

HOPE Alumni Stay Connected to the Community

A strong school community can make all the difference when it comes to student achievement. HOPE Online Learning Academy Co-Op aims to create an environment where students feel supported and are motivated to engage in learning. In turn, some HOPE graduates are now contributing to the Learning Centers that helped them thrive. These alumni strive to provide current students with the same guidance and encouragement they received while attending HOPE.

Taurean Rix Hillcrest Academy

Taurean Rix, a 2012 graduate, enrolled in HOPE as a junior. Not performing well at his previous school, Rix decided to complete his final two years of high school at HOPE's Hillcrest Academy on the recommendation of a family friend.



HOPE alumnus Taurean Rix plays in the 2012 Court of Dreams Tournament. Rix will help coach HOPE's basketball team this season.

Two reasons fueled Rix's motivation to focus on academics – the constant encouragement from Hillcrest's supportive staff and his participation in HOPE's basketball program.

"Basketball kept me out of trouble," he said. "I was looking forward to playing basketball every week, and I had to make sure that I got all of my work done to play."

Recognizing the program that helped him stay focused, Rix is giving back by helping coach HOPE's high school basketball team this year. In doing so,

he hopes to not only teach players how to improve their skills on the court but also keep them engaged so they can succeed in school. "Sports help students stay on track," he said.

Moe Fredriksz Center of Hope Academy

After years of struggling in a traditional school, Monique "Moe" Fredriksz decided to enroll in HOPE's Center of Hope Academy for her senior year. The 2008 graduate sought an attentive and supportive environment as she felt that her previous school "did not care about my well being and my success in school or in life."



Moe Fredriksz, a 2008 HOPE graduate, works as a mentor for Center of Hope Academy.

In the small, tight-knit community of her Learning Center, Fredriksz said she finally felt supported and was able to build confidence and succeed academically.

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Building a Community with HOPE



At HOPE Online Learning Academy Co-Op, one of our four pillars is “affiliation.” We work to build strong connections among our students, families, teachers, mentors and staff, and ultimately create a positive environment where students are engaged and cared for. HOPE is not only a school, but a community, and the goal of building that sense of fellowship is at the heart of everything we do.

HOPE was founded with a mission to “co-op” with the community to create educational opportunities for students. HOPE students, with the support of community leaders, acquire the 21st century skills and competencies they will need in the future, including strong self awareness, an ability to collaborate with empathy, critical thinking skills and the courage to take action.

Across our 40+ Learning Centers, there are countless examples of students making a difference because of the strength of the HOPE community. The examples in this issue of Voices of HOPE – from the Helping Hands Community Garden at Bridges of Silence Educational Center, which gives students the chance to learn about horticulture and entrepreneurship, to the returning alumni who are mentoring HOPE students in an effort to provide the same support they received in school – are representative of the HOPE community’s strong connections. Programs like these wouldn’t be possible without the dedication of HOPE and Learning Center staff, volunteers, parents and community members.

As we continue into the 2013-2014 school year and beyond, we encourage you to join our Learning Centers and our students in doing good work in the community. When it comes to student success, it’s inspiring to see the enthusiasm and the impact that community involvement and affiliation have on our students and others.

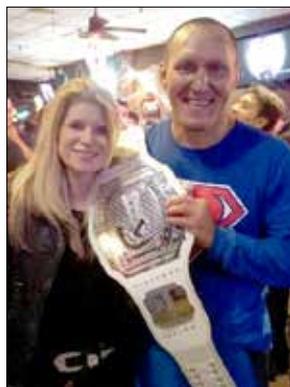
Heather O’Mara
Chief Executive Officer



STAFF SPOTLIGHT

Don Westman

HOPE Teacher Don Westman is setting a good example for students in more ways than one. Both with his work inside the classroom and with his efforts to live a healthy lifestyle, Westman demonstrates the hard work, dedication and discipline it takes to be successful. In an effort to get in shape, Westman began training in jiu-jitsu five years ago, but what started as a healthy hobby became much more. He now participates in Mixed Martial Arts (MMA) competitions and currently holds three local titles in the light heavyweight category – the Kick Down, Sparta Combat and Prize Fighting championships – and most recently competed in the Fight to Win championship on December 6th



HOPE Teacher Don Westman currently holds three local MMA championship titles.

Do you know a HOPE staff member who is doing amazing things? We want to know!
Send your Staff Spotlight submissions to Communications@HOPEonline.org.

ROCKIES GAME



A HOPE parent and Action Learning Academy first graders Jah, Bryant and Jeroen enjoy a Rockies game. HOPE students earned free tickets by participating in the Colorado Rockies Youth Artistic Writing Contest.



Roca Fuerte Learning Academy student Nayeli was honored in a pregame ceremony as one of the winners for this year's Colorado Rockies Youth Artistic Writing Contest.



Action Learning Academy students Diego and Jose enjoy the Rockies game with their dad.



Isabella, a first grader at HOPE's Action Learning Academy, roots for the Rockies with her family.



Anette, Karla and Angel, students at HOPE's Front Range Academy – Elmira, show off their costumes.



HOPE students Jorge, Suheyd, Blanca and Saira enjoy some party treats.



HOPE teacher Desirae Seter, Learning Center Director Kristen Smith and HOPE Mentor Karri Leonard partake in the Fall festivities at Front Range Academy – Elmira.

FALL FESTIVITIES

HOPE *happenings*

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



HOPE students from Greater Heights Learning Center show their HOPE spirit at Field Day.



HOPE students from Universal Learning Center proudly display their Field Day ribbons.



HOPE students are entertained by Milo, the CU Denver Lynx, at Field Day.



Marquiese, a HOPE student at I Am Academy, proudly holds his winning ribbon at Field Day.

FIELD DAY

Career Expo, College Fair and More

HOPE Online Learning Academy Co-Op puts a strong focus on preparing students for future success. In an ongoing effort to ensure graduates leave HOPE college- and career-ready, students are given the opportunity to participate in activities that aim to help them reach their goals.

On December 12, HOPE will host a **College Fair** for high school students at the Tivoli Student Union on Auraria Campus in Denver. Representatives from local two- and four-year schools – including University of Colorado Denver, Community College of Denver, Metropolitan State University of Denver and more – will be available to provide information and answer students' questions. The event will also feature a tour of the downtown campus, as well as a panel of school representatives

who will provide college prep advice and discuss a variety of education issues.

The College Fair comes on the tail of the Douglas County School District's 2013 **Career Connect 8th Grade Expo**, which was held on November 13 at the Douglas County Events Center in Castle Rock. HOPE 8th graders from 15 Learning Centers were able to meet with businesses and higher education representatives to learn more about their potential career paths of interest. HOPE also hosted an hour-long lunch workshop for HOPE students to help them get the most out of their time at the event, which included a pep talk from Learning Center Liaison "Coach" Eric Fears on building self confidence and learning how to succeed in high school and in life.



Cherry Creek Online students Bryn and Dajiel attend the Career Connect 8th Grade Expo.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Basketball

(Boys and Girls, High School and Middle School)

Starts December **2013**

Persuasive Argument Competition

December **17** 2013

Talent Showcase

January **31** 2014

HOPE Soccer Season Comes to a Close

Soccer season has officially come to a close for students from HOPE Online Learning Academy Co-Op. This season marked the second year of HOPE's co-ed middle school and high school boys' soccer programs.

The middle school program, which allows 5th-8th graders of all skill levels to participate, had 12 middle school teams this year; 150 students competed against each other in an all-HOPE league.

HOPE's high school teams played in the All-City Urban League, where they contended against each other as well as teams from five other alternative schools in the Denver area. HOPE's high school program included three teams – The Eagles Gold and Eagles Red

teams from Roca Fuerte Learning Academy, and the Lions Purple team, comprised of students from Action Learning Academy and Maranatha Learning Center.

The season was jam-packed with excitement and fun for all of the participating teams, with Eagles Gold coming in fourth in its league overall; Eagles Gold player Ricardo made 36 goals as the league's top scorer.

Isay, Eagles Red goalie, is a HOPE junior at Roca Fuerte Learning Academy who has attended HOPE since the 6th grade. As one of many eager participants

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HOPE Volleyball Enjoys Successful Season

HOPE Online Learning Academy Co-Op's volleyball players gave their best bumps, sets and spikes during the 2013 season. It was a successful first year for the program, which is offered as a part of HOPE's student athletics.

HOPE had two high school girls' teams this year – HOPE Roca from Roca Fuerte Learning Academy and HOPE West, comprised of students from Front Range Academy-Arvada, Front Range Academy-Westminster, Tetra Academy and Awaken Academy. In an exciting close to the season, HOPE West placed third overall in its league.

HOPE's volleyball teams participate in the All-City Urban League, competing against six other teams from alternative schools in the Denver area. HOPE Director



Students from Roca Fuerte Learning Academy played on one of HOPE's two teams this year.



The HOPE West volleyball team took third place in the All-City Urban league this year.



of Activities and Athletics Melanie Stone took on the task of coordinating the league – a spinoff of the Academy of Urban Learning League, which hosts HOPE's high school boys' basketball team – in order to expand HOPE's athletic offerings to include high school girls' volleyball, as well as high school boys' soccer and, coming up this spring, girls and boys' flag football.

In regards to spearheading the operation of the league, Stone said, "It is an endeavor. But, I'm a big believer in team sports. They are a terrific place for students to challenge themselves as well as learn from and encourage their teammates. For our kids, who don't have a lot of opportunities to play organized sports, it's definitely worth it."

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HOPE Soccer Season *(Continued from page 4)*

to join the high school soccer program in its inaugural year, he was very excited to get back on the playing field with the simple goal of "blocking a lot of shots this year," he said.

Coach Zach Macaluso, who leads the Eagles Gold team, serves as a HOPE mentor at Roca Fuerte Learning Academy. Coach Macaluso said that offering student activities like the soccer program is a key factor in helping HOPE students achieve success.

"HOPE has a lot of kids who need that extra support," he said. "Any activity they can participate in is an opportunity to stay engaged, keeping them out of trouble. That's a good thing."

Affirming that HOPE's activities help students stay involved with their school and find good influences, Jose, a HOPE senior at Roca Fuerte Learning Academy and an Eagles Gold player, said, "Playing soccer keeps me on track. I stay active, and I stay focused."



The team from Renewal Academy – Mountain View was one of 12 teams who competed in the all-HOPE co-ed middle school league this season.



Team members from Eagles Red, one of HOPE's high school boys' teams, pose with coach America Delgado after a game.





HOPE student Isaiah pulls kohlrabi from the garden to be sold at the market.



HOPE students volunteer for the Helping Hands Community Garden at Bridges of Silence Educational Center.

Community Garden Offers HOPE Students Invaluable Experience

What started as a small community program is now a full operation. Located at 5770 Niagara Street in Commerce City, the Helping Hands Community Garden provides fresh produce available for purchase by community members, as well as the chance to learn about health and nutrition. The venture is even more impressive when you consider that it is run entirely by students.

Operated by HOPE Online Learning Academy Co-Op's Bridges of Silence Educational Center, the Helping Hands Community Garden was established 10 years ago to offer neighborhood youths unique hands-on training in horticulture, nutrition and entrepreneurship. HOPE students attending middle and high school at Bridges of Silence, as well as other local students, participate in the program. Students not only complete the manual work, but they also make important decisions about the management and operation of the garden. This past year, students opened the Helping Hands Community Garden Market in order to sell the produce they've grown directly to neighborhood residents.

Lisa Benjamin, Director of Bridges of Silence, said the program aims to help students make healthier choices at an earlier age.

"We're really trying to create an environment where students have access to healthier food and the knowledge to make better choices," she said. "By getting them involved at a younger age, it's easier to create good habits and change existing ones."

Program participants learn how to grow, cook and prepare their own food while also learning how to run a business. Complementing their hands-on training operating the garden and market, HOPE students at Bridges of Silence can take Business 101 and financial literacy courses. Through these learning opportunities, students build self-esteem and confidence.

"Youths are amazing, and they can do anything. If given the tools, it doesn't matter their age, they can achieve greatness," Benjamin said. "By creating the program with community support, we are helping students develop healthy habits and leadership skills, and they gain valuable work experience starting at a younger age."

After a successful run, the community garden market closed for the season in October. Market sales will resume next July.

To contact the Helping Hands Community Garden at Bridges of Silence Educational Center and learn more about the Garden and opportunities to get involved, call 303-289-2993.

HOPE Alumni Stay Connected to the Community

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“When I did not think I had worth or a purpose in life, HOPE showed me that there is hope for those just like me,” she said.

In 2009, Fredriksz became a mentor for Center of Hope Academy where she currently works with middle school students. Following a passion that was ignited while serving as a student tutor during her senior year, she plans to have a life-long career in education.

“Working as a student tutor, I found that helping others succeed made me feel amazing,” she said. “It made me realize my passion for teaching and working with kids.”

Alan Coronol

Roca Fuerte Learning Academy

Alan Coronol, a 2013 HOPE graduate, had dropped out of school entirely a few years before he decided to enroll in HOPE’s Roca Fuerte Learning Academy. Wanting a second chance to earn his high school diploma, he chose Roca Fuerte after hearing positive recommendations from a few friends. “I thought HOPE would be a great place to get that second chance,” he said.



HOPE alumnus Alan Coronol (middle) poses with teammates Roberto (left) and Ivan (right) during the 2012 soccer season. Coronol now coaches one of the middle school teams for HOPE.

Coronol quickly found his niche by joining HOPE’s soccer team. Participating in sports kept him engaged and focused on school so he could reach his goal of earning a high school diploma.

Coronol stays connected to his HOPE roots by volunteering to coach the middle school soccer team for HOPE’s Renewal Academy – Mountain View. As

a coach with the distinct advantage of knowing exactly what it’s like to be in the place of his players, he aims to inspire them to work hard both on and off the field, especially in school.

“I realized that these students look up to me. I want to use my position to help them succeed,” he said.

Vera Gaither

Hillcrest Academy

2013 graduate Vera Gaither enrolled in HOPE’s Hillcrest Academy in middle school, after struggling in a traditional school environment.

“I wasn’t doing well at my previous school, and I needed a change of pace,” she said. “It ended up being a very good decision.”



Vera Gaither, who graduated from HOPE in 2013, works as a receptionist for HOPE’s Hillcrest Academy in Denver.

The guidance she received from HOPE staff, teachers and mentors helped her connect with her school and improve her academic performance.

After graduating this past May, Gaither accepted a position as receptionist at Hillcrest. While she eventually plans to entertain her “knack for story telling” by attending college and majoring in creative writing, for now, she enjoys interacting with students and helping create a positive environment for them at the Learning Center. She feels especially equipped to handle the job because “I’m able to put myself back in their shoes,” she said.

Do you know HOPE alumni who are doing great things? We want to hear their success stories! Send submissions to Communications@HOPEonline.org.

HOPE

ONLINE LEARNING ACADEMY

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HOPE Volleyball Enjoys Successful Season

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HOPE aims to offer a variety of athletic, academic and social activities and events to help students stay active and engaged in school. The athletics program, particularly, is a feat that would not be possible without the help of the HOPE community.

“As we continue to expand athletic opportunities for our students, I am so appreciative of our all our coaches,” Stone said. “Without them volunteering their time we wouldn’t be able to do this. I am grateful that they, like me, recognize the value of engaging our students in athletics.”

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	Front Range Academy – Elmira	Renewal Academy – Mountain View
Action Learning Academy - Secondary	Front Range Academy – Westminster	Renewal Academy – Thornton
Ambassador’s Academy	Greater Heights Learning Center	Roca Fuerte Learning Academy - Elementary
Awaken Academy	HOPE at Hillcrest	Roca Fuerte Learning Academy - Secondary
Bridges of Silence Educational Center	I AM Academy	Solid Rock Academy
Center of Hope Academy	Lighthouse Academy	Tetra Academy
Chapel Hill Academy	Maranatha Learning Center	The Children’s Academy
Cherry Creek Online	New Beginnings Learning Center	Trinity Learning Center
Cornerstone Learning Center	New Heights Academy	Tubman Hilliard Global Academy
Crescent View Academy	New Hope Academy	Universal Learning Center
Dinosaur Community Learning Center	Pathway Learning Center	Victory Academy
Front Range Academy – Arvada	Re-Create Academy	Westside Academy
Front Range Academy – Broomfield	Redeemer Learning Center – K	
	Redeemer Learning Center – 1-8	
	Renewal Academy – Aurora	