



## HOPE Students Learn through the Cultures of the World

– Written with HOPE Students Brandi and Christopher

“Arts Across Cultures,” the vibrant arts and academics program offered by HOPE through a network of collaborating artists, inspires local elementary, middle and high school students to reach for achievement.

Artistic Director Janelle Ayon, former principal dancer and soloist with Ballet Folkórico de México de Amalia Hernández, oversees the arts instruction of HOPE’s k-12<sup>th</sup> grade students. Their learning is enriched by the cultures of the world, such as Mexico, Africa, Japan and Spain, as well as Aztec and Native-American traditions. Ms. Ayon says, “The arts dissolve borders and build bridges in our communities.”

The instructors wanted to present dancing and culture in a way that reflected the blending of cultures. For example, through their research, they learned that African slaves were taken to Mexico by the Spaniards; the slaves settled in communities and formed their own cultures within Mexico.

“Arts Across Cultures” offers HOPE’s blended learning students access to rich dances, music and visual arts curriculum. This year, the program culminated in the “Circles of the World” performance at the Denver Art Museum in conjunction with the recent Día del Niño celebration. It featured HOPE students from I AM Academy, Victory Academy and Hillcrest Academy, whose dances reflected numerous aspects of daily life in ancient times.

Ms. Ayon says the program inspires positivity among her students. “I see students improve in their grades and in their confidence because of their involvement in the arts.” “Arts Across Cultures” includes instruction in visual arts, Japanese animation and theater and musical concepts from artist-instructors Judith Dillard, Takeko Kobayashi, Kenny Passarelli, Clark Hagan and Guadalupe Zarate.

I Am Academy’s Learning Center Director Anthony Watson, whose students were among “Circles of the World” performers, says this year’s theme for the arts program ties in well with other learning at school. “We use circles for community groups in our classrooms, which has helped students talk to one another and work through conflict.”

Ms. Ayon says, “‘Arts Across Cultures’ fosters appreciation of the similarities and differences among cultures that distinguish individuals and, at the same time, can be a tool to unite communities.”



HOPE Students perform a Circles of the World dance.

Tania participates in the Arts Across Cultures program offered at HOPE.

# Greetings from the Chief Executive Officer

Among the collection of articles in this *Voices of HOPE*, you will hear student and staff perspectives in several writing collaborations. I believe they show how, as we work together, our collective voice is strong. Thank you to all of our contributing writers:



- Our feature story about the “Arts Across Cultures” program is based on the interviews and descriptions of HOPE students Brandi and Christopher, who love to write.
- Our Super School News piece is written in collaboration with HOPE Teacher Nichole Brooker.
- Our “Team HOPE” column is based on an interview by HOPE students Kevon and Raquan, who spoke with HOPE Director of Activities and Operations Melanie Stone about how the entire HOPE staff contributes to, and is inspired by, graduation.
- Our “Learning Center Highlight” showcases the insights of Learning Center Support Manager Jaala Hemingway, who has collaborated with Maranatha Learning Center for several years.

This issue also demonstrates HOPE’s commitment to the arts. As mentioned in our feature story, publication closely follows HOPE students’ performance of “Circles of the World” under the artistic direction of Janelle Ayon at the Denver Art Museum. On that same stage, and at Denver Library, History Colorado Museum, Byers-Evan House and the Clyfford Still Museum, “HOPE’s Got Talent” finalists also performed their artistic music and dance numbers for the Denver community during the Día del Niño celebration.

I am very proud of our students and excited about their growth and enthusiasm as they participate in HOPE programs and activities that enhance their learning and nurture their creativity. Thank you for your support of HOPE as we continue to provide cultural and creative outlets for our students, harnessing the positive impact of the arts on the achievement of our students.

Sincerely,

*Heather O’Mara*

Chief Executive Officer

**HOPE**  
ONLINE LEARNING ACADEMY

## HOPE Student Reporters’ Newscast to Air on Rocky Mountain PBS

*By HOPE Teacher Nichole Brooker*

As a HOPE general education teacher, I was thrilled that HOPE was chosen to participate in Super School News! This fantastic educational opportunity, made possible through the Rocky Mountain Public Broadcasting Network, allowed our students to prepare an actual newscast that aired locally on KRMA-TV Channel 6.

It was an honor to assemble a group of 5th and 6th graders to create and report HOPE news stories. I knew that HOPE students would be perfect candidates because they

are hard-working and truly care about their education. Alicia Clearwater and Darrold Barajas, from Redeemer Learning Center, were two of the HOPE students selected to be part of this awesome adventure. They helped choose topics, take pictures for the backdrops and write the actual script.

“When I first heard about this, I thought, ‘Oh, my gosh! I want to be in that!’” Alicia shared with me recently, adding, “It was a fantastic surprise to be chosen.”

*(Continued on page 3)*

## EXPRESSIONS IN ART



Jimi's mobile



Oscar's 3D entry



Ramon's drawing



Yarely's math art

## MARDI GRAS SPRING FORMAL



Elegance



Glamor



Royalty

## COURT OF DREAMS



HOPE defense



Going for the shot



Headed for the basket



HOPE Staff wore favorite sports team colors for Spirit Week.



Lexi's Community Service Project

## HOPE HAPPENINGS



Roca Fuerte's Mario and Martin receive a special award from Michael Sawaya.



Jesus, Cristian, David and Osclair at the HOPE College Fair.



Spring Soccer

*(Continued from page 2)*

Alicia and seven other HOPE students from Redeemer taped their Super School News broadcast in the Rocky Mountain PBS downtown studios. Darrold said, "Watching my fellow classmates rehearse for the news broadcast was fun! It was especially entertaining to watch them correct their mistakes and race against the clock to finish in two minutes' time."

You can view our Super School News broadcast in May on the Rocky Mountain PBS website: [www.rmpbs.org](http://www.rmpbs.org). Click on "Kids & Family," then, "Super School News." There is an option, "Watch Super School News," using the username: superschoolnews and the password: superKIDS1.



HOPE's Super School News Team



# Team HOPE: Graduation

– Based on Interviews by HOPE  
Student Reporters Kevon and Raquan

Graduation is HOPE's crowning event to celebrate the academic accomplishments of our students. At graduation, we communicate the power of Team HOPE.

All members of Team HOPE, the Douglas County School District and the larger community are inspired by our graduates who proudly walk across the stage to receive their diplomas, cheered on by thousands of supporters.

We are proud to feature the collaborative efforts of Team HOPE during graduation season in this issue. It is a special time when “everyone comes together to make our graduation a successful and unforgettable ceremony,” says HOPE Director of Activities and Operations Melanie Stone.

In the process, individual and collective contributions are many:

- HOPE teachers work feverishly to ensure graduates complete 24 credits and pass the ACT or Accuplacer in anticipation of college and careers after high school.
- HOPE staff members coordinate the ceremony program and logistics, manage audio and video, provide caps and gowns, coordinate formal senior photos and oversee the HOPE student choir.
- HOPE Learning Center support & development team members welcome learning centers and families to the standing-room only commencement.
- HOPE Learning Center directors escort their graduates into the formal ceremony.
- HOPE students come to acknowledge and support their classmates' achievements.
- Family of HOPE's staff help with set up, refreshments, greeting and video presentations.

Best of all, graduation is a time when seniors graciously acknowledge the teachers, mentors, friends and family members who have played key roles on their journey of hope and achievement.

“Graduation is a celebration of our students,” says Executive Vice President of Academic Achievement Sherida Peterson. “It is the foundation for their future. We are proud to have helped them achieve.”

Graduation will be held on May 23<sup>rd</sup> at 7:00 pm at the Auraria Campus Gymnasium.



Members of Team HOPE

## STUDENT SUCCESS

# Juan's Got Talent!

Dancing his way into first place in the “HOPE’s Got Talent” elementary competition, Renewal Academy first grader Juan left no doubt that he is a performer who can wow an audience. The talent show was Juan’s first time on a stage, and his mother, Mrs. Luz Viasus, wondered how her son would feel on the actual day of the competition.

“When Juan arrived at the show, it was awesome,” Mrs. Viasus says proudly. “He felt a little nervous, but it was really exciting for him and for all the students who participated.”

Juan’s efforts and poise earned the admiration of his Learning Center, family, mentors and classmates. A photo of Juan receiving the winner’s trophy is displayed on the bulletin board at Renewal Academy–Thornton. Despite his young age, Juan offers a reflective view of his education.

“I learn a lot,” he says, describing his daily lessons, “so that when I am in college, I can learn more.”

Mrs. Viasus is happy that her son already considers college an expectation instead of just an option. “I don’t recall talking to Juan directly about college, but he seems to have ‘caught’ the idea that it is a vehicle that helps you get through life.”

HOPE encourages all students to stay in school, graduate and attend



Juan is a successful first grader, dancer and future college student



college. For now, Juan considers his school a great place to be, and he is proud that he overcame the challenges of being a new student this year. With a smile that conveys his enthusiasm, he describes his other successful pursuits.

He explains, “I can draw a dog, a car, a plane and a helicopter—that is the hardest one. I am also good at math and language arts. I write my letters well too.”

Yet, success has not spoiled Juan, who is grateful for those who help him learn, including his HOPE teacher and his classroom mentor. “Without a teacher,” he says, “we could not know what to do.”

## EDITOR NOTES

**Become a voice of HOPE!** Did you take great photo at a HOPE athletic game, activity, competition or event? Would you like to suggest a HOPE student success story? Are you coordinating an activity that may inspire others? Contact us by email at [ruth.west@hopeonline.org](mailto:ruth.west@hopeonline.org)

## HOPE LEARNING CENTER HIGHLIGHT:

# Reading, Writing and Relationships: Maranatha Learning Center

– Written with HOPE Learning Center Support Manager Jaala Hemingway

The learning environment at Maranatha Learning Center in west Denver is purposefully designed to enhance student engagement. Learning Center Director Victoria Aguilar, who founded Maranatha, knows firsthand the value of a classroom that is an asset to learning rather than an obstacle to it.

Ms. Aguilar remembers enjoying school herself as a child and, at the same time, struggling with attendance whenever she felt detached from classroom experiences. Now, with her guidance at a community Learning Center, she provides 7<sup>th</sup>–12<sup>th</sup> grade HOPE students with mentorship and support, positively influencing their academic pursuits.

“The learning environment at Maranatha is very welcoming and friendly,” affirms HOPE Teacher Aurora Gonzalez. “Students learn to explore and apply their skills in a variety of positive learning situations. Ms. Aguilar does a fantastic job cultivating a sense of pride in the neighborhood and cultural traditions of her students in ways that encourage them to be leaders.”

Recognizing how activities accelerated her own motivation to stay in school, Ms. Aguilar maintains community partnerships that help Maranatha students remain active participants in their studies through programs such as art, music and boxing, as well as individual tutoring and facilitated discussions about healthy life choices. Additionally, Maranatha students participate in HOPE’s athletic leagues and academic contests, as well as HOPE’s art competition, prom and talent show.

Students develop community awareness through the PeaceJam program and by helping tutor younger students through the Bridge Project which provides educational opportunities for disadvantaged children. There is no shortage of ways to be involved in this active Learning Center.

In and out of the classroom, the support that Maranatha provides is strong and lasting. Ms. Aguilar recalls a student whose parents were not sure he would graduate. He did graduate and now he attends nursing school, inspiring other students to join him there. Alumni often return to check in with Ms. Aguilar, sharing successes and receiving support with their college pursuits.

Ms. Aguilar believes that relationships with teachers, mentors, classmates and community members sustain engagement in lifelong learning and are paramount to a student’s success in school.



Maranatha students  
at “HOPE’s Got Talent”



Maranatha student artwork



Maranatha offers students an  
engaging learning environment.

# Awarding Excellence in Education: DCSD's Apple Award Nomination

"The Douglas County School District (DCSD) Apple Awards encourages us to pause and acknowledge outstanding examples in education, including work ethic, strategy, methodology and longevity," observes Executive Vice President of Academic Achievement Sherida Peterson.

HOPE's representatives for the 2012-2013 Apple Awards were General Education Teacher Barbara Pagano and Learning Center Director Amener Williams. Coincidentally, they both currently serve at Hillcrest Academy, one of our Denver Metro Area Learning Centers.

Ms. Pagano, a HOPE teacher since 2006, holds a Master of Arts degree in childhood education from the University of Colorado at Denver and a Bachelor of Arts in home economics from the University of Northern Colorado. She taught home economics in Illinois and Colorado. Ms. Pagano also pioneered

a district-wide teen parent program, which became a state model for Colorado.

Ms. Williams, who has served at HOPE since 2008, earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English and elementary education from Bishop College in Dallas, Texas. A former reading coach, gifted and talented teacher and classroom teacher, she also chaired the Colorado Education Association's Instruction and Professional Development Committee and contributed to the writing of Denver Public Schools' Strategic Plan.



HOPE Teacher Barb Pagano and Learning Center Director Amener Williams

Acknowledging the positive impact of the Apple Awards, Ms. Peterson emphasizes how HOPE's entire instructional staff is "lifted up" when one is nominated. "It helps quantify what others perceive as a job well done and allows for recognition in our profession."

Congratulations, Ms. Pagano and Ms. Williams! You are true examples of excellence in education.

## HOPE Learning Centers **Below is a list of all 2012-2013 HOPE Learning Centers.** To arrange a Learning Center tour, please call 720-402-3000.

Action Learning Center  
 Ambassador's Academy  
 Awaken Academy  
 Belmar Academy  
 Bridges of Silence Educational Center  
 Center of Hope Academy  
 Chapel Hill Academy  
 Cherry Creek Learning Center  
 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  
 HOPE at Hillcrest Academy  
 I AM Academy  
 JMJA Learning Center  
 Little Sailors Academy  
 Maranatha Learning Center  
 New Beginnings Learning Center  
 New Hope Academy  
 Pathway Learning Center – Elementary  
 Pathway Learning Center – Secondary  
 Redeemer Learning Center – k  
 Redeemer Learning Center – 1-8  
 Renewal Academy – Aurora  
 Renewal Academy – Mountain View

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

# HOPE

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373 Inverness Parkway, Suite 205  
Englewood, CO 80112

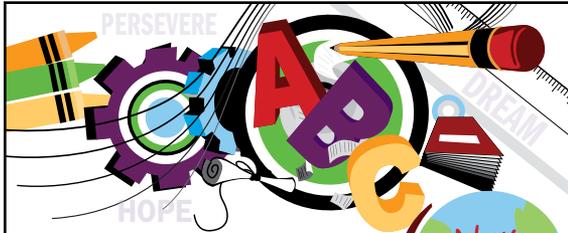


## HERO CELEBRATION

May 16, 2013 · 1:00 pm – 3:00 pm  
Grades 3 – 5

One essay from each Learning Center  
will be presented at the HOPE office.

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*Class of*  
**2013**  
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ONLINE LEARNING ACADEMY



We would be honored to have you share  
our accomplishments at Graduation  
on Thursday, May 23, 2013 at 7:00 p.m.  
Auraria Campus Gymnasium  
900 Auraria Parkway, Denver, CO 80204