



LARASA Learning Center
309 W. 1st Avenue, Denver, CO 80223
Grades 6-12
Director: Thomas Ogas
Manager: Dave Archuleta

LARASA Learning Center
7101 Irving Street, Denver, CO 80030
Grades: 9-12
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LARASA (Latin American Research and Service Agency) has dedicated itself to improving the academic achievements of at-risk and disadvantaged youth. By partnering with Hope Online, LARASA Learning Centers, under the direction of Thomas Ogas, provide trusted mentors, who work one-on-one with students in a safe environment, as well as instruction from a highly qualified Hope Online teacher.

LARASA's two Learning Centers are located in metro Denver neighborhoods. The majority of the students are Latinos from low-income families. Even though their families have been here for generations, the students have academic and social problems in traditional schools. "Families have actually asked us to open in these areas," explains Mr. Ogas, "many of our students have been expelled from, or pushed out of, their previous school."

Most of the Hope Online students at LARASA are from broken families or non-traditional households, and at least 70 percent of them are eligible for Free and Reduced lunch. Upon enrolling at Hope Online, students were a minimum of one grade-level behind, most of them were two, and some even more; one 10th grader was reading at a 4th grade level. Two-thirds had dropped out or were contemplating doing so prior to enrolling at Hope Online. Recalling one student's honest perspective, Mr. Ogas asserts, "The student believed that if it weren't for LARASA, he would be out selling drugs or in jail."

Several Hope Online students at LARASA are teen parents who, in a traditional school, were deprived of the support needed to continue their education and become self-sufficient. One young lady enrolled at Hope Online while she was pregnant. Amazingly she has maintained nearly a 100 percent attendance rate, only missing school after she went into labor while in class on a Thursday, missed school on Friday, and returned to class with her baby in tow on Monday.

For years, Dave Archuleta, Learning Center Manager and Mentor at LARASA, has worked with at-risk youth but, he testifies, "With Hope Online, we're making a difference. Hope Online and LARASA work for these kids. They come here to get the education they know they need."

Learning Center Administration

Thomas Ogas – Director

Thomas Ogas is the President and CEO of the Latin American Research and Service Agency (LARASA) and the Director of Hope Online at LARASA Learning Centers. For over 20 years, he has worked with youth and developed a strong non-profit management background. He helped establish a Boys & Girls Club, and then he was a faithful volunteer. He has experience as a mental health case manager for children and adults in Grant County, New Mexico. Mr. Ogas earned a Bachelor of Science in Psychology from Western New Mexico University in Silver City, NM.

Hope Online Teacher

Aurora Gonzalez – Hope Online Teacher

Aurora Gonzalez is a talented and compassionate Colorado licensed teacher with a background teaching bilingual students. She previously worked in Denver Public School's bilingual education program. Ms. Gonzalez received her Bachelor of Science in Engineering from the Instituto Tecnológico in Durango, Mexico and completed a Teacher in Residence Program at Metropolitan State College of Denver in Denver, CO.