



# JOURNEY OF HOPE

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45th Anniversary Edition, December 2024

## LANDSCAPING OUR FUTURE



 **Dedication September 11, 2024**   
**Sister Martha Rohde Track and Soccer Field**

*Celebrating 45 Years of HOPE*

# A WARM WELCOME FROM OUR DIRECTOR



## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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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-K3 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.

Dear Friends,



The late Archbishop of Recife, Brazil, used to say, "When we dream alone, it is only a dream. When we dream with others, it is the beginning of reality." It has been a remarkable gift to dream with you, our generous benefactors. You have believed in our vision and mission and have faithfully supported us for years. Your support and faith in what we do each day at Hope Rural continues to help us claim and embrace God's mission to be our mission. We focus our eyes on the future and continue to dare to dream impossible dreams.

***This year we celebrate the 45th Anniversary of giving HOPE to our families.***

In this issue, "Landscaping the Future," we feature various pictures and articles that continue to showcase the dreams that have become "Living miracles" on 150 th Street! Our recent dedication of our new "Sister Martha Rohde Soccer and Track field" is one of those "living miracles."

Reflecting on the graduates' thoughts and the endless blessings at Hope Rural School brings us to a deeper awareness of our indebtedness to the many people who make it possible for our students to reach their dreams. Lives have been transformed here in Indiantown and students are realizing their full potential.

The energy and excitement that abounds at Hope Rural School is due in large part to the dedication and commitment of our teachers and staff. It seems right and fitting that we highlight some of our present teachers and staff that have shared their talents and gifts for 10 or more years at Hope Rural. Any parent or student will tell you that the people who truly make a difference at the school are the teachers and staff.

School wide projects, field trips, etc... keep us unified in prayer and expand our vision of the world we live in. Our "Boxes of Joy" are shared throughout the world with needy children at Christmas. All of our featured activities strengthen spirits in new and wonderful ways.

As we begin the year of celebration of our 45 th Anniversary, we thank God for all that has been - the many blessings and challenges. We are especially grateful for our new Principal, Miguel Gaspar, who from day one as Principal is present to the staff, teachers, and students. He fastens his eyes on the landscape of learning and is a perfect leader of the school he graduated from... Pray for all of us as we forge ahead into the future with an ever-changing landscape. All of us know that the work continues, the mission endures, and the dream of this small Catholic School with 142 students shall never die because HOPE beckons us on!

During this season of giving and receiving, we at Hope Rural pause each day to remember you and your families in our prayers. We thank you for your love, support, and especially for your belief in our students and their possibilities. May God, the Giver of all gifts, reveal to you and your family your own special gifts as you experience the blessings and graces of this beautiful holiday season.

With love and warm wishes,

*Sister Elizabeth Dunn, OP*



## JOYFUL GREETING FROM OUR PRINCIPAL



Greetings from your family at Hope Rural School, we are grateful and thankful for your continued support. As we celebrate 45 years of our mission, we remember our donors who have passed and welcome everyone who supports our families at Hope Rural School. We hope you had a Thanksgiving holiday filled with happiness and gratitude for all of God's gifts. The transition for me as Principal has been wonderful, our students and teachers work hard everyday, and it has been a blessing for me. I am grateful to be learning from the best - Sister Elizabeth. We wish you a Merry Christmas and a Happy 2025 from all the students, teachers, and staff at Hope Rural School.

Wishing you the best,

**Miguel Gaspar**



# 45 YEARS - THEN AND NOW



## A Vision Realized Hope Rural School 1980-2025



Hope Rural School was founded in 1980 to serve the children from migrant and immigrant families. The educational program has always focused on the academic, spiritual, physical and cultural needs of its multicultural, multilingual students. Hope Rural was the first school in the country to offer full day classes to immigrant children. Hope rural School believes that every person has a right to receive an education and an opportunity to receive guidance, assistance and love in an environment that promotes the dignity and uniqueness of each individual. The school responds by providing a Catholic education in the rural community of Indiantown. It supports and encourages parents in their role as the primary educators of their children. The school nurtures each of the essential areas of growth and formation, striving for the integral development of the student.

### Over the past 45 years, God has helped us through many challenges, while showering us with an abundance of blessings:

**THEN:** Our first students were from migrant families, traveling whenever and wherever work led them.

**NOW:** Most of our families are viable full time residents of our community and work in landscaping , painting, nurseries etc. within driving distance!

**THEN: ONE** small building, housing classrooms for 30 students in K-2nd grade, kitchen and a small cafeteria. The fire alarm system did not cover all buildings. A bull horn was used to alert areas not connected to the system. The fire alarm system was updated over the years.

**NOW: NINE** buildings, 142 students in PreK3 through 5th grade. Hope Rural is a fully accredited Catholic School. A “state of the art” fire alarm system was installed that connects all buildings on campus.

**THEN:** Language barriers hindered the learning process.

**NOW:** Students start school as 3 year olds, learning and speaking English well before the end of their first year and parents take 4 week parenting classes offered at the school!

**THEN:** Most students did not excel beyond their basic education.

**NOW:** Many alumni are enrolled in college majoring in teaching, medicine, business, law and various other vocations. We are privileged to offer scholarship assistance through the Vilma Shaw Scholarship Endowment which enables graduates of Hope Rural School to further their education after high school.

We have had hundreds of students take advantage of this program. Currently, we have 20 students studying at various universities/colleges. We are proud that one of our former graduates of Hope Rural School has come full circle as a member of our Board of Trustees with two Master’s Degrees with one in Education. He is now Principal of Hope Rural School for the 2024-2025 school year. The love and compassion of many benefactors to our MISSION OF HOPE has allowed us to maintain a level of dignity for the families, offering them a chance for a good education and a better future!

*“Providence **CAN** provide, Providence **DID** provide, Providence **WILL** provide.”*

**DEDICATED TEACHERS AND STAFF  
WITH THEIR OWN WORDS THAT DESCRIBE 10+ YEARS AT HOPE...**



**Tonya Lozano- Business Officer, Lunch Manager ★ 45 years ★**  
**REWARDING / JOYOUS / LOVING ATMOSPHERE / AMAZING / LEARNING EXPERIENCES!**



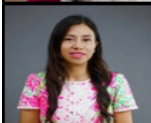
**Erin Dilla- Fourth Grade Teacher 32 years!** (27 years full time, 5 part-time)  
**BLESSED, REWARDING, HAPPY, SPIRITUAL, CHALLENGING!**



**Raquel Martinez- Administrative Assistant for 23 years!**  
**JOYFUL / PEACEFUL / OUTSTANDING / SPIRITUAL / CARING!**



**Betty Ann Suder- Administrative Assistant 20 years!** Volunteered since 1993.  
**FULFILLING / MEANINGFUL / REWARDING / AWESOME / BLESSED (ALSO FUN!)**



**Kendly Lopez- PreK3 Teacher 20 Years!**  
**WISE / DILIGENT / GENEROUS / ENTHUSIASTIC / COMPASSIONATE!**



**Erica Lozano- Kindergarten and Grade One Teacher Aide 18 amazing years!**  
**AFFECTIONATE / CONSIDERATE / GOOD LISTENER / SUPPORTIVE / THOUGHTFUL!**



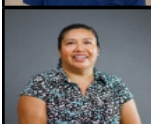
**Guadalupe Martinez - PreK4 Teacher 18 years!**  
**CONTENT / GRATIFIED / JOYFUL / THANKFUL / REWARDED!**



**Erin Sercia-Third Grade Teacher 14 years!**  
**BLESSED / LOVED / TRANSFORMATIVE / HOLY GROUND / GIFT FROM GOD!**



**Virginia Daly - Fifth Grade Teacher 13 years!**  
**PRICELESS / LIFE CHANGING / PRECIOUS / MEANINGFUL / BEAUTIFUL!**



**Floridalma Perez – PreK4 Teacher Aide 12 years!**  
**HAPPY / JOYFUL / PEACEFUL / FRIENDLY / SPIRITUAL!**



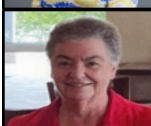
**Leonel Rocha- Faithful Bus Driver for 12 years!**  
**HAPPY / BUSY / BRAVE / ATTENTIVE / ADVENTUROUS!**



**Taryn McCrink –Second Grade Teacher 11 years!**  
**BLESSING / MISSION / CREATIVE / CHALLENGING / PROUD!**



**Azucena Lopez- Parent Outreach Coordinator, PE Teacher 10 years!**  
**INCLUSIVE / COLLABORATIVE / GENEROUS / SUPPORTIVE / PEACEFUL!**



**Sister Elizabeth Dunn, O.P. - Director of Hope Rural School 10 years!**  
**GRACE-FILLED / JOYFUL / MIRACULOUS / BLESSED / LOVING!**



# THE VILMA SHAW SCHOLARSHIP PROGRAM

Each year we have new recipients for the Vilma Shaw Scholarship. One criteria to receive this scholarship, requires the potential scholar to write a brief essay on –“How Hope Rural School Made A Difference in Your Life...”

We marvel at each students’ responses and memories because they have been away from Hope Rural for 7 or 8 years depending on when they started at Hope Rural. We thought you would be as inspired as we are to know that our education truly makes a difference. Here are the responses from our 5 new Shaw Scholars.

“I attended Hope Rural throughout all my Elementary schooling. I began in PreK4 all the way through 5th grade. Hope Rural School has made a difference in my life by teachers always telling me that I am good enough, and that I am capable of being and becoming a better version of myself. Hope Rural had the best teachers that I will remember for the rest of my life, The amount of support and knowledge learned from them will help me succeed in the future. As I start this new chapter in life, I will always hold on to and carry the morals and knowledge Hope Rural School has taught me. I am forever proud to have been a part of Hope Rural School.” ★ **Jose Martinez, III**

“Hope Rural School has impacted my life in many different ways. It has brought me closer to God and strengthened my faith in Him. By doing the Character Counts Program and learning the six pillars of character, it taught me to be a model citizen and I learned to spread these traits to other people. I loved the school so much that I came back and volunteered to help students feel the same way I feel about the school. In all, it has impacted me in so many ways that I can’t express it all through words, however if I were asked how I were to describe it, I would say it would be like having a second family.” ★ **Alan Morales**

“I have lived in Florida my entire life, and if there was one thing I can proudly say about living in this small town is that I went to a Catholic school called Hope Rural. Saying that Hope Rural made a difference in my life is an understatement. Going to Hope Rural helped me become closer to God and gave me a boost of confidence. I would give up everything to go back in time and hold hands with my classmates and pray together before classes started. Hope Rural taught me that if I had God by my side, I would be the strongest I would ever be. Hope Rural changed my life in ways I cannot explain. Teachers taught me to be kind, respectful, and to follow my dreams. Hope Rural taught me that I could do anything if I believed, and no matter how hard life got, God will always be watching over me.” ★ **Anahi Padilla**

“One of the biggest ways that Hope Rural has made a difference in my life is that I knew I was in a safe and nurturing school family. Hope Rural taught me that everybody should be treated equally and that we should all support each other no matter what. I was provided with a secure and warm environment where I was able to thrive and develop my independence. Hope Rural School also gave me support in my studies and gave me courage to keep believing in myself. Knowing that I have a village behind me, and supporting me means a lot because it gives me strength and hope to continue being my true self. “We are the family and we are the home.” - just a small part of Hope Rural’s school song - carries a deep message for all the families that attended or are still attending Hope Rural School. Thanks to Hope Rural School, my educational journey has been shaped significantly.” ★ **Yosselin Santoyo**

“I started Hope Rural School in Kindergarten. I loved how we would all pray together during morning breakfast and sing the school song, “We are the Family”. The thing I love most about Hope Rural School is its strong diverse community. I learned so many things while attending this school and I truly believe it is like no other. Being a student at Hope taught me many things. One major thing I learned is the importance of giving. I noticed while being at Hope Rural that there were special donors supporting the school. Thanks to many kindhearted people, students were able to go on field trips, receive Easter baskets, gifted bikes from “Jack the Bike Man” and we were given Christmas presents every year from Harbour Ridge at a Christmas Party. Once I got to high school, I joined clubs and organizations that primarily focused on volunteer work. I learned to love giving back to the community and supporting the less fortunate. Another thing I learned was how to be confident. I once played Ms. Hannigan in the play, Annie. I remember being in the school choir and that is definitely where my love for singing came. Even though it’s been seven years since I’ve attended the school, I still have strong memories and connections with this school. It’s truly amazing to see how Hope continues to grow and make a difference in so many lives!” ★ **Jemima Sejour**



# CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS

## Parent Outreach

Parenting classes introduce communication, discipline, and family time skills. Information nights include guest speakers that share nutrition skills, healthy choices and exercise practices, drug/alcohol abuse, banking & legal assistance information etc... Time is offered for peer-to-peer discussions to share ideas & success stories as they learn. Advanced classes for parents of fourth and fifth grade students are also provided to deal with moral values and adolescent issues. Each family is encouraged to participate in the care and maintenance of our campus grounds once a month-an opportunity to have pride in, and personal responsibility of “their school” while helping us to maintain our beautiful campus.



## Honor Roll/Accelerated Reader Recipients

Every quarter we have Parent/Teacher conferences with our parents to discuss their child(rens) academic progress. We have an honor roll which follows report cards in which we applaud those who have made every effort to receive high honors (all A's) or honor roll (A's and B's). Coupled with academic grades, we also acknowledge those students in grades 1 and 2 who participate in the (AR) accelerated reading program in which we praise students who continually read and have received the highest points in reading in their respective classrooms for the quarter. Pictured are our first quarter honor roll winners in grades 3, 4, and 5 and our accelerated reader winners in grades 1 and 2.

## Preventive Oral Health Program

The mission of Florida Health is to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts. We are grateful for our partnership with the FL. Department of Health in Martin County who provides us with preventive dental services. The van pictured right - brought all the dental hygienists and equipment to our school in October.



## Harvest Family Dinner

Each year in late October, families of students in grades 3-4-5 gather for an evening of sharing a meal and enjoy entertainment performed by the students. The purpose of the evening is to reinforce the importance of family eating together and sharing with the importance of eating together as family, and sharing with one another all that goes on in each one's life in a day. A great time was had by over 200+ families, staff, and teachers.



# CAMPUS HIGHLIGHTS



## Boxes of Joy

Box of Joy gifts are Christmas gifts sent to children in developing countries like Guatemala, Haiti, and the Dominican Republic. Filled with small toys, clothing, school supplies, toothbrush, toothpaste, soap, hair brush etc. These gifts represent Christ's love. Our donation demonstrates Christ's compassion to a child who may have never before received a Christmas gift.



## Visit from the Mad Scientist

Get ready to teach, see, hear, smell, and taste what science is all about! Students at Hope Rural engaged in exciting, interactive, and educational hands-on activities that instilled a clearer understanding of science and how it affects the world around them all while having fun.



## Character Counts Week

Every year since 1993, the U.S. President, Senate, Governors, and officials around the world proclaim the third week in October as CHARACTER COUNTS WEEK - this week highlights the value of good character and its important role in building strong communities that value positive, healthy relationships along with respectful behavior. During this week, we celebrate young people who are role models of good character in their communities. We support the parents and educators who teach our young people to be trustworthy, respectful, responsible, fair, caring, and good citizens.



## Heritage Day

We set aside a day in October as "Heritage Day" to celebrate and acknowledge the origins of ethnic groups represented in our school.



## Grandparents Day

National Grandparents Day has three distinct purposes: To honor Grandparents; To give grandparents an opportunity to show love for their children's children; To help children become aware of strength, information and guidance that older people can offer.

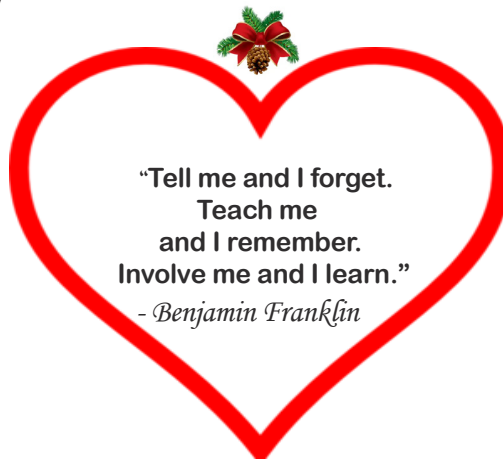
# PRECIOUS THOUGHTS

## ★ Gracious Remarks from our Volunteers - Tom and Mimi Murphy ★

"As I approach my eighth month of volunteering at Hope Rural School, I am filled with gratitude for the opportunity to work alongside these wonderful children. It has been deeply fulfilling to witness their growth, not only in their understanding of life and academics but also in their journey with the Church and their relationship with God.

This experience has been immensely rewarding, and I hope that my time here has had a positive impact on the children and their dedicated teachers. I look forward to continuing this meaningful ministry for many more months, and hopefully, years to come." Sincerely, Tom Murphy

"Volunteering at Hope Rural, and working one-on-one with first graders on reading, has been an incredibly rewarding experience for me. I love seeing the excitement in their eyes when they sound out new words and gain confidence in their abilities. The bonds I've formed, and watching their progress are deeply fulfilling. Thank you for giving me this opportunity, Sister. My deep gratitude to Miss Ally for her guidance too!" God Bless You! Mimi Murphy



## Inspirational words from our wonderful 100 year old former Director

*Sr. Marie Celeste Gatti, O.P.*

"I continue to marvel at the countless ways you make learning a family affair. Parents learn with their children...celebrations of sacraments, holidays, scholastic achievements, leadership formation, development of social skills, student performances...and the learning continues.

And together, families learn from each other. IT'S ALL UNBELIEVABLY WONDERFUL!"

**"KEEP DREAMING, PLANNING, SCHEMING WAYS TO MAKE LEARNING FUN!"**

# REMEMBERING OUR LOVED ONES



## Memorial and 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.**

**Your contributions bless many! You are forever in our thoughts and prayers.**

★ WATCH OUR WEB PAGE: [WWW.HOPERURALSCHOOL.ORG](http://WWW.HOPERURALSCHOOL.ORG) FOR UPCOMING EVENTS! ★