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**I could not be  
more proud to  
spend this time  
with you.  
I dare you to do  
something great.**

”

*Department of Education  
Commissioner Dwight Jones  
in his address to the Hope Online  
Graduating Class of 2008*

# Hope for the Future

## The third graduating class of Hope Online celebrates

“Powerful” describes the 2008 Hope Online Commencement held June 12th at the Metropolitan State College of Denver Events Center. Whether describing the thrill of families and friends witnessing graduates proceed up the aisle, the emotion of mentors, teachers, and parents walking alongside them, or the electrifying words of Department of Education Commissioner Dwight Jones, everyone concludes, “It was powerful.”

“What an auspicious occasion for forty-seven young people, one fourth of whom were first generation graduates,” points out Sherida Peterson, Hope Online Chief Academic Officer. “Each had a personal and compelling story, from the student who had been living under a bridge to the young woman pregnant with her third child. Five hundred people gathered to honor these forty-seven students who had overcome difficult odds to don a graduate’s cap and gown.”

By all accounts, the ceremony was both formal and joyful, in recognition of the graduates’ accomplishments. Heather O’Mara, Hope Online Chief Executive Officer, welcomed and congratulated the class, acknowledging, “We are grateful to the dedicated instructors that helped make this day a reality for our students.”

In his inspiring address, Commissioner Jones reflected on his educational challenges. He confided to Hope Online graduates that his own academic performance in high school was not outstanding, earning grades just good enough to be eligible for sports. “No one pushed me or expected anything of me,” Commissioner Jones conceded to his captivated audience, while emphasizing the resolve it took to overcome his struggles. His empowering message ended with a rousing challenge to the graduates: “I could not be more proud to spend this time with you. I dare you to do something great.”

Ms. Peterson, who coordinated the evening of festive pomp and circumstance, has seen the student membership at Hope Online grow in numbers and determination in the few years since its inception. “As a veteran educator, who has attended dozens of graduations, I believe this one stands alone in its promise for the future.”

“Each graduation generates affirmation among the graduates and their communities,” adds Hope Online Community Relations Manager Theresa Solano. “I believe this ceremony is a very purposeful evening for these graduates, in particular, because it makes their achievement very real to them.”





## Greetings from the Chief Executive Officer

“Back to School” is a distinct season, almost as unique as winter, spring, summer and fall. With it comes the anticipation of new books, new friends, the next grade level, lunchbox treats, and new school supplies. I saw my own children bubbling

over with excitement, before the reality of lessons and class work became routine.

Yet, for many Hope Online students, some of these exciting aspects of school cannot be taken for granted. This makes us, at Hope Online, all the more fortunate to have strong partnerships helping us progress toward making “back to school” a special time for all our students. One such venture this year was with KPPT-FM 95.7, THE PARTY, who helped gather essential school supplies for Hope Online students with a “Pack the Bus” campaign, detailed in this issue.

Meanwhile, our new authorizer, the Douglas County School District (DCSD), continues to offer a vital partnership to

Hope Online. Their guidance during Hope Online’s first steps toward a school lunch program has been crucial. The potential impact of quality nutrition, so essential to learning, for all Hope Online students is thrilling. By demonstrating Hope Online students’ eligibility for the school lunch program, students may also qualify for educational support services programs.

Additionally, the expertise and support of DCSD has been evident in our Special Education program. We are pleased to collaborate with DCSD and align their knowledge and resources to better serve Hope Online students. We look forward to blending the talents of Hope Online teachers with those of the DCSD learning specialists as they tailor interventions to improve the achievement of all our students.

As Hope Online looks forward to our fourth year, we are inspired by looking back, as well. The Hope Online Graduating Class of 2008 left their mark on our hearts and minds at a moving commencement ceremony. As you read more about it in this newsletter, remember our thanks for your commitment to making future graduations an affirming rite of passage for the 3,000 Hope Online students enrolled this year.

Sincerely,  
*Heather O’Mara*  
Chief Executive Officer



## Partnership Brings Hope to Eagle County

In remote McCoy, Colorado, no practical alternatives existed to maintain a local, stable learning environment for so few students. Enter Hope Online Learning Academy Co-Op (Hope Online), our online public school chartered by the Douglas County School District to educate local children.

Through an agreement to waive a memorandum of understanding between Eagle County Schools and Hope Online, McCoy students will now enjoy classroom-based online learning overseen by highly qualified teachers and mentors at Rock Creek Academy, a Hope Online Learning Center. Rock Creek Academy, housed in the former McCoy Public School building, will deliver classes to seven students living in northern Eagle County and southern Routt County.

“Prior to establishing the Learning Center in McCoy, students traveled upwards of an hour on mountain roads, often in treacherous winter conditions, to attend the nearest school,” explains Heather Eberts, Executive Director of Elementary Education at Eagle County Schools. “The collaborative partnership between Eagle County Schools and Hope Online will provide parents and students in this remote area of Eagle County an opportunity to access quality education right in their backyard, replacing lengthy transportation time with valuable education time.”

Hope Online, arguably Colorado’s most innovative school option, implements web-based curriculum, and learning plans tailored to each student. A low adult to student ratio ensures one-on-one attention from exceptional and devoted teachers in language arts, math, science, social studies, physical education, and other electives.

“After extensive research, we determined that the Hope Online learning model, including its standards-based online curriculum, was the best solution for our community,” says Dawn Mutchelknaus, Director of Rock Creek Academy. “Because of significant support from the McCoy community, coupled with the partnership between Hope Online and Eagle County Schools, we are able to utilize an existing facility and offer a quality education option to students in McCoy.”

“Hope Online looks forward to being part of this collaborative solution with Eagle County Schools and Rock Creek Academy. By working together, we will provide these students with the educational opportunities they deserve,” affirms Heather O’Mara, Chief Executive Officer of Hope Online.

Rock Creek Academy’s inaugural academic year began August 25th, 2008. *Welcome Rock Creek Academy!*

# Hope Online Class of 2008—Graduate Spotlights

## Monique Fredriksz



Monique Fredriksz was only a few credits short of graduating from her previous high school when she decided to enroll in Hope Online. The supportive environment at Center of Hope Academy provided

her just the guidance she needed to earn her diploma. During her studies, Monique discovered a natural gift and desire to work with children and help them build a strong educational foundation.

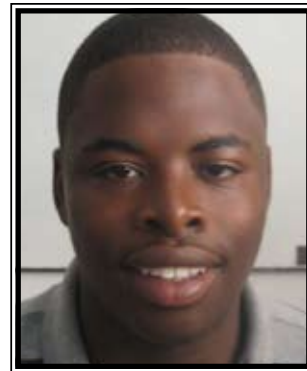
Today, she is doing just that. Monique works with kindergarten students as a mentor assistant for Hope Online at Center of Hope Academy. She plans to continue her education and develop a life-long career in educating youth. Monique encourages others to achieve academic success by advising them to do what she did - finish high school and not risk failure in life.

Monique enjoys being part of the Center of Hope team. She is a wonderful role model to students of all ages. Whether Monique is playing with the elementary-aged children, or giving advice to a hurting student, she can be depended upon to be patient, compassionate, and 100% committed to the task. *Keep up the great work, Monique!*



## Jacob Johnson-Hayward

Jacob Johnson-Hayward, a 2008 Hope Online graduate, turned nineteen last month at Oakwood University in Huntsville, Alabama. He is a freshman there, working on his general studies in preparation for a degree in psychology, miles and years away from his first day at Hope Online at Bridges of Silence in August 2006. Back then, he was a cynical junior who found Hope Online after being lost in a large school system his freshman and sophomore years.



“When I learned about the Hope Online opportunity, I immediately agreed,” says Jacob’s mother, Ms. Adrienne Johnson, reflecting on her decision to enroll him. “Jacob was not a high maintenance student, or an honors student, and there seemed to be little attention for the students in between those two groups. I knew it was a solution for my son, because he had definitely fallen through the cracks. Bridges of Silence, with its much smaller mentor to student ratio, could meet his learning needs.”



“Immediately, I realized that he couldn’t get away with unfinished assignments. The group was just too small and intimate. The teachers noticed everything he did and didn’t do. There was nowhere for him to hide,” recalls Ms. Johnson.

In his junior year, Jacob, according to his mother, “owned” his academic performance. His relationships at school encouraged him to consider college, rather than just academic survival. He took initiative to fill out college and scholarship applications.

Now, Jacob is adjusting to dorm life in a new town, and, at his mom’s insistence, he is joining groups and getting involved. Regretting the years lost slacking off at the beginning of high school, Jacob wants to help others avoid falling into similar bad habits.

“We got where we are now because of God, our family, and our determination to make the best of things,” asserts Ms. Johnson. “Parents should listen to their kids about their school and take time to explore other options. Find out what motivates your child. If the learning environment does not include good relationships with peers, teachers, and mentors, the student will not be motivated. Jacob was very influenced by Ms. Joy, Ms. Lisa, his fellow Hope Online students, and many positive relationships at Hope Online at Bridges of Silence.” *Jacob, you’re on your way to tremendous success!*

# Graduate Spotlights (continued)

## Leigh-Ann Maes

Leigh-Ann Maes graduated this year, earning praise for her tremendous determination to excel in her studies and develop her talents along the way.

Leigh-Ann exemplifies the power of inspiration, having been encouraged to graduate by her friends, 2007 Hope Online graduates from New Heights Academy. By earning her diploma, a goal she pursued with great purpose, Leigh-Ann became a first-generation graduate, and an example of scholarship and achievement to her younger siblings. She believes that education is an important accomplishment with lifelong benefits. Leigh-Ann plans to cultivate her artistic abilities and use them in a future career.



Leigh-Ann's genuine commitment to success compelled her to begin college classes immediately after Hope Online's June graduation ceremony. With one semester of studies at the Community College of Denver already complete, she began fall classes in August. Leigh-Ann is working on an Associates Degree in Computer Science, and then she plans to study Computer Game Design at the University of Colorado at Denver. *Congratulations, Leigh-Ann!*



## Tracey Amaya Paredes

Tracey is an academically gifted student who began to lose interest in academics during her high school years. An excellent student through middle school, Tracey found that her high school classes were not challenging. Upon learning that, at Hope Online, she could progress through her studies at an accelerated pace, she enrolled at A Brand New Start Learning Center. Tracey discovered that online learning was not only more efficient and sustained her interest, but it also complemented her natural learning style.



As struggles challenged her path toward graduation, Tracey overcame them by embracing the belief that life's lessons would make her a better person. The first high school graduate in her family, Tracey is very proud of her accomplishment. She hopes her success will encourage younger children, especially her sisters, to believe they can achieve their dreams and become whatever they desire.

Now, Tracey is following her own dreams to become an OB/GYN doctor. Her twelve-year journey began recently with her enrollment at the Community College of Denver (CCD). After completing basic courses at CCD, and transferring to the University of Colorado at Denver to earn a bachelors degree, this ambitious Hope Online graduate will enroll in medical school. *Great Job, Tracey!*



## Board Member Dr. Michael Bautista

Hope Online's newest board member, Dr. Michael Bautista, is currently the Associate Vice President for Learning and Academic Affairs and the Dean for the Center of Arts and Sciences at the Community College of Denver.

His 30 years of educational experience, at secondary and post-secondary levels, particularly writing subject-integrated curriculum for a magnet school he helped found, have convinced him of the necessity for a variety of education options in order to reach all students.

"Online education is the wave of the future. It promotes the acquisition of good study habits such as: focusing on the task at hand, managing time, and limiting distractions, as well as good academic skills such as: listening, researching, and critical thinking," asserts Dr. Bautista. "With online curriculum, students are engaged and master each lesson before moving on."

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**”**

*Dr. Michael Bautista*

Students must have positive mentoring from an adult role model. If we, as a nation, do not make changes in our educational system, we will forfeit our position in the global community. Education must be infused with creativity.”

Mastery of content in elementary and secondary education is of particular interest to Dr. Bautista, who sadly acknowledges, "Over 60% of the students entering college have remedial needs in at least one area." As a board member, Dr. Bautista is proud that Hope Online makes it top priority for its students to be exposed to post-secondary programs, and its graduates to be academically prepared for college. "Nobody doubts the benefits of higher-education, but only 72% of Colorado students graduate from high school, and Colorado ranks 32nd in the nation for students entering college. We need to show students the wide range of academic, vocational and career options available to them."

Dr. Bautista believes that industry and business should affect change in education. "Educators must listen to the trends and needs of business to responsibly equip a qualified workforce.

## Raymond Ayon, Hope Online Board of Directors

Denver Police Technician Raymond Ayon, who shares Hope Online's commitment to school safety, was recently appointed a member of Hope Online Board of Directors. Mr. Ayon is a thirty-year veteran of the Denver Police Department (DPD), serving as a community liaison to the DPD Gang Bureau. Prior to working at the Gang Bureau, Mr. Ayon served as an Investigator for twelve years in the DPD's Vice and Narcotics Bureau and five years in the department's Intelligence Sector.

In his current assignment, Mr. Ayon is a popular guest in classrooms and community forums. He educates the public on gang culture and the threat it poses to families, neighborhoods, and communities. Mr. Ayon regularly reminds his audience that gangs are more violent, organized, and widespread than ever before, posing one of the greatest threats to the safety and security of all Americans. Yet, he believes that a safe environment for all students and educators should be among the top priorities of law enforcement.

Mr. Ayon works diligently to dispel the glamorous myths of gang life, emphasizing the serious consequences of criminal acts. He encourages parents and educators to familiarize themselves with local gang symbols and to consider contacting school personnel, local law enforcement, faith leaders and community organizations for assistance, if signs of gang activity appear in their school or neighborhood.

Mr. Ayon's dedication and experience related to youth and safety make him an asset and welcome expert to the Hope Online Board of Directors.

### What can parents and educators do to help their children be safe?

- Know your children's friends.
- Know anyone else who influences your children.
- Know exactly where your children are, who they are with, and what they are doing.
- Be involved with your children, helping them occupy their time.
- Strive for good communication among all family members.
- Do not allow gang dress whatsoever.
- Do not allow your children to "hang out" in the streets or malls.
- Respond to any gang writing, graffiti, or tattoos.
- Encourage anti-gang attitudes at home and school.
- Participate in your child's education – find out what's happening at school.
- Get involved in community affairs and educate yourself on gangs and drugs.
- Be an example to your children – they will do what you do.
- Demonstrate confidence in your child.



2001 E. Easter Ave., Suite 202  
Centennial, CO 80122

## School Supply Drive

While choosing the right calculator model can be a school supply dilemma for some students, many Hope Online families struggle just to purchase pencils, paper, and crayons. Though Hope Online Learning Centers try to provide these and other basic items to all students, absorbing their cost is a challenge. Hope Online is committed to promoting classroom learning by assuring that students are equipped with proper supplies.

In August, Hope Online, in conjunction with the Urban League of Metropolitan Denver Inc., partnered with radio station KPPT-FM 95.7 THE PARTY for the "Pack the Bus" school supply drive, held at various King Soopers locations across Metro Denver. A bag full of school supplies gathered during Pack the Bus events was distributed to each Learning Center.

The Douglas County School District (DCSD) also donated school supplies to Hope Online. Every Learning Center received a full backpack from their DCSD Online Learning Specialist.

Thank you, KPPT-FM, the Urban League and DCSD for your generous contribution to our students. These school supply projects will benefit Hope Online students tremendously. Hope Online looks forward to future partnerships to foster student learning.

## Hope Online Learning Centers

Below is a list of all 2008-2009 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 first-hand how online learning is helping Colorado's at-risk student population. To arrange a Learning Center tour, please call 303-989-3539.

A Brand New Start  
All Peoples Learning Center  
Aurora Tech Academy  
Back to Basics Academy  
Bridges of Silence Academy  
Center of Hope Academy  
Cherry Creek Learning Center  
Common Ground Learning Center  
Cornerstone Learning Center  
Crescent View Academy  
Dinosaur Community Learning Center  
E-cademy  
El Shaddai - Alameda  
El Shaddai - North  
Family Learning Center  
Front Range Academy - Arvada 1  
Front Range Academy - Arvada 2

Front Range Academy - Boulder  
Front Range Academy - Broomfield 1  
Front Range Academy - Broomfield 2  
Front Range Academy - Lafayette  
Harrison Street Academy  
Healing Waters Family Center  
Hillcrest Academy  
IBG Learning Center  
La Academia  
La Esperanza  
LARASA Central  
LARASA Westminster  
Life Preparatory Academy  
Little debbie's Dream Learning Center  
Love Educational Center  
Mile High Academy  
Miriam Education Resource Center, Inc.

New Beginnings Learning Center  
New Heights Academy  
New Hope Academy  
Our Lady of the Rosary Academy  
Park Hill Preparatory School  
Pathway Learning Center  
Redeemer 1-8 Learning Center  
Redeemer K Learning Center  
Roca Fuerte Learning Academy  
Rock Creek Academy  
Solid Rock Academy  
Tetra Academy  
Tubman Hilliard Global Academy  
Urban League Child Development Center  
Urban League of Metropolitan Denver, Inc.  
Westside Learning Center