



JOURNEY OF HOPE

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JOURNEY STORIES - THROUGH THE EYES AND VOICES OF THE CHILDREN

It's a Journey of Hope...and the Story Continues...



Nestled among acres of citrus groves, cane fields, vegetable farms, ranches and nurseries is Indiantown, Florida. It is located thirty miles from West Palm Beach, Okeechobee, Belle Glade and Stuart. Migrants and immigrant farm workers have called it home for decades and continue to claim it as a refuge from the economic hardships and civil wars in their own countries. Indiantown welcomes a diverse population of people from Mexico, Guatemala, Haiti, and the United States.

Our fifth grade students have been working on a two year project to learn local history while finding out more about their own. Their finished project is on display at the Elisabeth Lahti Library here in Indiantown in cooperation with the **Smithsonian Institute***. Our students are seeking the American Dream, as they learn about the journeys that many people have traveled to reach a safe haven, a better life, a place to call home. They also learned about the Seminole and Asis Indians, the people who first lived here.

However, their "*Journey Story*" did not start with a long trip from somewhere. Most of them were born here, after their families made the decision to find a better way of life. Indiantown is the only home they know, and they love their hometown. A few of the thoughts from these fifth grade children speak volumes to the way of life that each of them have come to know:

"Indiantown has justice, liberty, and mercy. Indiantown is a place to stand up for freedom."

"We have the opportunity to live a better life here, to grow up to have freedom, to become anything I want to be!"

"In MY town, people don't let people down."

"It doesn't matter where you came from...what you speak...or who you are...EVERYONE is welcome."

"Indiantown is a dream that came true for me...I thank my teachers for my education and thank God for my life."

"Indiantown has a lot of nice people who help each other, people who care for you."

Hope Rural School students are filled with **Love** for their families and neighbors, **Compassion** toward their community and their surroundings, **Observations**, realizing that everyone has an opportunity if they try hard, and are full of **Hope** for a bright future through hard work and a solid education to pave the way.

* **Journey Stories** is a Museum on Main Street project organized by the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service in association with the National Museum of American History, and the Florida Humanities Council.



A MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



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Mission Statement

The mission of Hope Rural School is to offer hope to families.

The school primarily serves children from immigrant families by providing them with a Catholic Elementary education in grades Pre-K through 5 in an environment that nurtures the Gospel values of mercy, justice, and love, through fostering the principles of Christian discipleship; supporting, guiding and encouraging parents in the education of their children; developing an appreciation and respect for heritage; encouraging and enabling graduates to reach their full potential through advanced education.

"It's funny how, in this journey of life, even though we may begin at different times and places, our paths cross with others so that we may share our love, compassion, observations, and hope.

This is a design of God that I appreciate and cherish."

~ Steve Maraboli

Dear Friends,

The above quote on the "journey of life" had me thinking about my own personal journey and the amazing people who have crossed my path over these many years. As I reflected on the numerous educational opportunities afforded to the most vulnerable, at-risk children in the heart of the inner city of Boston, the remote highlands in Liberia, West Africa, and the rural community in Indiantown, I realize it is because of the incredibly dedicated people whose lives have intersected with mine. These men, women and youth have shared their **LOVE, COMPASSION, OBSERVATIONS,** and **HOPE,** transforming lives and journeys.

The lead story in this issue of the Hope Rural "Journey of Hope" highlights the individual journeys of our present fifth graders. Most of them have not known any place but Indiantown. It is where they were born and raised; attend school and church; eat, shop, and receive medical attention. As you read over their impressions of the place they call home, certain words and phrases rise to the surface- safe, lots to do, families helping families, feels like home, hear birds sing, small friendly town, nice people who care, wonderful school, everyone is welcome. They love their town and are surrounded by people who share their **LOVE, COMPASSION, OBSERVATIONS,** and **HOPE.**

Special thanks to the Smithsonian Institute who has initiated and raised awareness of Indiantown History- Journey Stories of Its People and Town. During this coming year, the Elisabeth Lahti Library in Indiantown will display the exhibits and stories. We look forward to the next chapter here at our school - the Journey Stories of our Parents. Unlike most of our children, their stories are filled with extreme challenges and risks. Thankfully for them, people have intervened in their lives and shared their **LOVE, COMPASSION, OBSERVATIONS,** and **HOPE.**

Lives reaching out and touching lives! This truly is a design of God that we all appreciate and cherish.

Gratefully,

Sr. Mary Dooley, S.S.N.D.
Director

March 2, 2014
SAVE THE DATE
"CIRCLE OF HOPE"
at the Kane Center in Stuart, FL
with our students performing
"THE WIZARD OF OZ"

It's a Journey of Hope...

CHANGING THE WORLD...ONE MEAL AT A TIME



Our little school of Hope was blessed in another special way a few weeks ago. Our Fifth Grade Ambassadors, pictured to the left, began their first outreach project, caring for children who are hungry in this world and in need. The students, faculty, and staff focused on others' needs before their own, and the entire project enlivened everyone's spirit to a deeper and compassionate sense of those in need. Hope students know all too well the struggle and stress their families faced in their journey to a new home.



We are changing the world one meal at a time.



LORD HAVE MERCY.

Hope Rural raised \$1,461.00, giving not out of their abundance, but sacrificially. Students could relate to the plight of going to bed hungry and were highly motivated to make a difference.

The final donation provided 5,844 meals and a check was presented to three representatives of Cross Catholic Outreach for "World Food Day" 2013. We are very proud of our Ambassadors for hosting this event and amazed at what can be accomplished, when we all work together for a wonderful cause!

We have exciting and wonderful news to announce!

Hope Rural School has been selected as one of 12 Innovative Catholic Schools in the country for 2013 by "Today's Catholic Teacher" under the category of "Innovative Projects in Curriculum and Instruction." Titled: *From Learning English to the Stage*, this award honors Catholic Schools that have led the way by implementing exemplary innovative programs to improve the teaching and learning of their students, faculty, and staff.

Our Parenting Program is highlighted in this award because it was designed to help immigrant parents acclimate to their new homes, while learning how to best help their children succeed in school and become a positive force for change and growth in the classroom and the community. We also created a very successful Pre-K Program for three and four year olds, teaching children English from a young age, when their parents are unable to do so. With the new English classes in place, students thrived! So much in fact, that we now have a Drama Club. Students, who formerly could not communicate in English, are now on stage performing, singing, dancing and wowing the community. Productions have included adaptations of *The Wizard of Oz*, *Beauty and the Beast*, *Annie*, and *The Sound of Music*. Their newfound confidence has revealed their hidden talents! Kindergarten students were the first to perform *The Wizard of Oz*. Now, five years later and in the fifth grade, the original cast of students are working on a re-make for our annual fundraiser in 2014!

They say "pictures are worth a thousand words". We will let YOU decide for yourselves how much fun and enjoyment the children provide our guests at our annual gala event. Their beautiful faces and amazing costumes (lovingly made by faculty, staff, and volunteers) light up the stage!



The Wizard of Oz

Beauty and the Beast



Annie!



The Sound of Music

~ and the Story Continues...

Paul Siefker Pavilion

A Man of Character
A Builder of Hope

Hope Rural School August 2013



Sister Marie Celeste, OP
"Visionary"



Timer Powers
"Peacemaker"



Fr. Frank O'Loughlin
"Humanitarian"



Edward Ricci
"Justice-Seeker"



Sister Carol Putnam, RCSJ
"Advocate for the Poor"



Nathaniel Reed
"Earth Caretaker"

Our "Character Counts" Pavilion is dedicated in honor of some of the amazing men and women, who through their lives have shown a profound depth of character, dedication, and love to the mission of Hope Rural School. Paul Siefker, our Board President, has been part of the story of Hope even before it opened its doors in 1980.

He is someone who embodies all of the 6 pillars of character, has walked with every Board Member and Hope Rural Director, and has been their "right hand" as they guided the mission over these past 33 years. The beautiful campus that we enjoy today is due in big part to his commitment, availability, patience, wisdom, insight and his building skills. We are proud to honor these fine examples for their **Trustworthiness, Respect, Responsibility, Fairness, Caring, and Citizenship** to our students, faculty, and staff.

Our Character Counts program is made possible through a partnership with United Way of Martin County.



Check out our NEW WEBSITE: www.hoperuralschool.org



Please consider clipping and sending BOX TOPS to HOPE RURAL SCHOOL.

MAKE OUR SCHOOL A CUT ABOVE!

REMEMBERING & HONORING OUR LOVED ONES

Memorial / Tribute Gifts

Remembering your loved ones through memorial gifts in lieu of flowers and tribute gifts in honor of birthdays, anniversaries or other meaningful events is a thoughtful and life-giving way to continue the mission work of Hope.

Please also consider remembering Hope Rural School in your will...a tribute for a lifetime.

It's a journey of Hope... and Your story continues...

