



*SOWING THE
SEEDS OF HOPE*



BACKGROUNDER



The idea of Fort Hope began in 2003 with a man named Pat Loomis. He was inspired through his faith to invite disadvantaged children – especially those from single-parent homes – to enjoy some of the activities that he loved as a child at this family’s ranch. Loomis wanted children to be able to try fishing, archery, shooting, and other activities that he believes are gradually fading into history as they disappear from modern daily life.

Loomis had many fond memories of frequent gatherings at the old “Ghost Town” which his uncle, father, and friends made from reconstructed buildings from the city of Arroyo Grande. The old-fashioned activities Loomis and thousands of other visitors participated in, such as singing and playing the piano, helped to maintain the historical Old Western essence of the place that helped to inspire Fort Hope.

The dream of building Fort Hope was made real when Loomis and his wife Leigh Ann were gifted a part of Loomis’s family’s ranch in 1999. They were able to follow their vision and make Fort Hope into what it has become today. Donations of time, money, supplies and labor from the local community have also been crucial in bringing Fort Hope into existence.

Like the old Ghost Town Loomis loved as a child, Fort Hope is a place to gather and have fun away from the contemporary world of computer screens and video games. With over 15 activities and 22 buildings, Fort Hope has become a place where children can come to attain a sense of fulfillment, while learning about history, through unforgettable hands-on activities.

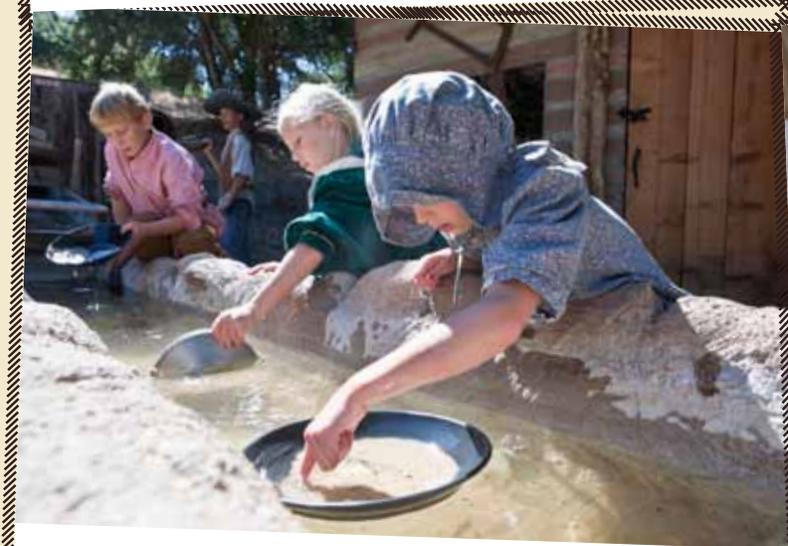
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Fort Hope Town is modeled after an 1800's frontier town, including a blacksmith, candlemaker and jail



Students learn about historic local Native American culture, customs and history



Gold panning is interwoven with history lessons on the California Gold Rush



Many kids shoot their first bow and arrows at Fort Hope, complete with trapping and hunting tutorials



The Fort Hope lake affords opportunities for canoeing demonstrations and fishing lessons



Kids have the opportunity to bond with each other and be mentored by many talented adult docents

FORT HOPE FACT SHEET



- Fort Hope is a **non-profit** recognized as a 501(c)(3) organization by the IRS.
- Fort Hope is a **frontier-style children's museum** set in a mid-1800's style fort where children participate in hands-on activities.
- **Activities** that Fort Hope visitors can participate in include the following:
 - o Fishing
 - o Archery
 - o Lassoing
 - o Panning for gold
 - o Making rope
 - o Making adobe bricks
 - o Making candles
 - o Shooting BB guns
 - o Churning butter
 - o Feeding animals
 - o Picking seasonal fruit
 - o Learning about California history
 - o Learning about endemic Native American culture
 - o Folk and square dancing
- The **main groups** of children that Fort Hope targets are children in single parent families, foster children, underprivileged children, and those with disabilities and life-threatening illnesses.
- A **group of docents** volunteer at Fort Hope by leading groups of children while dressed in costume and maintaining character of the period.
- **Last year**, Fort Hope hosted eight groups of children, but hopes to increase this number to 30 groups of 30 children in the coming years.
- **Fort Hope has a goal** of increasing donations substantially this year, so it will be able to accommodate more children at the museum. To host a group of 30 children at the fort costs approximately \$1,200.



- **Area schools** and groups that have visited Fort Hope:
 - o Sanchez Elementary School, Santa Maria
 - o Oceano Elementary School Special Education
 - o A Big Brothers, Big Sisters small group
 - o God's Haven for Children Foster Care
 - o Angel Tree Ministries
 - o Boys and Girls Club
 - o Camp Hapitok
 - o Family Care Network, Inc.
 - o House of Prayer youth group
 - o Good Samaritans for homeless children

Pat Loomis, Founder of Fort Hope

STUDENTS AND TEACHERS SAY THANKS!

"Thank you very much for giving us a spectacular field trip to Fort Hope!...It was a wonderful experience!"

- Teacher, Special Education class

"The volunteers at Fort Hope were fantastic! They took the time to explain things at a level my students could understand.... Fort Hope allows my students the opportunity to try new activities and build general knowledge skills that can be linked to learning."

- Teacher, Special Education Class

"I learned how to make butter. My favorite part of Fort Hope was to see the cats."

- Maria, Student

"I learned that you have to shake a jar of milk very hard to make butter. I also liked feeding the goats. When I pet them they are soft."

- Jonathan

"I loved archery. Fort Hope was awesome!"

- Luis

"Fort Hope was a really cool place"

- Marco

"I learned how to pan for gold. My favorite part was doing archery because I shot the bear. Some day I want to work there."

- Isreal

"I really liked fishing. Fort Hope was a lot of fun."

- Sammy



"Thank you for giving us a fun field trip. I really liked fishing. Fort Hope has great things to do."

- Fernanda