

**2010 Glenn W. Hoffmann Exemplary Program Awards**  
**HOPE Services Partnership – Lakeside Joint School District**  
**Family Involvement and Community Connections**

Lakeside School enjoys a remote, rural setting above Los Gatos on Black Road. Most students live at least five miles back in the Santa Cruz Mountains. Staff are always seeking ways to make the learning experience rich and meaningful for the 86 students on campus. One innovation to accomplish this goal is to bring more people from the “flat lands” on to the campus.

HOPE Services, a center for employment opportunities for adults with developmental disabilities, places clients in sheltered work environments in southern Santa Clara County.

Initially, a parent, impressed by HOPE Services clients working at the HOPE operated Kids’ Cafe in the Children’s Discovery Museum, suggested we invite HOPE to offer a similar program at Lakeside. At Lakeside, HOPE Services clients help serve a healthy, hot lunch every other Friday. HOPE clients, working with parent volunteers and school personnel, over-see the serving line where students choose which vegetable and beverage they would like. HOPE clients place the food items on the student tray. Clients also help set up for lunch, clean the tables and trays, and leave the kitchen ready for the next Pizza Friday.

For Lakeside, the participation of HOPE clients is an opportunity for students to rub elbows with people of differing abilities. For the clients, working at Lakeside is a highly valued placement. In fact, the Lakeside crew is always made up of volunteers. HOPE clients have other opportunities where they are paid an hourly wage, but at Lakeside they do it because they love to come here. Some clients are in their second year of participation.

One outcome of the HOPE/Lakeside partnership is the confidence developed by the clients who enjoy “real world” responsibility and respect. “I wish you could meet the people at the school that work along with the clients . . . they always treat them as equals. It’s fun to see them greeting each other and catching up on things that they have done since they last saw each other,” says Marg Cimafranca, Hope Services Employment Specialist. Another outcome is the change seen in the Lakeside elementary age students. Stares and stammers give way to greetings and conversations as student learn the HOPE clients are people just like them. One Kindergartener opined, “I like Margarita because she always smiles at me.”

Historically, Lakeside has had very few students with disabilities. Our partnership with HOPE Services enhances the learning environment for our students and gives them the access to greater diversity right in their mountain community.

There is no greater outcome than for young children to learn to accept others for who they are regardless of ability (or disability).