



# EAGLE EYES

Volume 16, Number 3

News From Fall 2008 Trimester

Beginning with this issue, all of the news and information found in Eagle Eyes will be shifted entirely online to [http://eaglerockschool.org/eagle\\_rock\\_online/eagle\\_eyes.asp](http://eaglerockschool.org/eagle_rock_online/eagle_eyes.asp). Our final printed version of this publication was in the Fall of 2008. This new initiative is in keeping with Eagle Rock's objective of being an environmental leader, in recognition that more people are getting their news and information online than ever before, and in light of the need to be cost efficient. We welcome and appreciate any comments or suggestions you might have. Please email us at [newsletter@eaglerockschool.org](mailto:newsletter@eaglerockschool.org). We look forward to seeing you on [www.eaglerockschool.org](http://www.eaglerockschool.org). Happy holidays and our best to you in the new year!

## EIGHT NEW STAFF JOIN EAGLE ROCK

by Carter Cox, Public Allies Fellow in Professional Development



This past trimester Eagle Rock welcomed eight new staff members to its community. Working everywhere from the classroom to the business office to the maintenance shed, each of ERS' new staff has brought a wealth of experience and assets.

*Jesse Beightol*, ERS' new Wilderness Program Director and the Outdoor Program Instructional Specialist, describes his job as "overseeing the new student wilderness orientation experience as well as all other adventure activities on campus." Jesse completed a Master's degree in Outdoor Education at the University of New Hampshire in the spring of 2008, but has worked at ERS periodically since 2000. ER-47 was Jesse's 11<sup>th</sup> ERS wilderness course. "I am excited to live and work in an intentional community that is committed to helping young people improve the quality of their lives," Jesse says. "I am also excited about the school's commitment to outdoor and experiential education."

*Jon Borodach* is the new Instructional Specialist in Music. Jon previously taught instrumental music for nine years in the Grossmont Union High School District in San Diego County, California. He holds a Master of Music degree from San Diego State University and has been a master teacher for music education students from San Diego State University and Point Loma Nazarene University. Jon has served as a festival adjudicator for the Southern California School Band and Orchestra Association and San Diego

City Schools. Jon says, "I am excited to be at Eagle Rock because of the school's emphasis on learning, community, and personal growth. Eagle Rock School provides a wonderfully collaborative educational environment. I am excited to be a part of it."

*Karen Ikegami*, Instructional Specialist in Math, comes from to Eagle Rock after working at a small, public high school in SeaTac, Washington. Karen taught science there for four years,



See "New Staff" - Continued on Page 2

**A publication of  
Eagle Rock School  
and Professional  
Development Center**

Editor:

Dan Condon  
2750 Notaiiah Road  
Estes Park, CO  
80517

Phone Number:

(970) 586-0600

Fax Number:

(970) 586-4805

Website:

www.EagleRockSchool.org

An initiative of the  
American Honda  
Education Corporation

**American Honda  
Education  
Corporation**

**Sheri Bullock**  
Secretary/Treasurer

**Marc Burt**  
Board Member

**Gary Kessler**  
President & Chairman  
of the Board

**Cathy McEvilly**  
Board Member

**Kaz Odaka**  
Vice President

**Eagle Rock School  
and Professional  
Development Center**

**Jon Anderson**  
Human Performance

**Jesse Beightol**  
Wilderness &  
Outdoor Education

**Jon Borodach**  
Music and Performance

**Burt Bowles**  
Facilities & Maintenance

**Robert Burkhardt**  
Head of School

**Dan Condon**  
Associate Director of  
Professional Development

**Susan D'Amico**  
Administrative Assistant



"New Staff" - Continued from Page 1

as well as Ultimate Frisbee, women's fitness, and photography. Karen is originally from Oregon, just outside of Portland, and received her undergraduate degree in Biology from the University of Oregon. She has a Master's degree in education and has also spent time working in a molecular biology lab. Of her new job, Karen says, "I am excited about creating courses that both students and I can be excited about. I'm also excited to be working and living in a community where people have enthusiasm for education."

**Dave Manzella** is Eagle Rock's newest Language Arts and Literature Instructional Specialist. Dave oversees all of the major ERS writing requirements including the graduate major research projects. He is currently working

on a system to support writing across the curriculum. Dave most recently helped open a charter high school in Taos, NM. Vista Grande High School, an Expeditionary Learning school, opened its doors in August of 2007. Previous to working in New Mexico, Dave taught at Red Canyon High School for five years. Dave describes himself as being "dedicated to giving students the chance at success they did not receive during their former educational experiences."

**Holly McKamey** is Eagle Rock's new Business Office Assistant and Student Insurance Representative. Before starting at ERS, Holly was working in Fort Collins, Colorado a part-time computer office assistant and a full-time horse trainer and riding instructor. She has a B.S. in Equine Science from Colorado State University. Holly says she is "super excited to be able to contribute to an organization that makes such a difference in the lives of young people."

**Kirstin Sizemore**, new Human Performance Instructional Specialist, is originally from Wisconsin. Kirstin spent over three years working for Outward Bound in Florida, and she taught last year in Commerce City, Colorado. Kirstin says, "I am really excited to be a part of the Eagle Rock Community and to continue building relationships with both staff and students."

**Joel "Shortz" Ziegler** joined the facilities/maintenance team this fall. Shortz has lived in Estes Park working at the YMCA and then a local retirement village. "I am excited about working here," Shortz says, "and being an integral part of this community while working here during the day. Why does he go by "Shortz?" That's what he likes to wear."



## EAGLE ROCKERS ATTEND FALL FORUM

by Dan Condon, Associate Director of Professional Development

During the second week of November, a sizable crew from Eagle Rock joined over a thousand other educators and students for the 2008 Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) *Fall Forum*. This year's forum theme was *Live It. Learn It. Change It.* The Forum was held in downtown Charlotte, North Carolina. Eagle Rock staff and students presented two of the over 300 workshops offered during the conference, and facilitated two of the smaller inquiry group discussions.

The Fall Forum is CES's primary networking and professional development event, bringing together educators, students, parents, and leading thinkers in education from around the world to exchange ideas, ask questions, and share insights about effective school practices and designs. The conference consists of workshops, interest group gatherings, and other sessions in the content strands of teaching, learning, and assessment; school culture, practices, and design; leadership; and community connections.

The goals of the Fall Forum are to: Deepen practitioners' understanding of how the CES Common Principles can guide change and improve outcomes for all students; Provide opportunities for attendees to network with others about their experiences and efforts to redesign their classrooms, schools, and districts; Allow attendees to hear from and exchange ideas with leading figures in American education today; Stimulate conversations about issues of importance; Influence people to embrace CES ideas and priorities.

Michael Soguero, Director of Professional Development stated, "More than any other event, The Fall Forum gets me focused on our larger mission of positively affecting secondary education nationally. I'm learning strategies at workshops to bring back to Eagle Rock and to our mission of sharing with folks who visit. I'm networking with the best practitioners from around the country.



Participating in the Fall Forum is one of the most important things we do."

Thursday evening's conference opening began by asking attendees how they *Live It, Learn It, and Change It.* Keynote speaker Luis Rodriguez (pictured with two Eagle Rock students) is a multi-genre author and community leader who has led young individuals and communities out of gang life and into personal pride and productivity. Two days after Election Day, Fall Forum's powerful opening also invited participants to contribute to the creation of a collaborative message to President-elect Obama.

On Friday morning Michael Soguero, Director of Professional Development and Dan Condon, Associate Director of Professional Development were joined by Eagle Rock Students Calvin King and David Sanchez in presenting *ABCD: And We Aren't Talking About the Alphabet – Using Asset Based Community Development in your School.* Asset-based community development (ABCD) is an approach to school community development that advocates for the use of strengths that are already present within the school community, rather than obtaining help from outside institutions. The phrase "asset-based" refers to a positive, "capacity-driven" approach that encourages community members to make progress for

See "Fall Forum" - Continued on Page 4

**Mark Dougherty**  
Sous Chef

**Cynthia Elkins**  
Arts

**Beth Ellis**  
Learning Resources  
and Information

**Jacques Fournet**  
Wilderness & Outdoor  
Education

**Mike Glowacki**  
Head Cook

**John Guffey**  
Service Learning

**Karen Ikegami**  
Mathematics

**Sheri Jackson**  
Business Administration  
Specialist

**Janet Johnson**  
Science

**Janice Lee**  
Registrar

**Jeff Liddle**  
Director of Curriculum

**Denise Lord**  
Life After Eagle Rock

**Susan Luna**  
Director of Operations

**Dave Manzella**  
Language Arts & Literature

**Mark Palmer**  
Public Allies

**L'Tanya Perkins**  
Admissions Associate

**Tim Phelps**  
Chef Instructor

**Scott Rashid**  
Second Chef

**Russ Rendón**  
World Languages

**TBA**  
Society and Cultures

**Kirstin Sizemore**  
Human Performance

**Philbert Smith**  
Director of Students

**Michael Soguero**  
Director of  
Professional Development

**Terry Tierney**  
Assistant Facilities

**Jesse Tovar**  
Health and Wellness  
Counselor

*"Fall Forum" - Continued from Page 3*

themselves, as opposed to a traditional "needs-driven" approach that makes the community dependent on institutional help. Once resources are assessed, the school community selects goals, and finally (and most challengingly) determines how the student and staffs skills can be leveraged into achieving those goals.

Later than afternoon those same four Eagle Rock community members presented *Making Change Stick: Restorative Justice Case Study*. We invited participants to learn about the struggle of change, and the tools for successful navigation, through the case study of implementing a Restorative Justice program at Eagle Rock School. In addition to receiving materials on the Restorative Justice program, participants also gained an understanding of how to implement any change process.

Jeff Liddle, Director of Curriculum explains, "I loved it. It's great to connect with like-minded schools. I went with the intention of focusing a lot on assessment and how schools structure their curriculum. I enjoyed and got a lot out of all the sessions that had to do with assessment and curriculum design. The synergy of going with other ERS folks was also great. The pre-conference on power standards was also good, especially for our current curriculum guide revision project."

Jon Anderson, Human Performance Instructional Specialist says, "I have plans to implement differentia-

tion into one of my classes (From Mountains to Deserts) next trimester based on time I spent with Carol Ann Tomlinson."

Similar to Jon, Janet Johnson, Science Instructional Specialist says, "Jon and I are going to use Tomlinson's work to help us structure our class (Soggy Socks). We are going to put all of our energy into differentiating for that class on a daily basis.

Christi Kramer, Public Allies Fellow in Curriculum explains, "Learning about how other schools overcome challenges to produce successful and meaningful educational experiences inspired me to think of ways we can enhance our curriculum, specifically regarding assessments."

The Fall Forum also presented an opportunity for the CES Small Schools Network to touch base and meet with their mentor or mentee schools. Staff from Eagle Rock and Skyview Academy and Odyssey – The Essential School briefly met to reflect on their partnership, and to make plans for professional development for the coming months including a school observation trip to Chicago with Odyssey the Essential School to which occurred in early December and a professional development visit to Skyview that occurred the week following Fall Forum.

**To learn more about the CES Fall Forum visit [www.essentialschools.org](http://www.essentialschools.org)**

## **SOARING WITH EAGLES**

**This letter to the editor is being reprinted with permission from the Estes Park Trail Gazette where it appeared on October 10, 2008**

Dear Editor:

It is with great gratitude that we, as co-managers of the local Furniture Connections (a used furniture store), thank the Eagle Rock School for their commitment to community, as witnessed on September 18 at the Eagle Serve Day on the Eagle Rock campus. We were invited to this event and enjoyed a breakfast with two fantastic students, Katie and Hutch. Ideas were exchanged and about building community through service.

September 19 was community service volunteer day for Eagle Rock students. Katie and Hutch worked hard at Furniture Connections for four hours, making trips to the dump and picking up donated furniture items. With the aid of John Guffey, staff member at Eagle Rock, we worked with these students and helped the community at large recycle good used furniture. Their help is invaluable to us at the store.

If you have lived in Estes Park for any length of time, you know that Eagle Rock students are often for hire to help anyone in the Estes Valley with whatever they need, be it staining a deck, cleaning up a yard, or helping the disabled to clear out ld storage shed. These energetic students need to know that they have helped someone and that their services are appreciated and needed to create a closer community. We encourage all of the residents of the Estes Valley to get to know students from Eagle Rock by hiring them or attending the on-going event they have at their school and in the community.

*With sincere thanks, Sudan Lowe and May Anderson*

## A RECENT GRADUATE WRITES THE COMMUNITY

*This letter from an Eagle Rock graduate was received on September 19, 2008, and portions are being reprinted with permission.*

Ciao Eagle Rock School:

Wow, it's trimester 46...it's unbelievable how quickly time travels. It seems like only yesterday the winter trimester started and I was in Pinon watching movies, bumping music and running over to Robert's house because we were desperate for popcorn...good times.

Well the summer nights over here are endless and you can sometimes feel like a Popsicle melting away. I ended the rafting season a little early. Working everyday in the sun and being with groups from 6:00 am to 11:00 pm really, really, really made me appreciate all of the fellows and what they do to hold that school together. One of the last rafting groups I guided was the Braille Institute. One of the girls was

completely blind, and let me tell you, she was a firecracker. She was the most outgoing and brilliant twelve year-old I have ever met. The other two girls in the group were partially blind and could see shadows and such. They LOVED being in the water and I absolutely loved guiding them. I learned so much about people and how to accommodate their needs.

I had some major learning during my time since graduating that I wanted to share with my beloved Eagle Rock community. It's called gratitude. When I was younger I used to say that I love my life because things could be worse off. Like I could be in a wheelchair, deaf, or blind. I would use other people's challenges to make me feel better. Working with hundreds of different people and people living with disabilities I started to question why I said it could be worse. I saw these people rafting and loving their life...and living it the way they learned and it became very transparent that by me thinking this I was giving myself permission to believe that I was better than them because I had more. This is not true at all.

I couldn't even begin in this letter to tell you all about my summer because it would be fifty pages long. I can say that I swung from high trees and did back flips from ropes, jumped off waterfalls, fell out of a boat while guiding 11 – 15 year olds in class three rapids, hit waves sideways and learned to love it, lost people in rapids and had many moments of chaos. I learned that energy in a boat is contagious and sometimes problems need to wait. I bought my first pair of climbing shoes and went bouldering. I went down class four rapids and learned to read water. I assistant guided and then finally was checked out as an official raft guide. I met people who challenged me and my morals and went with it. I learned how to flow with the way the bubbles are going in the river and in my life. I found all of this because of Eagle Rock. So thank you. For now I am in the San Fernando Valley completely under stimulated waiting for some news about possible jobs in Africa. I miss you all and kudos to all the new students, Fellows, Instructional Specialists, and the ER 46 graduates! Eagle Rock is a gift. If you don't believe me call my dad.



Best wishes, *Amanda Hansen (ER-38)*

## STUDENTS ON ICE

by *Adrienne Bovee, Eagle Rock School student*

This summer I was given the opportunity to go to the Arctic Circle with a program called Students On Ice. Students On Ice is a Canadian-based, environmental education program, which takes high school students from all over the world to the Arctic and Antarctic. Angel Flores, another Eagle Rock student, and I were awarded full scholarships (worth close to \$10,000 each) for the trip due to our expressed interest in the environment.



We met the group of nearly 100 students in Ottawa, Ontario, where we spent a day sight-seeing the Capitol of Canada. From there we flew to Iqaluit, the Capitol of Nunavut, the northernmost province of Canada, which is located on Baffin Island. We spent a day in Iqaluit exposing ourselves to the life of the Inuit people who live on Baffin Island, met the commissioner of Nunavut (who came with us on our expedition), and boarded the ship on which we would spend the next three weeks sailing Baffin Bay.

Days sailing were spent in lectures covering a wide array of topics from sea ice to community activism. Once or twice a day the large group would split into small workshop groups to study Arctic wildlife, geology, fundraising and marketing techniques, and more- all with the focus of making an impact in our own communities.

In the afternoon, we would hop aboard the zodiacs, a small motor powerboat designed to explore. It was from the zodiacs that we saw seals, whales, and polar bears. If close enough to shore we would make a landing to explore the diverse landscape of Baffin Island. We found ourselves surrounded by towering fjord walls, and hiked canyons carved by rapid glacier melt.

The impact that this experience has had on my life is both long lasting and immeasurable. My commitment to sustainable living was rejuvenated, along with my optimism about the capabilities of the human race to cope with the challenges that global warming presents. It remained prevalent in my thoughts throughout the recent election and remains relevant as our country deals with the current economic crisis. As Eagle Rock faces challenges in regards to our impact on the environment, the trip has inspired me to be a leader in making Eagle Rock more sustainable.

For more information about *Students On Ice* visit <http://studentsonice.com>.

## GRADUATE PROFILE – WHERE IS SHE NOW?

by *Carter Cox, Public Allies Fellow in Professional Development*

“Sarah Winship Baker is one of the best people I have ever had the pleasure of knowing. As a student she was kind, articulate, intelligent, and humble. She had many friends, no enemies, and time for everyone.”

–*Jon Anderson, Human Performance IS*

Sarah Winship Baker, ER-20 (Spring, 2000)  
 Graduated ER-29 (Spring, 2003)  
 Geography: Grand Haven, Michigan

When I finished reading the letter that Sarah Winship Baker, whom I have never met, wrote me, telling me about her life, the first three words I wrote down were *humble, kind, and happy*. Sarah was quick to preempt her story by telling me it was not so extraordinary as other ERS grads. From what I have read, however, I cannot support that statement. In my own opinion, there is nothing ordinary about leading a meaningful life filled with friends, family, and love. I am, therefore, starting out this article by openly disagreeing with Sarah.

*Profile" - Continued from Page 6*

Sarah Winship Baker grew up in Grand Haven, Michigan, raised in a "close" family. She is the youngest of four daughters and her parents – who own and operate a lumberyard that has been in the family since 1871 – are still married after 35 years. Sarah told me she does not remember making a specific "decision" to come to Eagle Rock – it just sort of worked out that way.

"I became disillusioned with public school as well as a lot of other things right around my ninth grade year," she wrote me. "I refused to go to school and ultimately ended up having adventures around the country alone at the age of 16." Returning home Sarah had no desire to return to school, but her parents wanted her to and her eldest sister had a friend who had visited ERS before.

I asked Sarah what her strongest memories of ERS are. Her answer to me reads like free form poetry. I will share some of my favorite parts:

*...LT's Fourth of July sweet potato pie, the strength of Tim's coffee, the notorious "Eagle Rock gas," and how we all thought the kitchen staff put some sort of baking soda in the food that caused it, going to Thailand, my friend Flurry, fried green tomatoes (that I grew in our food class) at Janet's house, coffee with Jon Anderson before morning exercise, Philbert's baked ziti, all the drama, Terry's lesson about how your name is on every job that you complete and taking pride in all your work...the unending passion that lives at Eagle Rock...*

About her personal growth at ERS, Sarah told me this: "I became a confident person. I left having a better grasp on what my role in the world might be. I grew to take pride in my background and in the family lumber yard. I became a good public speaker. I honed my writing skills. I felt empowered. I became assertive."

After graduating, Sarah took some time to travel a bit – "the long way home." She visited friends, worked a bit, and eventually decided to move out to Santa Fe, New Mexico, where she interned at a homeless shelter. Eventually Sarah returned to Michigan. Again, she writes it so much better than I could: "[I] tried school, but didn't try hard enough. Got a puppy dog. Got a Cadillac (in the presence of Casey Whirl and Matt Rutherford), took that Caddi to the junkyard. Got laid off. Fell in love. Went back to work. Grandma died,

Grandpa died. Babies were born...you know...the usual stuff that happens in peoples' lives."

These days Sarah is living and working in Spring Lake, Michigan, where she manages a flower shop. "I often long for a more fulfilling job," she said, "but I make the most out of my relationships with customers, and sharing whatever joy or sorrow that brings people into flower shops." Sarah has brought the value of community living from ERS to her life as an adult. "My relationships with these otherwise strangers really and truly enrich my life...it's nothing fancy at all, but you can find inspiration and purpose no matter what you do. To me, it's all about people."

Sarah lives with her fiancé, Doug, and her dog, Hank. Sarah and Doug have plans to be married next August 22, 2009. After that they would like to build a house, grow crops, raise animals, and start a family. Sarah is also currently taking classes to convert to Catholicism, something she said former intern Kathryn

Getek turned her on to. "It is a happy time for me," she wrote me.

The last thing Sarah wrote was to bid me a happy time at Eagle Rock. I was touched by what a kind letter she wrote and what a lovely person she clearly was, is, and continues to be. Robert puts his own stamp on it.



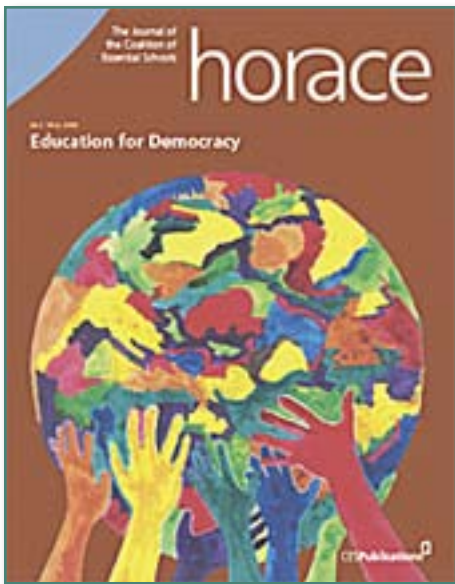
He says, "Sarah Winship Baker was always gossamer floating sweetly through the days at Eagle Rock, emanating love and good cheer. It was impossible not to love her." At Eagle Rock we always tell visitors that we are a "prep for life" school. What an exemplar Sarah Winship Baker serves as for that motto.

## SPEAKING FOR DEMOCRACY

by Andrew Barron, Former Public Allies Fellow in Language Arts & Literature

Portions reprinted with permission from *Horace: the Journal of the Coalition of Essential Schools, Volume 24.3, Fall 2008*

My co-teacher, Donnie, and I were in costume. He was Malcolm X. I was George Wallace. In character we spoke passages from our most famous speeches. By the end of the third minute of class, I was declaring..."Segregation today... segregation tomorrow...segregation forever!" And Donnie was warning, "White America, wake up



and take heed, before it is too late!" When we asked the students what they thought of our production, they circled one there:

"I thought you sounded stupid," one student told me.

Both speeches were rich with the high rhetoric of the Civil Rights era, I thought, and asked, "Why?"

"Because you had a southern accent."

"What about Donnie?" I probed.

"He sounded smarter because he didn't have an accent."

"So you decided he was smarter based on how we talked?"

"Yes."

This was the discussion that began our class, a class designed around the idea that if we are to be judged by how we talk, we have it in our interest to practice the way we speak. It was the summer trimester at Eagle Rock School, a small, tuition-free, residential school in Estes Park, Colorado. In the summer, teachers are encouraged to teach classes that might fall outside the traditional subject matter, and students are encouraged to take risks on classes they might otherwise skip.

Rhetoric was once a staple of the school system. It is a discipline with a long and storied past with its roots in the seminal moments of democracy. In the incipient democratic societies of ancient Greece rhetoric grew out of the new need to persuade large groups of people to come to consensus. As Jay Heinrichs wrote, while no one can attribute the success or failure of a democratic society to the quality of its speakers, in the case of Syracuse, the ancient Greek fledgling democracy begged mighty Athens for a manual on rhetoric.

In democratic schools, we ask for the participation of the students. We demand it. And we have research to back up our claims that democratic classrooms and schools help ease the volatility of adolescence, boost self-esteem, and prevent frustration. Yet some students may come to the task a bit like Syracuse, begging for some instruction on how to speak confidently without risking public embarrassment. The first challenge of our class was to purge any hesitation students might have about speaking publically. Everyday, we would finish class by having a few

students give impromptu speeches on topics they drew out of a hat. Some of the topics were silly, some serious, but all lent themselves to quickly formed arguments. I explained to them, "Read the topic, form an opinion, and begin. The rest will come as you proceed." While this exercise was not intended to do anything more than shake loose their nervousness, it became a powerful experience for our students. As one student told me, "After I did a few [impromptu speeches], I felt like, if I can talk about something I don't even care about, then it's easy to talk about something I do care about."

Yet, many students struggle to find something they care about. Most often the case is not that my student are too heartless or selfish to care about worldly issues. Rather, they have never been asked to form an opinion, or they have never done the research that might lead them to strong feelings.

The latter was the case for Brandi, who lamented early in our writing process, "I don't care about anything." As this is true for almost no one and certainly was not true for this warm, soulful 15-year-old, I politely disagreed with her and asked her about some of the world's persistent issues: poverty, wars, politics, and free speech. While the students' assignment was to write and present a speech on any topic of their choosing, all of my students gravitated toward important current affairs. They could have easily chosen trite, tired topics, but instead they grappled with the death penalty, HIV/AIDS, and Mexican-

See "Democracy" - Continued on Page 9



*"Democracy" - Continued from Page 8*

American identity. It makes finding evidence for a speech easier. And, more important, a controversial and timely topic makes a more interesting speech. All of my students shared the fear that they would begin to write only to find that they had nothing to articulate.

I sat Brandi in front of an online archive of Nicholas D. Kristof's multimedia reports on some of the world's most urgent issues by telling personal stories. The Monday after I talked with Brandi about her search for something to care about, she proudly told me that she had read an article in the newspaper about prostitution in Thailand, and she knew what she wanted to speak about. Of course it is not always so easy, but when I brainstorm with my students I emphasize that anything they would like to change is a thesis statement waiting to happen.

Students who write speeches for public performance write better than those who write papers for private grading. They pick sides. They see the other side of their argument and argue against it. While it may seem simple they every essay should make an argument, new writers often struggle with this concept. As Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein remind us in *They Say/I Say*, "To make an impact as a writer, you need to do more than make statements that are logical, well supported, and consistent." Interesting writing pushes up against the other side and explains why one might care to side with the writer.

I have taught students to write thesis statements that do nothing but inform the reader that China is, in fact, a country of more than one billion people. No student, however, would want to read a paper with such a mundane thesis statement in front of his or her classmates. The audience holds power over the

writing process. While composition teachers often tell students to think about their audience in a hypothetical way, speechwriters have to think about the audience in a real and consequential way. The natural consequence that holds every speechwriter accountable is the fear of public humiliation. That fear, if we are to believe oft-cited surveys on the subject, exceeds even death as a motivator. Those surveys often claim it is public speaking that people fear, but surely no one fears being a successful public speaker. No, the fear is that they would fail at speaking, that they would bore their audience or worse. And so, with that fear as a motivator, my students revised as never before. They asked me to help them practice after class, and when I made suggestions about grammar or their use of sources, I was no longer an antagonist ruining their papers. They were the workers and I was their coach, helping them write a better speech. In the end, they were just as invested in demonstrating their mastery as I was. Public speaking, though featured prominently in many states' standards, is rarely a required part of any high schools' curriculum. Standards include it as part of Language Arts, but the art goes largely ignored to allow for more time to prepare for AP or standardized test. Teaching rhetoric consumes precious time. Most schools, including our own, have found ways to include the standard in small ways into every class. Rhetoric is everywhere and, therefore, nowhere. Secondary schools followed the lead of major universities, where, around the turn of the 20th century, rhetoric was absorbed into departments of English. English became literature, and literature, preoccupied as it is by the written word, leaves out the art of the spoken word, according to Jay Heinrichs. In the other schools,

public speaking has become a specialized sport in the form of Speech and Debate teams. These teams prepare a select few but neglect the masses.

Today, English, language arts, and humanities teachers have a new set of challenges. Though public speaking may figure prominently in the standards, it defies mass standardized assessment. Imagine thousands of video entries flooding the inboxes of state assessment boards. And so, teachers have to choose between teaching posture and poise and reviewing comma rules.

For similar reasons the PLACE test, Colorado's state test that all English teachers must pass, does little more than stab at the skills needed to teach speechmaking. One of the questions among the few that dealt with the topic asks what a particular hand gesture might imply. Such standardization is crude and unhelpful. It no more qualifies a teacher to teach public speaking than knowing the symptoms of appendicitis qualifies one to perform an appendectomy. The failure is not in our ability to test public speaking. Our failure is our inability to see rhetoric as an essential teaching tool to motivate and empower students.

It has been years since Donnie and I taught that class on speech making. Yet, as I laid out my year-long plans for my current English class, I remembered Brandi smiling after she delivered her speech. "I have never done anything like that before," she told me. She was experiencing the adrenaline rush that comes from conquering fear. Teaching the spoken word is emerging as crucially important at Cristo Rey Jesuit High School, where I currently teach. Cristo Rey Jesuit High School serves under-resourced students from Minneapolis's toughest

## MEET THE PUBLIC ALLIES TEACHING FELLOWS

by Mark Palmer, Director of the Public Allies Teaching Fellowship at Eagle Rock

Eagle Rock School eagerly welcomed new Teaching Fellows this past September. At a summer barbeque, staff and their families came to greet ER-46 Fellows on their first day at Eagle Rock, sharing stories and getting to know them. This year's group of Fellows was selected from over 120 applicants. They come from across the country and bring a passion and dedication to education and youth development.

**Alyssa Chen**, Math Fellow, was born in Mendon, Vermont. She graduated from Bowdoin College with a double major in math and psychology. At Bowdoin she was a volunteer tutor and mentor. She also worked in the math and psychology department as a tutor and teaching assistant. Her senior year of college she started a dialogue project, called the Un-discussed, to surface identity conflicts at Bowdoin. As a math fellow, Alyssa hopes to find ways to make math relevant and interesting to students. She also will be continually pondering the question, what is the purpose of math education and what curriculum follows from that purpose?

**Libby Cole**, Health Wellness and Counseling, grew up outside Boston, Massachusetts and graduated from the University of Vermont with a BS in Social Work and received her Ed. M. in Risk and Prevention from Harvard University. Libby has managed cultural exchange and study abroad programs for a private international education company in Cambridge, Mass. Libby worked as a Counselor at The English High School, our nation's oldest public high school. Libby is passionate about people and learning. At ERS, She hopes to build strong supportive relationships with staff and students and learn from all the brilliant people around her.



**Carter Cox**, Professional Development Center, is originally from Columbus, Ohio. He received his B.A. in Theatre from Hamilton College in Clinton, NY in 2003 and his M.A. in Education from Prescott College in Prescott, AZ in 2008. Carter has taught theatre full-time at the middle and high school levels and has taught theatre workshops to primary grade levels through the college level. Carter has also taught outdoor education and team building for a youth development center in New Hampshire. As the Professional Development Fellow, Carter is excited about engaging visiting educators in discussion regarding school reform in the United States today.

**Liz Berliant**, Music Fellow, was born and raised in the suburbs of Chicago. In the spring of 2005, Liz graduated with a BA in Music from the University of California in Santa Cruz. Most recently, she completed the Masters of Music Education and Certification program at Vander Cook College of Music in Chicago. Liz is traditionally a trumpet player, but is working to expand her musical confidence in singing, violin, and guitar. As the music fellow, Liz hopes to bring out the musician in every student.

**Mike Dunn**, Service Learning Fellow, is most recently from Detroit, Michigan. He graduated from Michigan State University with a B.A. in History and a minor in Religious Studies and is pursuing a M.A. in History and a M.A.T. in Secondary Social Studies Education at Wayne State University. He has worked for various non-profits including Camp Sancta Maria, and Summer in the City, a volunteer program in Detroit. At Eagle Rock, he hopes to gain a more broad understanding of the cross-curricular incorporation

*“Public Allies” - Continued from Page 10*

of Service-Learning. While not teaching, you can find Mike singing, playing guitar, creating websites and taking pictures.

**Andrea Fullington**, Literacy and Literature Fellow, was born and raised in numerous areas of Southern California. During her time in college she developed a love for youth work while studying abroad and being involved in several educational non-profits. In 2007 she graduated from USC with a degree in Sociology and African-American studies. As the Literacy and Literature fellow she hopes to continue learning interdisciplinary ways that English can be taught while exploring ways that ERS curriculum and community can be incorporated into the lives of California public school students.

**Berta Guillen**, Societies and Culture Fellow, was born and raised in San Francisco, California. While attending Skyline Community College she developed her love of learning and a firm desire to become a teacher and was awarded the Karl S. Pister Leadership Award, granting her a \$20,000 scholarship to attend the University of California at Santa Cruz. Exploring the fields of Sociology and Latino and Latin American Studies, she also embarked on study abroad to Delhi, India. Berta spent several years as a Union Representative with SEIU Local 87, also a receptionist for a downtown San Francisco law firm. At ERS, she hopes to learn as much as she can about the methods of teaching implementation, hoping to create a network with which to share ideas and knowledge. Most of all, she wants to have a great time and grow as an educator!

**Beth Jackson**, Outdoor Education Fellow, grew up in Bloomington, Indiana and is serving as the Outdoor Education Fellow this year. She attended Earlham College, where she earned her BA in Art (with an emphasis on Metalsmithing). She also received minors in Art History and Outdoor Education. Since college she has worked leading wilderness trips with the Sargent Center for Outdoor Education, Outward Bound, and the Eagle Rock School. She has taught Outdoor and Environmental Education in California and Indiana. By spending a year at Eagle Rock she hopes to explore how a wilderness experience can be transitioned to and integrated into the classroom.

**Christi Kramer**, Curriculum Fellow, has spent the majority of her life in northern Maryland. She graduated from the University of Mary Washington, with a de-

gree in Creative Nonfiction Writing. Christi discovered a passion for experiential education while facilitating at Genesee Valley Outdoor Learning Center, where she was the Associate Director. As the Curriculum Fellow, Christi is excited to support both students and staff, and to be a part of the curriculum revision process. Christi hopes to acquire more experience in the non-profit world, nurturing a goal of one day operating an outdoor educational center of her own.

**Katie Leonard**, Visual Arts Fellow, was born in Cleveland, Ohio and grew up in Michigan. She graduated from The School of the Art Institute of Chicago with a BFA. Katie focused on ceramics and painting and volunteered with Chicago's youth. This led her to join the Peace Corps in 2005, where she taught art at a school for the deaf in Ghana. After returning to America, she moved to Seattle and served as an AmeriCorps member at Tyee Educational Complex in SeaTac, WA. As the Visual Arts Fellow, Katie hopes to gain valuable teaching experience, learn creative ways to integrate art into other subject areas, and share her love of art with the ERS community.

**Ryan Morra**, Science Fellow, is a recent transplant from Asheville, North Carolina, where he completed his BS in Biology and Environmental Studies from Warren Wilson College. Ryan has been a Corps Member and Team Leader for AmeriCorps\*NCCC, and a former employee of the playground-building non-profit KaBOOM! Ryan first learned about Eagle Rock during an across-the-country bicycle trip called Bike & Build. When not being a Science Fellow, Ryan can be found on his bicycles (road and mountain), being overly theatrical, or reading a (hopefully) good book.

**Henry Schrader**, Human Performance Center Fellow, comes to ERS after graduating from Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, with a degree in English Communications. With a Strong interest in Education and working with adolescents, Henry has been enjoying his first few months in the Human Performance Center; conducting morning exercise along with aiding in a variety of classes. Henry is the son of two educators and has one brother, Jake living in Fitchburg Massachusetts. Henry hopes to use his experience at Eagle Rock to further his personal growth in education and eventually wants to be a full-time teacher or youth worker.

**Learn more about the Public Allies Teacher Fellowship Program at <http://www.publicallies.org/eaglerock/>**

## FOUR MORE GRADUATES TAKE FLIGHT

by Carter Cox, Public Allies Fellow in Professional Development

*As I sit in the restaurant, eating my pizza, and listening to the graduates all tell stories, I can't help but wonder if I should be trying to facilitate some sort of more formal discussion. I have managed to get them to have lunch with me, after all, and I know I have to write an article about them soon enough, so perhaps I have some sort of formal obligation to get them to reflect on their time at Eagle Rock, the things they have learned, their personal growth?*

I think perhaps it is easy to think of a graduate's time in those terms, the words and ideas we use in our official language – major learning, personal growth, etc. ER-46's graduates helped me remember something, though, one day when I got to have lunch with them: the growth that happens in high school cannot be understood merely by glancing at a transcript or a resume. High school can be summarized, to be sure, but I think if that were all I was interested in I ought to have taken the graduates' ILPs out to lunch, not the graduates themselves. It means much more to someone like myself to hear about hilarious pranks or awkward interactions with prospective students, because it takes a whole person to tell me those stories.

Eagle Rock graduated four students on December 12, 2008, and the community can surely take pride in knowing that they are seeing off four whole adults into the world:

**Hutch Bercow** is from Boulder, Colorado. Hutch found out about Eagle Rock from his sister, an alum-



nus of ERS. "I hated high school," he said, "because it was for one type of student, and I wasn't that type." Talking about the memories he will take from Eagle Rock, Hutch cited the friendships he has made and the support he found at the school. He said he will miss all the good conversations

he has had with people. Hutch told me that one of the biggest ways he feels he has grown at ERS is in holding himself accountable. He talked about the ways he communicates: "I know how to control what I say."

In his time following graduation, Hutch will be working. He is planning to go to college next fall and is interested in studying accounting and philosophy.

**Sarah Katz** also came to Eagle Rock from Boulder. After struggling in a few different schools there, Sarah

searched for a new choice. "I didn't connect with any of the teachers," she told me, "so I didn't go to class." Wanting an alternative outside

of Boulder, Sarah found Eagle Rock with the help of her mother and her counselor. Describing her personal growth at ERS, Sarah said she is more social than when she first came to the school. She added, "Definitely one of the biggest



parts of my personal growth is just coming to terms with the fact that there are things about me that I need to work on that I never wanted to notice before."

Talking about memories she will take away from Eagle Rock, Sarah talked about the accomplishment of hiking Long's Peak. She also shared a story from her house when she was a new student: "There were these two girls living in my wing. I felt like they didn't like me that much, and then one day Ana tricked me into going upstairs. The lights were off, I was like, 'Hello?' and then when I opened the door Tahnee threw a blanket over my head and they started vacuuming the blanket while it was over me. It was the scariest moment of my life but it was definitely the beginning of our friendship."

Sarah is very excited for her year following graduation. She has applied to nine schools to start college in the fall of 2009. In the meantime she will be working and has plans to take trips to Panama and France

**Edwin Rivas** came to Eagle Rock from Los Angeles, California. Prior to coming to Eagle Rock, Edwin was in probation boot camp. "I was tired of living life in Juvenile hall. A counselor, my sponsor now, gave me some options of how to help, and the best-sounding option was ERS." Edwin talked about the ways he has grown: "I used to love to do what every other bad kid

*“Graduates” - Continued from Page 12*

would do, and now it's more of following my goals in life.” One memory Edwin said he is taking away



from ERS was coordinating spoken word youth events between students at school and other students from Estes Park High School.

Edwin told me he wants to go to college. “When I go to college I want to get the highest degree there is and not stop until I get it. I really want to do something that I like

instead of must making a lot of money.” He added, “I would just like to thank Eagle Rock for everything that they have done for me, and for putting up with me, because now I am a good person in the community, but before I had a lot of stuff going on.”

*Katie Wiseman* is another Colorado native. After experiencing loss in her family when she was 15, Katie began to struggle in school. “I was just disengaged from the process,” she said. “I felt no connection to school at all, even on a social level.” Eagle Rock showed up in an internet search under “alternative education.” Having done wilderness programs in the past, Katie liked the idea and applied. Talking about her personal

growth since coming to ERS, Katie said, “I feel like I can articulate myself, and I can define myself through my thoughts instead of my actions. The inside stuff is aligned with the outside stuff.”

Looking back on her experience, Katie talked about the opportunity to attend the World Scholar Athlete Games in Rhode Island during her first summer at Eagle Rock. She also discussed getting to hear Bill Clinton speak: “Seeing him speak that summer, I feel, was one of the most influential classes I’d ever been in...I was engaged. He really changed my view on how I can affect society.”

Katie will be starting community college in January and plans to do park service in Alaska later in 2009. She is hoping to attend Columbia College in South Carolina next fall. “I wouldn’t be who I am today without coming to Eagle Rock,” she said. “The closer I get to graduation, though, I think about who I am *going* to be because I went to Eagle Rock.”

As sad as we all are to see these students leave, everyone at Eagle Rock is excited to hear about what they do next in the world. Good luck, grads!



## A MOTHER’S THANKS

*This letter from a parent of a recent graduate was received on August 15, 2008, and is being reprinted with permission.*

Dear Robert & Eagle Rock School Staff:

There is no way to adequately thank you for giving me back my precious daughter, Haleigh. When she was a little girl, she was the most self-assured, sunny, confident child. We watched that slip away by degrees over a three-year period until finally, afraid for her life, we sent her to Oregon to stay with my sister while we prayed to find the right kind of help for her. Our prayers were answered in the years Haleigh spent at Eagle Rock, where she was challenged every single day by each of you and by other students. Without Jen & Jimmy’s nurturing, Philbert’s fatherly “tough love”, Robert’s writing assignments, Michael’s belief in her abilities – without the countless other people who helped to mold and shape her – the Haleigh we have today might not have been possible. Since she’s moved home, we’ve had conversations about relationships, choices, birds, poverty, politics, the economy, and poetry. This girl is invested, involved, and ... happy. That happiness in her – the confidence and self-assurance – is back. And I thank you for helping her uncover who she truly is again. From the bottom of my heart I thank you. The work you do means something, not just to the kids you work with, but to all the people who love those kids. And so I wish all the Eagle Rock community the very best. You are a school beyond schools! You are all my heros.

*Sincerely, Shawna Jackson*

*“Democracy” - Continued from Page 9*

neighborhoods. For many of my students, their ability to stay quiet and go unnoticed is a long-practiced survival strategy. This strategy, however, leads neither my students nor our democracy to success.

Our school has a work program that sends all of our students to corporate internships. They must interact with their supervisors, their co-workers, and customers with professionalism and clarity. The students, like most teenagers, are not accustomed to being asked their opinions. But the truth is, though practices in reticence, they long to be asked, and, once they know it is safe, would love to learn how to express it well. This election season, as I watched the convention speeches and debates of our two candidates for president, I remembered showing my students speeches from bygone election seasons. Together, we extracted meaning from what they said, and more importantly, how they spoke. The rhetorical devices used by the great

speechmakers in American history – anaphora, chiasmus, peroration – are designed to manipulate their audiences. There is great power in seeing the mechanics of those phrases meant to stir our emotions. As we discussed these devices and saw them in the mouths of Jesse Jackson, John Kerry, and George W. Bush, my students felt like they had been let in on the secret language of political speeches. All speeches are designed to manipulate, they learned, and they learned how the speechwriters, went about the task. Members of an informed electorate must not only understand the facts; they must know how politicians can persuade us to ignore the facts.

*Andrew Barron started his teaching career at Eagle Rock School. He earned masters of Education at Harvard Graduate School of Education and currently teaches ninth grade at Cristo Rey Jesuit High School in Minneapolis, Minnesota.*

## IT'S TIME TO REVISE: THE MOTIVATION BEHIND EAGLE ROCK'S CURRICULUM REVISION PROJECT

*by Christi Kramer, Public Allies Fellow in Curriculum*

The curriculum at Eagle Rock School is getting a makeover. In order to nurture a philosophy of advancement and change, and to guarantee best practices, we must constantly reexamine our approach. From the start, the school's education was intended to regularly evolve and adapt, fueled by innovation and re-

form. In this spirit of progress, Eagle Rock's Director of Curriculum, Jeff Liddle, and Director of Professional Development, Michael Soguero, spearheaded an initiative to rethink our curriculum.

With the aid of a curriculum revision advisory team, Jeff and Michael are in the midst of a long process to examine, evaluate and enhance our educational design. Changes will be most evident in the curriculum guide, which informs course creation, and the *Individualized Learning Plan* (ILP), the ERS transcript. The motivation behind this revision stems from three main objectives: a desire to more strongly incorporate the original academic goals of the school, the responsibility for academic consistency among graduates, and an ideal

to allow more flexibility and student choice in the curriculum.

When the idea for Eagle Rock School was conceived, 8+5=10 did not yet fully exist. The 8 themes were established and would lay the foundation for creating and building the school, for setting the tone of the school environment, and for inspiring such elements as morning exercise, the wilderness program and service learning. However, the themes did not fully encompass the academic goals of the school; there was no clear guideline to express what each student would achieve by graduation.

The founding instructional team, under Judy Gilbert's facilitation, answered this concern: they developed the 5 expectations to drive the academic focus and to describe the goals of our education. The intention was that Eagle Rock gradu-



*“Curriculum Revision” - Continued from Page 14* ates would earn their diplomas after fulfilling the following expectations: Developing an expanding knowledge base, Communicating effectively, Creating and making healthy life choices, Participating as an engaged global citizen, and Providing leadership for justice.

Over time, this understanding evolved into our current curriculum, and our current ILP. Both are designed to encourage student ownership of learning, to demand documented or demonstrated mastery of graduation competencies, and to allow for the individualization of credit toward graduation. This design is fundamental to an Eagle Rock education, and these objectives will remain through the revision.

What will change is the organization of the ILP, creating a stronger focus on the 5 expectations, and therefore a more obvious reflection of the values of the school. The current ILP is organized primarily by disciplines (i.e. Art, History, Science). Though the 5 expectations have always been embedded in the course planning process, they will now be more explicit on the ILP. Listed on the ILP, each expectation will have a power standard connected to it, which translates the expectation into a functional statement of enduring understanding. For example, the power standard for *Creating and Making Healthy Life Choices* may sound like this: The decisions I make today impact my body, society and the earth.

Fulfillment of the power standards, or graduation standards, will include a good deal of preparation, and students will present their understandings through a variety of performance-based assessments. Rubrics will measure demonstrated

learning in academic and community aspects, as well as personal growth. Achievement of the expectations will be a comprehensive process, built off of a collection of experiences at ERS that inspire in-depth learning and reflection. The graduation standards demonstrate the culmination of learning from ERS courses and experiences, which will result in ideas and insights that will endure long after graduation.

Creating these rigorous graduation requirements, with consistent and reliable evidence of learning, will help us express (especially to those outside our community) the path to graduation, and what Eagle Rock graduates look like; their education will be more transferable.

In addition to graduation standards, the ILP will include *Distribution Requirements*. These requirements consist of the various disciplines and will continue to reference Colorado state and/or national content standards. Flexibility and student choice will come into play when choosing these courses. Students will still be required to complete a minimum of 2 years at ERS, but after fulfilling core requirements, they will be able to decide which subjects to focus on more heavily to fill their transcript. The idea behind this is to allow students to concentrate on interests and passions, and to gear their energies toward honing strengths in preparation for life after ERS.

One final component of the ILP will be a list of Experience Requirements such as AIDS Awareness and the Wilderness trip. Students are already required to complete these “must do’s”, and they will remain on the ILP because they are essential in developing a well-rounded ERS education.

We are still developing this new ILP, and are defining the process to create power standards and assessments for each expectation. This trimester has provided opportunities to test-run some of the new ideas and methods. Many of the ER-46 courses were designed with a focus on Creating and Making Healthy Life Choices. By examining the expectation in practice, we have practical models to review. A power standard was chosen and instructional meetings have been devoted to generating possible learning targets and assessments to fit with this standard. We are making progress, but there is still a lot of work to be done. Instructional staff have played a crucial role by brainstorming, offering feedback, and providing insight on the decisions we face. Their help will be invaluable in the months to come.

Our goal is to transition the new curriculum and ILP into practice starting September 2009. The revision process will be a lengthy one. There are many questions yet to be answered (and many more that are likely to emerge as we advance through the stages of development). The curriculum advisory team has gone through specific and involved procedures, incorporating philosophies of Understanding by Design and standards-based education (and we are happy to share more details of this process with interested readers).

The resulting design will be well-worth the time and energy put into it. With a solid foundation, focus on our values and goals, and on-going efforts to evolve, the Eagle Rock curriculum will continue to improve. And we will continue to strive for the best possible education for our students.