



IMPACT REPORT

Mission

"I feel it is the heart, not the eye, that should determine the content of the photograph. What the eye sees is its own. What the heart can perceive is a very different matter." – Gordon Parks

Over the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years, selected students at HOPE Alternative Learning Program (HOPE ALP) in Edgecombe County, NC, participated in "Glimpses of Hope," a **PhotoVoice** program proposed by HOPE teacher Crystal Lancaster as part of her team's work with ROI. The project allowed students to learn photography skills for a deeper purpose. Through a series of photography assignments, the students used photography as a means of self-expression, helping build an appreciation of their surroundings and make sense of the complex circumstances they face in everyday life.

The mission of **PhotoVoice** was to help students use visual storytelling as a strategy to heal from trauma and find beauty in the ordinary. This impact report showcases the students' experiences and the program results from Fall 2021 to Spring 2023.



"I see this different side in [Zamarion]...he doesn't mind going to school and telling us what he did. I like that."

Lizzie Stanton, reflecting on her grandson Zamarion Stanton's reaction to **PhotoVoice**.

"I had a student say 'I wasn't going to come to school today, but then I remembered we had PhotoVoice.' ... If you open those doors for them, the kids will walk through them and shine."

Crystal Lancaster, reflecting on student reactions to **PhotoVoice**.

Glimpses of Hope PhotoVoice Project

The PhotoVoice participants were thrilled to showcase their work to community members at two gallery events. Watch the video to hear student, faculty, and community reactions to the project.





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Healing Through Storytelling

Students often face challenges in their transition to a new school, and an alternative school like HOPE ALP is not an exception. “When they come here, they lose a lot,” says Crystal. “They will be separated from old friends, sports, and hobbies they had at their last school. The HOPE program is amazing, but because we’re not connected to other schools, it can kind of feel like you’re on an island by yourself.” On top of that, attending an alternative school can cause students to stigma within their community, and many of HOPE ALP’s students face challenges at home.

A lifelong lover of photography, Crystal saw **PhotoVoice** as an opportunity to give HOPE students a chance to reclaim their narrative. “Sometimes people just need to be given a chance to shine. It’s about seeing potential in someone and letting them know. It breathes life into their spirit. I wanted **PhotoVoice** to provide healing to students through a new medium most of them haven’t tried before.”

How It Works

ROI partnered with HOPE ALP to provide funding for **PhotoVoice**. Jenny Jacklin, a local artist and visual journalist, and Crystal Lancaster facilitated the program. facilitated by local artist and visual journalist Jenny Jacklin and Crystal Lancaster. During the program, students were given cameras to complete photo assignments. They then engaged in a weekly dialogue about their pieces and the feelings they evoked. After 10 weeks, the students showcased their work at a gallery show entitled *Glimpses of Hope*, where community members could engage with the students and their photographs.

“Through the program, the students challenged stereotypes and authored their own narratives. They have so much to say, express, and give. They’re caring and creative.

Jenny Jacklin, PhotoVoice facilitator

Thank you to our partners

Your help allows us to execute projects like PhotoVoice to better serve youth in rural eastern NC.



Jenny Jacklin
PhotoVoice Program
Facilitator



Crystal Lancaster
HOPE ALP English
and History Teacher



Meagan Sykes
ECPS Exceptional
Children’s Director



Quarry Williams
HOPE ALP Principal



Dr. Robert Batts
ECPS Director of
Secondary Education



Dr. Chanda Battle
Waters
ECPS Director of
Student Support
Services



Dr. Valerie Bridges
ECPS Superintendent



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Photovoice Round 1 (2021-2022)

The first five student participants were apprehensive to start the program; but Jenny says it didn't take long for them to dive in. "Once they started looking at the world around them with their cameras, something clicked. They now had a tool and skills to share their unique point of view, and they built community with each other while sharing their photographs over the ten weeks."

Each week, the students were given a prompt to inspire their next photo assignment. They practiced depicting specific visual techniques while capturing their challenges and joys, favorite places, peers, and more. They also had an opportunity to visit an art museum and see the work of a variety of artists and creative mediums. These experiences enabled the students to build community with each other and confidence in telling their stories through photography. Jenny witnessed their leadership and social skills blossom. "I was having a hard week, and the students surprised me by decorating an encouraging sign," she shared. "They recognized that I was going through something, and they worked together to show their support. As we shared our own experiences through our photographs, it not only instilled confidence in the students, but created space and community for them to help others."

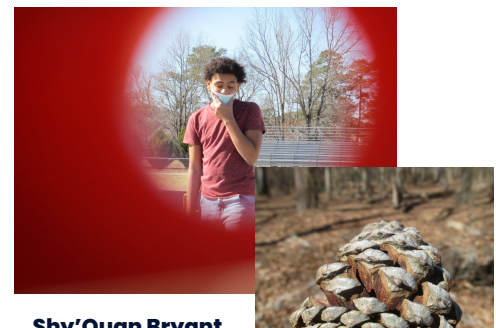
The culminating gallery show, *Glimpses of Hope*, was a huge success for the students and well-received by the community. "Students showed up in formal attire. Community members asked to buy the artwork. It was inspiring to watch the students receive recognition for their incredible work," said Crystal.



Gambit Robinson



Matthew O'Neal



Shy'Quan Bryant



Lakeita Johnson



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Photovoice Round 1 Survey Results

Following the first round of the program, the student participants were surveyed about their experience with **PhotoVoice**. Survey results revealed that students had a very positive experience overall, increasing their capacity to learn resilience skills, connect with peers and family members, express themselves and observe the world around them.

Students learned healing responses and practiced resilience skills through this project.



Increase in resilience skills

Students can better can connect to peers and family members and support their healing through this project.



Increase in connection with family



Increase in connection with classmates

Students felt more empowered to express themselves, own their narrative, and develop a positive self-image.



Increase in self image rating



Increase in ability to share stories through photography

Students gained skills in observing the world around them.



Increase in ability to pay attention to details



Increase in ability to see beauty



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Collection of Photographs Photovoice Round 1



Gambit Robinson



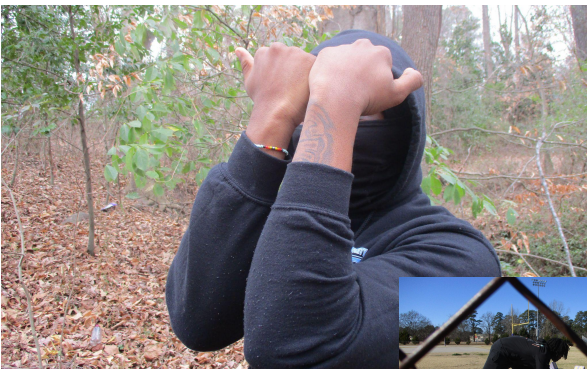
Matthew O'Neal



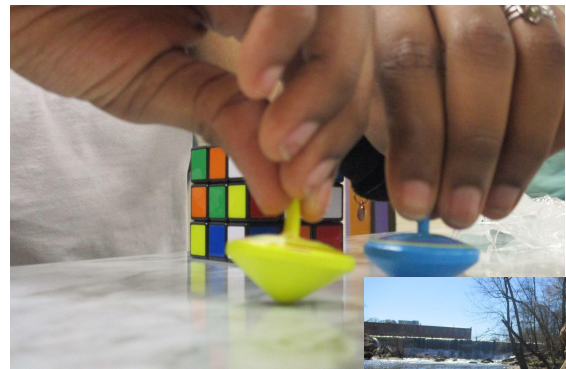
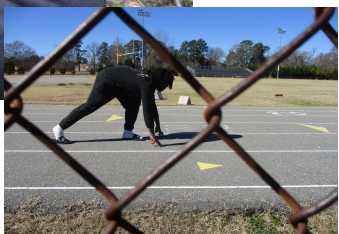
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Lakeita Johnson





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Photovoice Round 2 (2022-2023)

After the success of the first iteration of **PhotoVoice**, HOPE ALP restarted the program the next school year with a new group of six students to continue growing its impact. This time, data was collected both via survey and through a photo captioning exercise completed by each student participant; the students created captions for their photos of community heroes through a series of question prompts. Overall, the results of the survey and captioning exercise indicated that students gained important skills.

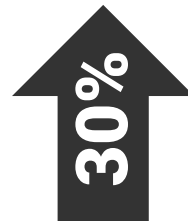
Photovoice Round 2 Survey Results

Following the first round of the program, the student participants were surveyed about their experience with **PhotoVoice**. Survey results revealed that students had a very positive experience overall, increasing their capacity to learn resilience skills, connect with peers and family members, express themselves and observe the world around them.

Students can better connect to peers and family members and support their healing through this project.



Increase in connection with family



Increase in connection with classmates

Captioning exercise: Students were asked to tell the story of the subject of the photo and how it relates to their own life. The most common observations were a sense of connection and inspiration to help others.

Example student caption: *“I want to be a coach like her.”*

Students learned healing responses and practiced resilience skills through this project.



Increase in resilience skills



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Photovoice Round 2 Survey Results (con't)

Students felt more empowered to express themselves, own their narrative, and develop a positive self-image.



Increase in self image rating



Increase in ability to share stories through photography

Captioning exercise: Students were asked what they felt looking at the community hero portraits. The most common observations included positive narrative and positive self image.

Example student caption: “[This photo makes me feel] Good because someone like him inspires and helps people to see their potential.”

Students gained skills in observing the world around them.



Increase in ability to pay attention to details



Increase in ability to see beauty

Captioning exercise: Students were asked to describe what was happening in the community hero portraits. The most common observations included emotions expressed by the subject and personality characteristics exemplified by the subject.

Example student caption: “She looks genuinely happy.”

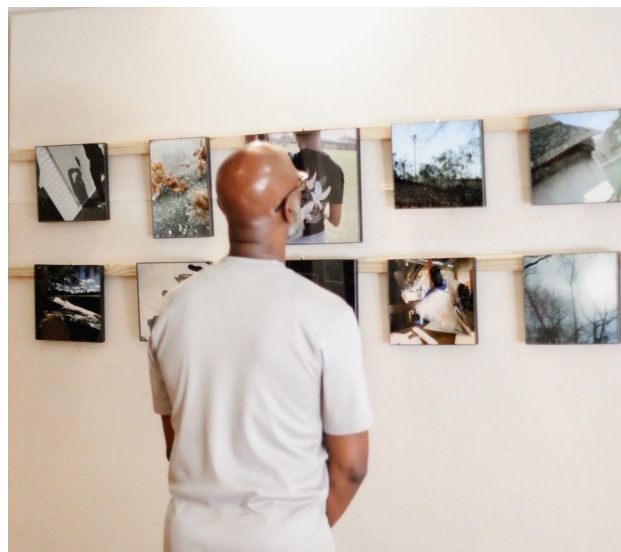


PhotoVoice Round 2 Survey Results (con't)

Overall, **PhotoVoice** participants had very positive reactions to the 2023 iteration of the program. We are pleased to see that the program has had a significant impact on their lives, as shown in feedback from the students themselves. We are hopeful that **PhotoVoice** will continue to grow its impact, helping students build valuable life skills and an appreciation for a new art form along the way.

→ Student feedback:

- ◆ *“It changed mainly on how I viewed the world and how I look at things now which was a dramatic change.”* – PhotoVoice Student
- ◆ *“It just really gives me something to look forward to.”* – PhotoVoice Student
- ◆ *“I find photography more interesting and I would like to learn lots of more things about it.”* – PhotoVoice Student
- ◆ *“With the proper camera and vision, photography can make your life much better. It can help lift our spirits when we are down, help us look beyond the disappointments life can sometimes throw at us and spark our creativity and imagination.”*
– PhotoVoice Student





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Collection of Photographs Photovoice Round 2

