Academy
 Chapel Hill Academy
 Cherry Creek Online Learning Center
 Common Ground Learning Center
 Cornerstone Learning Center
 Crescent View Academy
 Dinosaur Community Learning Center
 Eastwind Academy
 E-cademy
 Elmira Academy
 Faith Prep Learning Academy
 Front Range Academy – Arvada

Front Range Academy – Broomfield
 Front Range Academy – Lakewood
 Front Range Academy – Westminster
 Hillcrest Academy
 I Am Academy
 JMJA Learning Center
 LARASA – Central Learning Center
 LARASA – Westminster Learning Center
 Life Preparatory Academy
 Little debbie's Dream Learning Center
 Love Educational Center
 Maranatha Learning Center
 New Beginnings Learning Center
 New CHANGE Academy
 New Hope Academy
 Pathway Learning Center

Redeemer Learning Center
 Renewal Academy – Aurora
 Renewal Academy – Mountain View
 Renewal Academy – Northglenn
 Revolution Global Academy
 Roca Fuerte Learning Academy
 Solid Rock Academy
 Tetra Academy
 Trinity Learning Center
 Tubman Hilliard Global Academy
 Urban League Child Development Center
 Victory Academy
 Vision Academy
 Westside Learning Center