



The Tree of HOPE

For many students, learning in a traditional setting can be difficult. HOPE Online Learning Academy Co-Op's unique approach to education recognizes that, for at-risk students to be successful, establishing a sense of belonging and affiliation is just as critical as providing high-quality curriculum.

In its continued effort to provide a diverse variety of activities that encourage student engagement, HOPE partnered with Arts Across Cultures to provide an immersive arts curriculum to students – including a rigorous dance, music and visual arts program that explores various themes of multiculturalism. Through the program, students not only discover the arts, but also begin to see the many similarities and connections among different cultures.

“Art creates something so exciting for the kids, and they look forward to it,” said Kenny Passarelli, Arts Across Cultures Music Director.

Over the course of the school year, HOPE students from Awaken Academy, HOPE at Hillcrest and I AM Learning Academy have been working to create a comprehensive

arts production, titled “The Tree of HOPE.” Students are creating artwork with recyclable materials, writing original songs about the environment and learning traditional Mexican choreography. Their efforts will culminated in a performance at the Denver Art Museum's Día Del Niño celebration on April 27.

Students in the program get the opportunity to work with professional artist mentors. For example, HOPE

students recently visited the Denver Art Museum to work with resident artist Beatriz Gomez to create percussion instruments for their production.

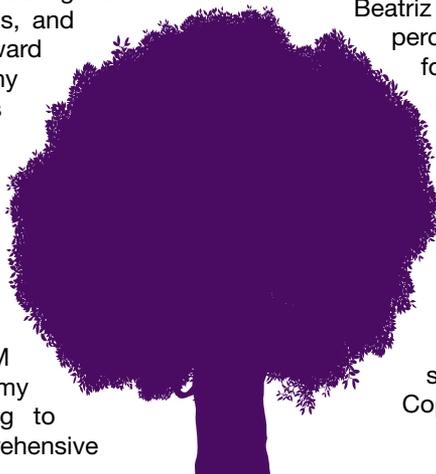
“All the materials used in the set design are recycled materials, so now the students are beginning to see trash differently,” said Gomez, who previously designed sets for David Copperfield.



HOPE at Hillcrest Students construct the Tree of Hope



Kindergarten students from Awaken Academy paint instruments at the Denver Art Museum



Supporting the Whole Student



For many of our students, traditional brick and mortar schools just didn't meet their needs. They came to HOPE seeking something different—and our blended learning model has the potential to help students succeed. But it isn't enough to deliver education in a non-traditional environment.

For our students to be successful, a sense of belonging and affiliation is as critical as high-quality curriculum. We must leverage blended learning to engage and support students by implementing a “whole-child” approach.

This is why “Affiliation” is so important at HOPE. We are committed to providing outlets for students to express their own unique interests and abilities—this is why our athletics department is rapidly expanding, why we implemented the Arts Across Cultures program, and why we hold school-wide academic events that encourage a love of learning. We want our students to feel a connection to HOPE, but we also want to make sure our kids have an opportunity to connect with each other, to foster a sense of belonging. At HOPE, the whole student is engaged and supported—academically, socially, and emotionally.

We know that this whole-child approach prepares students better for the demands of the 21st century—we've seen it work at each and every Learning Center. Students know that they aren't alone, they know that there is a community rooting for them to succeed. And that's important—not just for kids, but for anyone and everyone.

We all want to improve the work we do for our students while they are here, so that they become successful people when they leave. The whole-child approach makes sure our students are healthy, safe, engaged, supported, and challenged, and helps them take on the obstacles of today and tomorrow.

Heather O'Mara
Chief Executive Officer



Tree of HOPE *(Continued from page 1)*

And while the artist mentors lead the instruction, it is the students who are actively involved in creating.

“I like dancing and making music but, for me, the best thing about this program is that I get to make things,” said Kameron, a fifth grader from HOPE at Hillcrest. “Right now we are making a tree for the set out of chicken wire and twigs. It's really cool.”

One of the most important aspects of Arts Across Cultures is that the program is free to HOPE students—arts programs can often be costly for parents, so high-risk students sometimes miss out on such

opportunities, and therefore the associated benefits.

“It is no secret that arts education improves learning across all academic areas,” said Janelle Ayon, the Arts Across Cultures Artistic Director. “We've been able to track some of the students who have participated in the program for the past few years; Not only are they re-enrolling, but their test scores are improving. It is truly amazing. I attribute that to the strength of the academics at HOPE. The two—arts and academics—really play off one another.”

HOPE

happenings



Heather O'Mara visits Solid Rock Academy



HOPE Gold and Black soccer teams



HOPE Gold girls soccer team takes the field



HOPE at Hillcrest students Xavion and Hector, Pi Day winners



Roca Fuerte Learning Academy students celebrate 100 day

HOPE'S GOT TALENT



HOPE 11th grader Lydia performs "Skinny Love"



HOPE at Bridges of Silence student Aiesha performs



Cherry Creek Learning Center performs "What Does the Fox Say?"



Maranatha Learning Center senior Angel warms up before his solo

Want to see your Learning Center featured in a future issue? Send your pictures to Communications@HOPEonline.org.

HOPE Knights Play at the Pepsi Center

The Academy of Urban Learning (AUL) formed a charter school league comprised of thirteen teams from the greater Denver area—including the team from HOPE—which have been competing since last fall.

The HOPE Knights—nine students from HOPE at Hillcrest, Roca Fuerte Learning Academy and Action Academy—were led by head coach Taurean Rix, a 2012 HOPE graduate.

"I think the best thing about being on this team, is that I get to interact with kids from

other learning centers," noted Kendall, the Knights' forward. "I have even become friends with other guys in the league."

Since 2011, HOPE has also participated in the Court of Dreams post-season tournament, an event that allows all of the league teams the chance to play at the Pepsi Center, on the Denver Nuggets' home court.

"It's such a cool experience for our students," said Melanie Stone, HOPE's Director of Activities & Athletics.



Mayo and Matthew enjoying the Nuggets game

Students Make a Big Bang *(at Science Expo)*

Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) careers are becoming increasingly important in the global economy. A study by the National Governors Association Center for Best Practices found that the top 10 bachelor-degree majors with the highest median earnings are all in STEM fields. Accordingly, HOPE Online Learning Academy Co-Op provides activities that allow students to foster their interest in the scientific process.

Last month, students from HOPE's 40+ Learning Centers tested their theories at the Annual Science Expo. Students were encouraged to investigate and answer scientific questions that have a personal impact on them and their community.

Rakheti, a seventh grader from HOPE's Tubman Hilliard Global Academy chose to test which over-the-counter probiotics were most effective in combatting lactose intolerance. "Lactose intolerance is a big problem in my family, and in my community, so I wanted to know which products on the market worked best," she said.

Science experiments are a great example of "hands-on" learning, also known as active learning or inquiry-based learning. As education looks to emphasize STEM learning, science fair events provide the opportunity for students to become more knowledgeable about how the world around them works.

"Our kids are brilliant, and the Science Expo is evidence of that," noted HOPE teacher Nikki Brooker. "With some guidance, education, imagination and

help from home, students did some amazing things."

HOPE's Science Expo provides a unique learning experience for students because it involves so much more than science. Participating in the event requires students to engage in reading, logical thinking, writing, grammar and spelling, math, statistics and data analysis, as well as scientific methodology. Students also present their findings to a judge, so they must be able to explain and defend their work. All participants are expected to demonstrate motivation and critical thinking—important skills and traits that are useful in other areas of learning.

"What is great about this assignment is that students learn a process that they can then apply to so

many other areas of their lives," said Carrie Lander, a mentor at Renewal Academy in Thornton. "They can make a hypothesis, investigate and think through a problem, and even if they are wrong, they have learned something. That's huge."



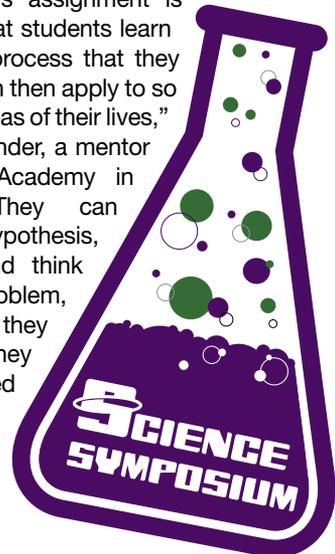
Nazeeya from Crescent View Academy



Roca Fuerte HS
project on car aerodynamics



HOPE CEO Heather O'Mara Awards
the First Place Middle School
Prize to 7th Grader Rakheti





Alex, Jose, Michael, Ana, Katty, Judge Jeffrey Holmes, Sofia, Aidee, and coach Kym Smiley



Michael questions the witness

HOPE Students Head to Court *(for School!)*

Every year, the Colorado Bar Association (CBA) sponsors a mock trial competition, engaging over 1,500 students in judicial process. This year marks the first time HOPE Online Learning Academy Co-Op sent a team to the competition. Seven students from Roca Fuerte Learning Academy spent three hours a week, for over three months, preparing to put their legal chops on display in a court room full of their peers.

This year's case centered on a traffic collision involving a student driver who was texting and a bicyclist who was talking on his cell phone. With expert witnesses ready to take the stand in support of both the plaintiff and defendant, mock trial teams each took a side, with a decision handed down from a CBA-appointed judge.

Each team took turns representing the plaintiff and the defendant in the case, allowing students to fully understand the legal process and giving students the opportunity to analyze a problem from multiple perspectives. The program provided the students with a positive educational experience that was focused more on learning and less on winning.

The HOPE team was led by Kym Smiley of Steese, Evans & Frankel P.C.

"I think that the whole experience really opened the students' eyes to

their potential. Now, they have the confidence to pursue an advanced degree, and I think that is pretty fantastic," Smiley said.

While the team was not selected to go to state, they gained invaluable life and career experience.

"I used to think the legal process was boring," explained Aidee, a tenth grader from Roca Fuerte Learning Academy. "Now, I think I want to be a lawyer. I can't wait to do this again next year."



Ana, Aidee and Alex prepare between trials



Jose takes the stand



Hero Celebration, Graduation and more!

The HOPE staff takes great pride in serving as role models to our students. But we also know how important it is to encourage our kids to see the good around them, and to always celebrate every day accomplishments and work hard to change the world into a better place.

The Annual Hero Essay Celebration will be held on May 15 at the HOPE offices. This event is overwhelmingly positive—our students are tasked with identifying inspirational figures in their immediate community or around the world that work hard every day to make a difference in the lives of others, and reflecting upon can celebrating those accomplishments through a personal essay. Students will present their essays in front of fellow students, families, and HOPE staff.

And speaking of celebrating the inspirational accomplishments of those around us—it's almost graduation time! Let the Class of 2014 know how proud you are of them by cheering them on as they walk across the stage with their diplomas in hand. The graduation ceremony will be held at the Auraria Campus PE center on May 22 at 7pm.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Skateboard Expo

May 9 2014

Hero Celebration

May 15 2014

Graduation

May 22 2014

HOPE Students ACE Competition

In early March, forty-three students participated in the ACE Challenge at Aurora Community College. This event, sponsored by Cherry Creek School District, had metro-area high school students compete in workplace related challenges such as: entrepreneurship, job interview skills, career planning, community and customer service, and other related areas.

Several HOPE students took home gold and silver awards, and Rosario, a 12th grader from Action High Learning Academy, was awarded “employee of the day” honors, a title that celebrates the student who exhibited the most professionalism throughout the day.

“The students had so much fun,” said Jeff Pelkey, the Work-Study Coordinator at HOPE. “It really gave them a chance to experience real-world challenges, and they performed incredibly well. They gained the confidence to take that next step after high school, and they know they can achieve anything if they put their minds to it.”



HOPE Senior Elgin shows off an award won at the ACE Challenge

Seniors Prepare for Life After HOPE

On February 12, HOPE hosted its first annual “Senior Day”. Sixty-seven seniors bonded with their classmates and took part in workshops on graduation preparation, college scholarships, and financial responsibility after high school.

“We think it is important that our students understand what a 401k is, and that they understand what it means to have good credit,” explained Jeff Pelkey, HOPE’s Work-Study Coordinator.

“No one has really sat me down and explained personal finance to me. You hear about how people aren’t saving the way they used to, so I just want to get started as early as I can,” said Francisco, a senior from HOPE at Maranatha Learning Center.

Students also listened to a presentation by motivational speaker Jason Howard about overcoming obstacles to turn their dreams into reality. His presentation, “The Evolution Revolution,” provided students with seven steps to escape their “virtual prisons,” roadblocks to success and happiness that people put up for themselves.

The presentation sent a powerful message that resonated with many of the HOPE students, particularly those who have dealt with challenges on their path to graduation.

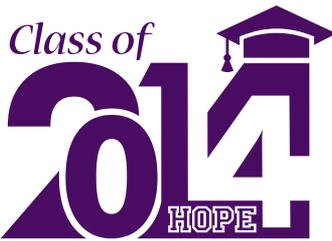
“I had dropped out of my last school,” said Serafina, a senior from Front Range Academy–Arvada. “After a year away I decided that I wanted to return, but I was looking for a school that would work for me, and would give me the support I needed to do my best. That’s when I came to HOPE, and now I’m almost to the finish line.”

Seniors will spend the next couple of months buckling down and planning their next steps after graduation, which can be a scary prospect. To help address students’ fears about the uncertainty that lies ahead, HOPE Guidance Counselor Kristie Richardson led an activity called “Turning Fears to Cheers.”

“It’s a big step our kids are taking—whether they are off to college or joining the workforce,” said Richardson. “We had everyone write down

one thing they were excited about, and one thing they were scared about, and we just walked through them all. Now they realize they aren’t alone, and we have given them a knowledge base around what they can expect, which will give them the confidence to do well on whatever path they take.”

We are excited and see the HOPE class of 2014 graduate on May 22 at 7pm at the Auraria Campus PE Center. We couldn’t be more proud!



Seniors from Roca Fuerte Learning Academy attend Senior Day

HOPE

ONLINE LEARNING ACADEMY

373 Inverness Parkway, Suite 205
Englewood, CO 80112

HOPE Student on America's Got Talent

We are so proud of Tetra senior, Diozanae. She will be auditioning in front of a live audience as she tries out for America's Got Talent. She has already made it through one round and has a call back for round two.

Please help us wish her luck and watch for her on NBC during the upcoming season, which premieres May 27 at 8:00 pm.



HOPE LEARNING CENTERS

Below is a list of all 2013-2014 HOPE Learning Centers. To arrange a Learning Center tour, please call 720-402-3000.

Action Learning Academy – Elementary
Action Learning Academy – Secondary
Ambassador's Academy
Awaken Academy
Bridges of Silence Educational Center
Center of Hope Academy
Chapel Hill Academy
Cherry Creek Online
Cornerstone Learning Center
Crescent View Academy
Dinosaur Community Learning Center
Front Range Academy – Arvada
Front Range Academy – Broomfield
Front Range Academy – Elmira

Front Range Academy – Westminster
Greater Heights Learning Center
HOPE at Hillcrest
I AM Academy
Lighthouse Academy
Maranatha Learning Center
New Beginnings Learning Center
New Heights Academy
New Hope Academy
Pathway Learning Center
Re-Create Academy
Redeemer Learning Center – K
Redeemer Learning Center – 1-8
Renewal Academy – Aurora

Renewal Academy – Thornton
Roca Fuerte Learning Academy –
Elementary
Roca Fuerte Learning Academy –
Secondary
Solid Rock Academy
Tetra Academy
The Children's Academy
Trinity Learning Center
Tubman Hilliard Global Academy
Universal Learning Center
Victory Academy
Westside Academy