



# EAGLE EYES

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News From Fall 2010 Trimester

## FIND A NEED & FILL IT

by Michael Rose, former Public Allies Teaching Fellow in Mathematics

Robert once again had the attention of the community telling a story of a concrete truck he once saw with the slogan on the side, "Find a need and fill it." This was a common expression used by Robert Burkhardt, Head of School, consistently throughout my time as the Public Allies Teaching Fellow in Mathematics at Eagle Rock. It was an expression, or "charge" rather, that has significantly shaped my role as an educator and continues to foster my sense of leadership and responsibility to my community. But what does it mean to "find a need and fill it?"

For the past three years, upon completion of my Fellowship, I have been a math teacher at a residential all-boys choir school in the heart of New York City. Similar to Eagle Rock, my role at the school is much more robust than merely a teacher. As a member of a residential community, the needs are often great. Most of the work isn't glamorous, just ordinary work that simply needs to be done to make the community



function. Like a concrete truck, it simply goes about finding holes and filling them, making the roads better for all of us – just simple, ordinary, practical, useful work.

*See "Find A Need" - Continued on Page 4*

## AUTHOR ON NATIONAL BOOK TOUR STOPS AT EAGLE ROCK

by Juley Harvey



*The following article appeared in the November 5, 2010 edition of the Estes Park Trail Gazette and is being reprinted with permission.*

Author William Powers, from New York, challenged Eagle Rock students to define the American dream and then to downsize it to fit within a comfortable sustainability window. Powers was on a national tour last week, promoting his latest book, "Twelve By Twelve, A One-Room Cabin Off the Grid & Beyond the American Dream." Eagle Rock was the only high school on the tour that

includes college campuses and bookstores in Boulder, Colo., San Antonio, Texas, and Knoxville, TN.

The *Washington Post* called Powers' book "enlightening and eloquent." In introducing Powers, Eagle Rock teacher John Guffey said Powers gives us an alternative to the accepted American dream, a dream that he said is being challenged right here, right now, in this community of Eagle Rock. Guffey asked students to consider what the American dream would be like when they enter the work force, when things are very uncertain economically and internationally.

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## WHERE I'M FROM

by Eagle Rock Student Jon'Ya Crawford



*The following piece appeared in the print and online editions of Teen Ink Magazine and is being reprinted with permission. It was the a writing product from an Eagle Rock English class entitled "Boys in the Hood" where students explored their home communities through both creative and analytical writing. Students also studied what institutions, and environments help make up strong neighborhoods and strong communities.*

I'm from short days & long nights.

Just around the corner from love & one door over from the fights.

I'm from potholes & abandoned buildings, rats & roaches breaking through flooded ceilings.

I'm from a place where faith is all you got 'cause in reality ain't sh\*\* worth living for but the unseen.

I'm from a school of kids who don't know the Pledge of Allegiance 'cause they so focused on the CREAM raising a middle finger to the sky 'cause to them Cash Rules Everything.

I'm from naptime every two hours just to get a taste of heaven.

In my dreams I stay head above the clouds afraid of heights so I never look down;

At the lost opportunities & all the perils against me.

I'm from a place where all you got is family 'cause a friend is only kin to the enemy so we never bother to befriend too many.

I'm from a place where Sunday school is cool and people running 'round the church praising god; those who know nothing about say they fools but everybody know that between those blocks god is all you got to look up to.

So we pray for stronger faith speaking tongues and singing hymns in the kitchen during Sunday dinners.

I'm from a place of pain though Love was always the intent.

At times I can't stand it.

I'm from the crooks to cracks, from Fairfield Ave to Madison; Route 8 bus & Yellow cabs.

Roach-infested schools and pissed-out elevators, blood pistols & tears; a place where being 18 and not pregnant is out of the ordinary.

I'm from the city of lost dreams and tainted diplomas; Bridgeport Born and raised this is home it's not the best but I'd never change.

It'll always be where I'm from but never who I am!

## MEET THE PUBLIC ALLIES TEACHING FELLOWS

by Mark Palmer, Director of the Public Allies Teaching Fellowship Program

A saying we often use at Eagle Rock is, "You have no right to no opinion." Well, our opinion of the twelve new Public Allies Teaching Fellows is that we are happy they have joined our learning community. The dozen individuals were chosen from over 200 applicants and come from all over the country. This year's Fellow group includes our very first Life After Eagle Rock Fellow, two Banana Slugs from the University of California – Santa Cruz, two Public Allies Alumni and a host of talents to share with the students and staff and we are excited to welcome them to Eagle Rock.

**Marq Agboyani**, Human Performance Center Fellow, worked with the Montana Conservation Corps out of Helena Montana last year. During that time he was a crew leader where he led service projects such as trail maintenance, fence construction and invasive species treatment. Marq received his Bachelors degree in Health and Exercise Science from Colorado State University.

**Gwen Cagle**, Life After Eagle Rock Fellow, comes to Eagle Rock from the Schuler Family Foundation. There she managed a caseload of up to 90 students in guidance counseling. Gwen was an Ally with Public Allies Chicago and worked with the National Runaway Switchboard. Gwen has a Bachelors of Social Work from Loyola University in Chicago.

**Jeanine Cerundolo**, Professional Development Center Fellow, comes to Eagle Rock from Tufts University where she received her B.A. in English. She worked for the National Educational Travel Council and served as a team leader for City Year, where she worked with youth in service activities in the Boston Area.

**Ashley Davidson**, Literacy and Literature Fellow, most recently lived in Winston-Salem, North Carolina where she attended Winston-Salem State University. She received her B.S. in Psychology with a minor in Education. Ashley was a lead teacher for Childtime Learning Center and was an intern for Congressman Bobby Scott of Richmond, Virginia.

**Kristen Hayes**, Outdoor Education Fellow, brings over 400 field days of experience leading teenagers

from diverse backgrounds in the backcountry. Kristen has led trips with Outward Bound out of Moab, UT and also worked with the Aspen Achievement Academy. Kristen has a B.A. degree in Literature and Environmental Studies from Hampshire College.

**Kari Liotta**, Service Learning Fellow, comes from the University of Wisconsin where she received a Bachelors degree in Family, Consumer and Community Education. Last year, Kari was a National Civilization Conservation Corps Program Office Support Leader. Kari has also been on the National Leadership team for the Colleges Against Cancer organization where she served as the survivorship chairperson.

**Issac "Ike" Leslie**, Music Fellow, earned his B.A. with a double major in International Studies and Music. Ike has worked in a variety of music communities including Alternatives for Music in Poughkeepsie, Green Mountain Music Camp and Escuela de Musica Basica in Boliva. Ike originally comes from Vermont.

**Laura Nelms**, Visual Arts Fellow, graduated from Mercer University with a B.A. in Art with an emphasis in Studio. Laura has also worked as a Wellness Person at SuperCamp Seattle, part of the Quantum Learning Network, as well as serving as a member of the Mercer University Art Department.

**Andrew Nimmer**, Science Fellow, has a B.A. in Environmental Science with a focus in Wilderness Ethics from University of California - Santa Cruz. Before joining Eagle Rock, Andrew served as the lead teacher for Tree Frog Treks out of San Francisco. He also led trips with teens to Peru, Ecuador, the American West, India and Norway to name a few with the organization The Road Less Traveled. Andrew comes from Carpinteria, CA.

**Melissa Santosa**, Health & Wellness Counseling Fellow, was an Ally with Public Allies Delaware. During her year there Melissa worked at the West End Neighborhood House where she helped youth people develop career readiness skills and explore future



*"Public Allies" - Continued from Page 3*

career pathways. Melissa has also worked with Peoples Place in Dover, Delaware as a therapist. Melissa has a B.A. in English from Delaware State University.

**Zev Vernon Lapow**, Societies and Culture Fellow, comes to Eagle Rock School from the Bay area. Zev has a B.A. in History from University of California - Santa Cruz. Zev worked with a variety of youth development organizations including the James Kenney Recreation Center, Adventure Playground as well as the Greenbelt Alliance.

**Benjamin Walker**, Mathematics Fellow, is originally from St. Louis, Missouri. Benjamin graduated from Miami University of Ohio. Benjamin has his B.A. in Integrated Math and a B.A. in Math and Statistics and did his student teaching with the Chicago Public Schools. Benjamin has led cross-country bicycle tours for Overland Summers Inc. and was a member his university men's glee club.

As the deadline for next year's class of Public Allies Teaching Fellows nears we hope you'll spread the word and let interested individuals know about this powerful teaching and learning opportunity for emerging educators. More information may be found at [www.publicallies.org/eaglerock](http://www.publicallies.org/eaglerock).

*"Find A Need" - Continued from Page 1*

The values of community, leadership, and accountability that were such integral parts of my Eagle Rock experience have made me increasingly aware of their necessity within a successful educational environment, one that contributes to the overall well-being – academic, social, emotional, physical – of the individual. Community is how we become the best versions of ourselves – as students, as educators, as mentors, and professionals. It is how we learn to express ourselves in a constructive, safe environment, and how we practice critical thinking and articulation of our ideas to others who support and care about us. This environment of support is truly transformational. It isn't always easy, and often extremely challenging, yet there is a true sense of empowerment that comes with engaging in community.

So what does it mean to "find a need and fill it?" To me, it has served as a reminder to always be seeking ways to contribute my skills and abilities or "assets" to whatever situation I find myself in. It has also prompted me to be impatient when it comes to using my assets to help others and bring about change. Too often, we are hesitant to act on our interests and passions because of fear or insecurities.

This past summer, I had the opportunity to travel to Southern Sudan where I trained math teachers and developed curriculum for the first high school in the region. Like Eagle Rock students, the students in Marial Bai had the desire to be educated and will make a difference in the world. Having a high school diploma will set them apart as some of the most highly educated people in Southern Sudan. The needs were great, and often meeting those needs in front of me was difficult. My hands and clothes got dirty, I became tired physically and emotionally, and there were always more needs to fill. Always my mind would return to Eagle Rock and I would hear Robert saying, "Just do the best you can right now, fill the need right there in front of you."

The tangible implications of this message, as well as many others that were gleaned during my time at Eagle Rock, have been far-reaching in my life since Eagle Rock, and will continue to be a source of motivation and inspiration throughout my future endeavors as an educator. I have been inspired by the small changes that can take place over time when individuals are told that they not only have a positive contribution to make to society, but that they will be held accountable as they work together to reach a common goal.

**Susan D'Amico**  
Administrative Assistant

**Mark Dougherty**  
Sous Chef

**Denise Dunn**  
Business Administration  
Specialist

**Cynthia Elkins**  
Arts

**Beth Ellis**  
Learning Resources  
and Information

**Mike Glowacki**  
Head Cook

**John Guffey**  
Service Learning

**Berta Guillen**  
Society and Cultures

**Karen Ikegami**  
Mathematics

**Janet Johnson**  
Science

**TBA**  
Registrar

**Jeff Liddle**  
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**Terry Tierney**  
Assistant Facilities

**Jesse Tovar**  
Health and Wellness  
Counselor

*“National Book Tour” - Continued from Page 1*

Guffey said Powers’ history includes living and working abroad – in such places as Bolivia and Liberia – and as a journalist. Powers has lived in a 12 x 12 cabin in North Carolina, owned by a woman doctor, and presents a fascinating idea of a doctor with the means to live in a big house who chooses to live in a small one. Guffey said more such things are happening and he sees it as part of the American dream – “living into the future in a new way.”

Powers told Eagle Rock students he admires what they are doing to promote sustainability.

“We’re in a global ecological crisis,” he said. “I spent the last 10 years living among indigenous people around the world, in 60 countries, in West Africa and South America.”

He learned firsthand the effects of “our consumerism” on their lifestyles, he said.

Powers was inspired by speakers to “go out and change the world. We’re in a casino economy, with melting icebergs and overleveraged debt that we’ve inherited. There’s still a lot we can do.”

There are solutions.

“What’s your 12 x 12?” he asked students. “It’s how each of you can find a 12 x 12 space of joy, simplicity and service in a difficult world.”

Many of the Eagle Rock students live already in a 12 x 12 (or less) space – their dorms, he pointed out.

Powers writes on his website, [williampowersbooks.com](http://williampowersbooks.com), that the North Carolina physician, Dr. Jackie Benton, impressed him when he met her, because she was “stroking a honeybee’s wings in front of her 12 x 12, off-the-grid home on No Name Creek in central North Carolina. She struck me as someone who had achieved self-mastery in these confusing times,

but discovering how she’s done this would prove to be a riddle intricately connected to the house itself. To my surprise, she invited me to stay, alone, in her 12 x 12 for a season.”

He told Eagle Rock students that 200 varieties of plants bloom around the home, delighting the senses. At night, Benton lights the area with a myriad of candles, so that “it looks like a giant jack-o-lantern.” There is no electricity in the small home.

“She has a carbon footprint of a Bangladeshi,” Powers said.

Although Powers, a senior fellow at the World Policy Institute in New York, lives in New York City now, he maintains sustainability where he can – does without a car and he plants a garden. He has learned to take sun showers, using a five-gallon vat of water, heated in the sun. He trades with neighbors for organic chickens.

He became interested in helping to change the world in 1998, when he was finishing up grad school at Georgetown. He started working for the Catholic Relief Services as an aid worker in a Liberian war zone. He ran a huge food pipeline. He met child soldiers, who were fed amphetamines through their faces, so they would be hyped to kill. The Liberians were harvesting their rain forests, so “we would have lumber at Home Depot.” Providing the food aid gave him an “incredible sense of accomplishment,” Powers said. Aid workers also helped put in water wells, latrines, ecological stoves so that people with a small supply of wood could heat water and swamp rice projects, so that the local people would “not slash and burn the rain forest.”

He called Liberia “American Africa – a part of our own country, founded by U.S. slaves.” Powers noticed that, amid the horrors of war, the people were still “living joyfully. Sometimes simplicity leads to that.”

After two years there, he transferred to Bolivia, where there was deep poverty and the people couldn’t even clear enough rain forest to survive. He encountered global warming – a ski resort above La Paz was turning the area into a desert, he said, melting the glaciers, which provided a water system for millions of people.

In five years working on the rain forest, they were able to conserve 3 million acres of it. Bolivia is “huge and it was a very interesting project,” he said.

The success abroad led to disappointment when Powers came home.

“It was like rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic when I got home,” he said. “There was overdevelopment. I thought back to the native I saw, who was the last speaker of her language, when I saw the shopping malls.... Happiness does not increase with economic growth. People in America who’ve seen their incomes rise have not seen greater happiness. It’s like a crack house – we’re addicted to stuff, affluenza. We need more. Brazil, Russia, India and China are the new crack houses. But there’s a lot we can do, to create our way out of this. There are four pillars -- taking care of yourself, your community and family, your nation and the world.”

He urged students to visit [recycle.org](http://recycle.org) and [neighborhoods.net](http://neighborhoods.net), to learn ways to recycle and borrow, and [etsy.com](http://etsy.com) to learn to shop locally. He suggested they look into taking internships in organizations that promote the environment, empower women and encourage disarmament.

“The World Policy Institute is always looking for interns,” he said. “There’s a lot you can do. Talk with your family and school about issues.

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## HONDA FUNDS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT FOR INDIAN LAKES ADMINISTRATOR

by Bellefontaine Staff

*The following article appeared in the October 19, 2010 edition of the Bellefontaine Examiner and is being reprinted with permission.*

Rob Underwood, Indian Lake High School Assistant Principal, recently visited Eagle Rock in Estes Park, Colo., a year-round residential high school for at-risk students ages 15-17.

The school utilizes trimesters for its 96 full scholarship students. Eagle Rock opened in 1993 and works to keep teens in school and on track to graduate through a variety of unconventional measures aimed at promoting community, integrity and citizenship among its students.

"We're trying to reach our at-risk students," said Mr. Underwood, "and Eagle Rock is on the cutting edge when it comes to new educational technology."

Mr. Underwood says he hopes to implement some of those new methodologies in the Indian Lake curriculum.

"I'm especially interested in exploring the possibilities of restorative justice, a disciplinary approach that allows students to repay the harm they've done to others through their corrosive behavior," he said. "There's also an interesting student-led approach to education where the teacher will give the students a prompt and they are then responsible for discussing the topic in groups."

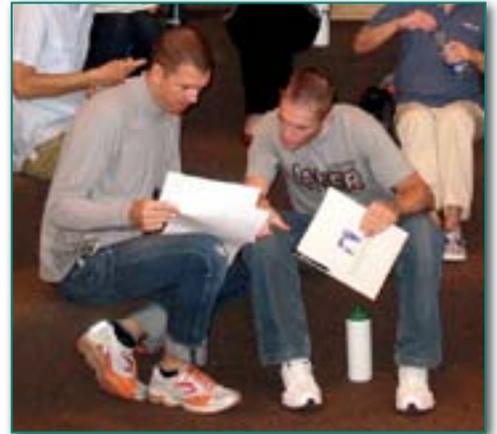
During his three-day visit to Eagle Rock in September, Mr. Underwood attended the professional development center for educators.

"I was most impressed with the ability of the school to bring together a diverse group of troubled adolescents and help them live in harmony with one another and with the environment," he said.

"Eagle Rock is helping potential dropouts grow personally and academically and is giving them a chance to be productive members of society."

Eagle Rock is an initiative of American Honda Education Corp., a non-profit subsidiary of the American Honda Motor Company. American Honda, located in California, contacted Honda of America branches in Marysville and Alabama and offered to send one Honda representative and one educator from each region.

Tom Rippey of Honda attended the professional development seminar with Mr. Underwood.

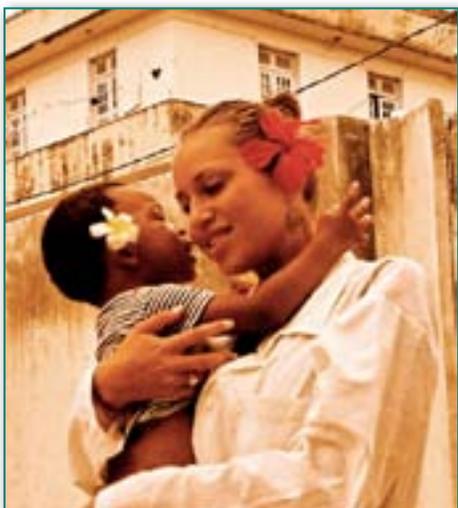


*"National Book Tour" - Continued from Page 5*

It was sad to be in Boulder and (find) people talking about very superficial things, when there are so much you can do. It's an interesting time in history. There's a choice. It's the factory mentality versus organic. There's a new vision -- harmony with nature, cycles, permaculture. It's about what space is enough, between over- and underdeveloped. Think about one thing you can do to find the contours of enough, and find joy in life in that way."

Asked for advice he would give to teens, Powers said not to do what everybody else is doing.

"Stay maladjusted," he said. "Maintain that integrity. Tune out media images of more and brands. Establish your own path. Follow your own bliss. Find your energy inside, blaze forward. Start small. Do one thing this year, two next and link up with others. You need to be a rebel, in a positive sense, in a unique way -- like this school is. Don't get sucked into the American dream as we know it, (where you will be) beholden and in debt.... I was going to participate in the system. I made the choice to do these things. You can make this choice as well."



## GRADUATE PROFILE – WHERE IS SHE NOW?

by Jeanine Cerundolo, Public Allies Fellow in Professional Development

**Naehalani Breeland,**  
**ER-25 (September 2001)**  
**Graduated ER-35 (April, 2005)**  
**Geography: New York, NY**

Naeha has many fond memories of her time at the rock, both of specific moments that make her smile, and of challenges that pushed her to become the person she is today. She has a passion for social change and a desire to live her life to the fullest. She attributes her current ambitions to follow her dreams to the support and love of the Eagle Rock community. Since graduating she says she has practiced and implemented many of the skills that she learned at Eagle Rock, including all of the values outlined in  $8 + 5 = 10$ . For example, shortly after graduation she moved to Salvador, Brazil for several months to work with a group called Cross-Cultural Solutions. She described, “There I worked in an HIV/AIDS orphanage and treatment center for children who had either been abandoned or whose parents had died of AIDS. During that time, I was able to develop a sense of direction in my own life: what I wanted to study and life long goals that I could aspire to.”

Personal growth and creating meaningful bonds and relationships with others have been part of these goals. Naeha fondly remembers mealtimes at Eagle Rock as an opportunity “to have long conversations with students staff and visitors about things that mattered

to us most, and having room to articulate ourselves freely.” It was many of these small moments that actually developed life-long friendships. While at Eagle Rock, she also appreciated the resources to be creative, the encouragement to venture outside her comfort zone, and listening and talking with respect during community gatherings. She commented that: “The experience we have at Eagle Rock cannot be compared to any other. While we are in it, it is hard and demanding and sometimes seemingly unnecessary. And interestingly enough, as I continue with my life in the ‘real world’, I find that lessons I learned at Eagle Rock frequently present themselves. I am grateful that I was initially confronted with them in such a supportive and loving community.”

Of these lessons, the value of “cross-cultural understanding” stuck with her. After her work in Brazil, Naeha then attended Eugene Lang College, of the larger NYC New School community in the fall of 2006, studying Cross-Cultural Psychology. While working as an assistant health educator to The New School, she formed a group of peer health educators. “We made ourselves available to students who had questions and concerns about all aspects of health (ie. physical,

mental, sexual, nutritional, etc.)”

Having just graduated in May, Naeha is currently living in NYC and “developing the artist within.” She says: “These days I am focusing more on singing and art, a part of me that I haven’t focused on for several years. New York has an abundance of live music and many forms of art to take in, and so I am.”

Naeha says that regarding college, it was the work during Graduate Work Day that has helped her immensely. She reminds students: “It is somewhat challenging to remember that we are working for ourselves when we are bagging leaves for an elderly couple in Estes Park, or emptying fire pits in Rocky Mountain National Park. However, Eagle Rock’s Graduate Higher Education Fund saved me each year of college, and I have Eagle Rock, past and present, to thank for that.”

Naeha’s next steps include a plan to join the Peace Corps. One of her long-term goals is to form a culturally conscious organization that works globally with HIV/AIDS awareness and education. She says that while she has always been acutely aware of the importance of giving back to her community and to others, it was individuals at

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## STUDENTS JAM FOR PEACE IN DENVER

by Jeanine Cerundolo, Public Allies Fellow in Professional Development

On November 7th, eight students and four staff attended the Peace Jam's "Taking a Stand: Youth against Genocide" event in Denver. The aim of Peace Jam is "to create young leaders committed to positive change in themselves, their communities and the world through the inspiration of Nobel Peace Laureates who pass on the spirit, skills, and wisdom they embody." Eagle Rock found an alignment between the organization's themes of "Education, Inspiration, and Action" and its own philosophy of  $8 + 5 = 10$ . The international focus of the day corresponded particularly with the ERS value of *Engaged Global Citizenship*, encouraging ERS students to raise their awareness about worldwide issues.

The group prepared for the event by organizing and holding a bake-sale. Enough sweet teeth in the community ended up providing the price of a ticket for an extra student to attend. The morning of the event found the campus to be sleepy and quiet. Some participants forgot about daylight savings time and were up at 5:30 am. Luckily, most caught a spectacular sunrise over the mountains. There were many sleepy faces on the quiet bus ride into Denver.

The day was kicked off by an introduction rally that included sharing some love with each other through giant rows of massages, and a drum song invoking a greater spirit of solidarity. Then, the first speaker, Barbara Coloroso, tackled the topic of bullying in schools and its relationship to Genocide. Drawing from her experience with parenting, teaching, school discipline, positive school climate, nonviolent conflict resolution and

restorative justice, she spoke adamantly about the costs of bullying in schools. Barbara impressed the students and donated copies of her new books "The Bully, the Bullied, and the Bystander" to Eagle Rock. Andrew Slack, an organizer who attended the event commented, "She was an amazing speaker and for the rest of the day, I and everyone at Eagle Rock were blown away, moved, and firmly dedicated to ending genocide and human rights atrocities any way that we can."

In between the speakers, students and staff attended a variety of workshops such as "Women and Genocide: Rape as a Weapon of War", A "History of Sudan", "A lasting legacy: Genocide in the Americas", and "Transitional Justice: Reconstructing Self and Society." Student David Sanchez commented, "At the event, I attended workshops that helped me become aware of today's issues. I learned that there is modern day slavery," he said, "and I wonder how many organizations are out there working on the slavery issue." Students were challenged to think about issues of bullying, hatred and contempt, violence, and forgiveness.

The second speaker of the day in the afternoon was Francis Bok, a Sudanese man who was a slave for 10 years in his childhood and who draws on his story to inspire change. Bok's presence really captivated the audience. He is very slender and tall, and has a contagious and warm smile. Listening to his atrocious experiences of losing his whole family in the genocide, and his plea to end similar suffering, one could not help but be moved. "One thing that impressed me about the Peace Jam event was that the speaker from Sudan was always looking forward to the future and having faith and hope even though he has been through so much in his past" said Eliza McCleod. "I left the event wondering why people would want to treat their own people like they are not even human, whether they be men, women, or children" she continued. Her sentiments were echoed by Michael Ditchfield, Chairman of the Colorado Coalition for Genocide Awareness and Action who stated: "Till we put aside our differences, we cannot make a difference."

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*“Jam for Peace” - Continued from Page 8*

By attending the Peace Jam event and cooperating in a spirit of understanding, the ERS students showed their efforts at putting aside differences to make way for positive social change, in both big and small ways. The ride home that evening was much more lively than the morning, as students were energized and motivated by the presentations. This enthusiasm for making a difference will spurn an umbrella “Peace Jam” Activist club at the school, under which they

will address more topics, such as Restoring the Earth’s Environment, Rights for Women and Children and their Role as Leaders, Social Justice and Human Rights for All, and Eliminating Extreme Poverty. Learn more online at <http://peacejam.org/issues.aspx>.

Michael Ditchfield closed the event with a few inspiring words: “You won’t accomplish everything that you dream, but you won’t accomplish anything that you don’t dream.”



## AN INTERVIEW WITH DREAMERS

by Kim Glasscock

*The following article appeared in the December edition of Dreamer News and is being reprinted with permission.*

For Boulder County Dreamers Leslie, Nick and Jenifer, the Eagle Rock School near Estes Park provides a “one-of-a-kind community” that blends a focus on academics with the chance for personal development. The year-round boarding school, funded by American Honda Motor Company, reaches out to students ages 14 to 21 who are at risk of not finishing high school. Students must stay at least six trimesters and meet Eagle Rock’s requirements before graduating. It has been the school home for Sanchez Dreamer Leslie for a year and nearly four months for Columbine Dreamers Nick and Jenifer.

“It’s a school of hope,” Leslie said. “This is a place that makes me want to really accomplish something with my life. I have big plans now.” Leslie didn’t always consider her future. “I cut school for 252 days one year, and that’s what started me on my way here,” she admitted wryly. “I thought I was ready to be an adult. All my friends were dropping out and having kids, and I figured that’s what would happen to me. I even ran away twice and lived with my boyfriend. My mom tried to make me change, but I just wasn’t listening to her.” Things changed for Leslie when Elyana Funk, her “I Have a Dream” program director steered her to Eagle Rock School. “This place is tough in the beginning, but I learned that they care. I learned to make good, healthy choices,” Leslie said. “I’ve built relationships with people that I never thought I’d even connect with. Now I’m doing very well,

and I want to be a neurologist or a surgeon.”

Nick also found his place at Eagle Rock. “This place is very different from my old school,” Nick said. “Here, people find ways to get along, instead of things to argue over. It’s a one-of-a-kind community, and I really like it here.” Nick, who has been writing a science fiction book for more than a year, is learning singing techniques and how to play the cello. He’s also enrolled in Aikido and a kitchen class. “There’s something to do all the time,” he said. “I’m really glad to be here.”

Jenifer had lost interest in school before coming to Eagle Rock. “Eagle Rock is so much better. There are small classes, and the teachers care. I was very quiet at school, and I kind of got lost in my old school’s big classes where the teachers didn’t even know my name,” she said. “I’ve found a better way of learning that works for me. And I can focus on school, instead of worrying about what is happening at home,” Jenifer said. “My uncle was murdered, and nobody has solved it. So I think I want to be a criminologist, or a lawyer.” But even though Jenifer had lost interest in school, she decided that she couldn’t pass up the “I Have a Dream” college scholarship offer. “I knew I needed to do something to keep that,” Jenifer said. “So I talked to Kristen Moegling, my Columbine class program director and she told me about Eagle Rock. I would probably have dropped out of high school if I hadn’t been a Dreamer.”

## EAGLE ROCKERS ATTEND FALL FORUM IN SAN FRANCISCO

by Dan Condon, Associate Director of Professional Development



During the first week of November, a sizable crew from Eagle Rock joined several hundred educators and students for the 2010 Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) *Fall Forum*. This year's forum theme was *Demanding Education That Matters*. The Forum was held in downtown San Francisco. Eagle Rock staff and students presented two of the over 200 workshops offered during the conference, and attended meetings as members of the Affiliate Center and Small Schools Project networks.

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.

Pre-conference activities commenced on Wednesday & Thursday. Each year, Fall Forum features the Youth Forum, a daylong intensive learning experience that brings middle and high school students together from around the country for a day of connection, activism, and growth. Eagle Rock students Leslie Hernandez & Cara Burns worked with students from seven other schools and four theater majors from the Boston Arts Academy to facilitate youth workshops that mirrored their own experiences in creating an original theater piece called *Soul Element*. The workshops explored

the societal issues of race, identity, violence & gender. Each workshop focused intensely on one issue; participants chose the issue they were most interested in exploring. Leslie and Cara engaged in the process of creating a theater piece, beginning with exercises such as improvisation, free writing, critical reading, and tableaux work. They then moved to the rehearsal stage of their performance piece, while the workshop culminated with participants presenting their group's original improvisational piece to the other three groups.

During the same time, Eagle Rock staff attended local school visits to ARISE High School, a public charter school serving grades 9-12 in Oakland, CA, and other onsite day-long workshops focused around project based learning, data-based inquiry, preparing students for college and an asset based neighborhood mapping activity where participants learning what a community can tell teachers about how best to educate young people.

The 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the CES Fall Forum opened on Thursday evening with words from Nancy Sizer, Founder Ted Sizer's widow. Nancy spoke of Ted's vision for CES and the importance of

conversations amongst critical friends. Even with continued school budget-slashing and misguided claims about the importance of high-stakes testing and Race to the Top, CES and Ted remind us to keep the ten common principles in the forefront of our work with our students. Questions that framed this year's conference included: *What does it mean to each of us to demand education that matters? To our communities? Our students and families? How do we organize with a stance to demand education that matters?*

Pedro Noguera, from New York University, was the keynote speaker and he shared some sobering statistics. Among them was that the achievement of African American males is worse since the implementation of No Child Left Behind.

On Friday afternoon Dave Manzella, Eagle Rock's Language Arts and Literacy Instructional Specialist was joined by Burns in presenting *Where I'm From: Writing that Starts at Home and Ends with a Vision for the Future*. We all come from different neighborhoods, home communities where we live both a shared and individual experience. While everyone comes from a different neighborhood, we all

*"Fall Forum" - Continued from Page 10*

share common values about the places we want to live. Participants engaged in conversations with Dave and Cara about a writing project that focused on individual life experiences that allowed students to envision positive changes in their communities.

On Saturday morning Tim Phelps, Eagle Rock's Chef Instructor and Berta Guillen, Societies and Cultures Instructional Specialist were joined by Hernandez in presenting *Fight for Fair Food: From Legislation to the Farm, Food as a Moral Dilemma*. At Eagle Rock, our kitchen's philosophy is to provide local, seasonal, sustainable and ethical food. These concepts fall under our schools larger mission to create engaged global citizens. Tim and Berta created a course to deepen the conversations around food and its global impact. Tim and Berta explained and simulated how students defined fair food based on historical investigation, hands-on work at a farm, and student led discussions. Participants left with new tools to lead a Building Background Knowledge Workshop with their students and ideas on how to create experiential simulations to foster heartfelt reflection and critical thought. Hernandez shared, "I never thought my actions in doing something that I am so interested in could affect someone through the presentation I helped with in San Francisco. I really enjoyed sharing how my class impacted the way I view food."

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 Odyssey – The Essential School briefly met to reflect on their partnership, and to make plans for professional development for the coming months including a trip out to SeaTac, Washington that occurred during the week of Thanksgiving.

Michael Soguero, Director of Professional Development, explained, "I picked up some new tools from the workshops to help improve professional development at Eagle Rock. There was one tool in particular called 4 Squares that helps teachers figure out inquiry questions. I also went to a Data Based Inquiry workshop. I'm looking forward to using some of those processes with our senior management team. I enjoyed meeting with the Center Directors to figure out how to sustain the organization"

Manzella stated, "I try to find a way to take something from every workshop I attend. This year, I learned about some great free software that will help with my film classes as well as a new way to help students think about what needs to go into a paragraph."

Student Burns described, "The CES conference has opened my eyes to how Eagle Rock and our style and belief in education is helping to revolutionize public education everywhere. Pedro Noguera conjured up emotions and concerns about how public education has affected my loved ones and he compelled me to do something to help this cause."

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

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## SIX MORE GRADUATES TAKE FLIGHT

by Jeanine Cerundolo, Public Allies Fellow in Professional Development

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This past trimester six more graduates took good memories with them and left behind legacies at Eagle Rock School as they moved towards what the future has in store.

**Cara Burns** journeyed from Harlem, New York to Piñon House at ERS. "I came to Eagle Rock to find myself and I needed a stable, healthy and disciplined environment." Through her interactions and relationships with others she said she developed both confidence and an ability to make more conscious and responsible decisions. "Here, I've learned how to

make healthier eating, spiritual, fitness and relationship choices" she said. She'll soon be attending Hollins University, a small liberal arts women's college in Roanoke, Virginia. On campus, she hopes to be remembered for being focused, friendly, respectful, and hard working. She said: "I hope that other students, especially girls, who struggle with self-respect and self-esteem as I did can see how I used Eagle Rock to help me blossom into who I am today and similarly find their own way to grow."

**Brindy Farrell** came to Juniper House from Parker, CO. She said,

"I was having a lot of problems at home and I knew that I wasn't going to do well in a public high school." Through her time here she changed a lot. "I've become a lot more vocal and open with people and willing to joke around. It used to be with only people I was comfortable with, but now I have begun to open up with new people and fellows." She encourages students to take advantage of all ERS has to offer, such as the art materials like stained glass. For her, some favorite memories included: going to the production of "Much Ado About

*"Graduates" - Continued from Page 11*



Nothing" at CU Boulder with the 'Midsummer Night's Dream' Class, spending time in the pottery studio, and all the good conversations in the Juniper Girl's Wing. After graduation, she plans on attending Arapahoe Community College in Denver and waits to hear if she got accepted to City Year in Seattle. She will be remembered for being a strong and positive female role model in the community.

**Saul Flores** hailed from the San Fernando Valley, CA and lived in Piñon House throughout his time at the Rock. He fondly remembered all the activities that kept him engaged and having fun at Eagle Rock. He appreciated the great scenery and the many opportunities that allowed him to experience more than he initially imagined possible. As far as personal growth, he commented that it involved coming out of his shell: "I came in as a follower, I feel I can now lead a group through effective communication, effective listening, and knowing how to approach people." Saul plans on working at Rocky Mountain National Park, and then wants to start college. His advice to current students is the following: "Don't give up even though your graduation date might seem so far. Time will fly by." Saul hopes to be remembered for his work ethic, and for being one of the students who had part in making a better relationship with Rocky Mountain

National Park.

**David Peck** moved from San Rafael CA, and resided in Piñon during his time at Eagle Rock. He said he came to Eagle Rock because "the school gives students a hands-on experience where you're in control of your learning,

not just given a text book that tells you what to do." David said a lot changed in his life since he came to ERS, such as developing a routine and an organized daily schedule. A few of his favorite memories were being the first one to finish his ER-44 run-in, seeing improvement on his public speaking every trimester through his POL's, and cooking a large brunch for Piñon house retreats. "I made an omelet with meat, cheese, bacon, salsa, onions, & peppers rolled up into a log. People loved it - it was bomb," he remembered. After graduation, David had plans to go to Mexico to visit his family, and then to Johnson and Whales University for culinary arts. He stated: "I decided to do this 6 years ago when I was doing community service hours working in a kitchen. I really enjoyed my experience there, then continued to experiment with cooking and I fell in love with it." David will be remembered for having a lot of spirit and for his friendly and humorous nature. We wish him well, and hope he will come back to visit and cook up something special for us!

**Xiomara (CC) Watson** joined Eagle Rock from Berkeley, CA for a more in-depth education with opportunities she wasn't getting at home. During her time living in Juniper House, CC became a lot more introspective. She said, "I've become a lot more calm, and

I've learned how to care for other people and still take care of myself as well." ERS moments that CC appreciated include: the family environment every Thanksgiving, the memorable moment when her wilderness companion sat on a cactus, and knitting with instructor Karen, which felt like a meditative hobby. As far as the future goes, CC wants to be a musician, and will attend the New School of Jazz and Contemporary Music in NYC. She will be remembered for her strong voice - both in song, and as a leader. The bonds of the friendships she formed are like the notes of a melody as she states, "we are all inherently interconnected here." Because of this, CC knows ERS will continue to be a solid presence in her future as well.

**Robert Miranda** traveled to Juniper House from California. He decided to gain an education that would lead him to graduation day. His favorite memories include: his graduating trimester, meeting his best friend, and being able to lead his house in the right direction as it once led him. Through being at Eagle Rock, Robert said: "I believe I have become more responsible, reliable and independent." During his time here he learned how to open up to strangers, growing in this area by going on the 25-day wilderness trip. After graduation he aims to attend San Francisco State and major in Computer Science or Graphic Design. He advised current students: "Remember who you really are and why you came to Eagle Rock." He seeks to be remembered for creating the foundation for a video game room that Eagle Rock students can use regularly. Robert said, "Eagle Rock not only gave me a second chance at continuing my education but also helped make me become a better person along the way."

We wish all our graduates the very best.

## WORKING WITH BIG PICTURE LEARNING

by Michael Soguero, Director of Professional Development

The Professional Development Center at Eagle Rock School works with educators from around the world who wish to study how to re-engage students in learning, keep them in school, get them graduated, and help them go on to make a difference in the world. Strategically we seek out partner organizations where Eagle Rock's efforts can be amplified through the convening of multiple schools.

Big Picture Learning (BPL), established in 1995, is such an organization. BPL's mission is to encourage, incite and effect change in the U.S. educational system. Founders, Dennis Littky and Elliot Washor, have developed a design to engage students in their education and have grown BPL to include 70 schools around the country.

Two years ago, Elliot and I explored the possibility of using Professional Development Center services to contribute to the work of Big Picture Learning. That conversation led to a plan to specifically support principals and address leadership issues nationally. A hodgepodge of efforts have resulted since that time including facilitating the Big Picture Principals' Retreat (Providence, RI) in August 2009, working with Highline Big Picture (SeaTac, WA) on their design for adult learning and launching Critical Friends Groups (CFG) around leadership issues in the Mid Atlantic Region (DC to NYC). Additional events occurred that were convened at Eagle Rock School's Professional Development Center. School coaches, advisors and staff from specific schools have, at various times, taken advantage of our setting and facilitation services to hold retreats on site.

The work that has emerged as a preferred strategy for supporting principals and school leaders has been the Critical Friends Group mentioned above. A Critical Friends Group is a regularly scheduled gathering of like-minded colleagues who use protocols to critically understand and provide feedback to each other's work.

Initially, a two-day event was launched at Eagle Rock to use a success analysis approach to study academically rigorous projects from a variety of schools. Fifteen participants from five different BP schools attended in May 2009. The event was so well received that requests were made to replicate it at Bloomfield Big Picture (Bloomfield, CT) in February 2010. Applying this approach with success at other events confirmed that we need to employ processes that foster collaborative study of the work we are producing

at our individual sites. A conversation with David Bromley (Big Picture Philadelphia) and others in at a principals' retreat in Nashville, TN led to the decision to foster this approach specifically amongst school leadership in the Mid Atlantic region. Two events have been held with schools invited from DC to New York City over the past nine months. A third event was hosted by The Bronx Guild on December 9<sup>th</sup>. The latest event illustrates the second key feature of this approach to adult learning: sustainability.

One or two external facilitators from Eagle Rock cannot possibly address all the leadership support needs of a national network if it requires our ongoing attendance at events. Fortunately, the CFG model lends itself to continuous professional development using existing staff and materials of a school or network. Having designed and led two Mid-Atlantic CFG's, Eagle Rock has now shifted to a shared



facilitation model where Al Sylvia, Bronx Guild Assistant Principal and Big Picture Coach, designed and co-facilitated the December event. It will be Al's job to pass the baton to another Big Picture staff member for a March event and following that we will support the Mid Atlantic region from a distance as they continue the work amongst themselves.

Once a regional CFG has been established, our vision is to launch a new regional CFG and repeat the process described. Eventually we envision every region hosting their own, self-sustaining CFG. Every principal in every region will have a reliable structure for support and professional development. Future national gatherings of principals and leadership could allocate time and space for regional support. Requests are already rolling in from the New England region suggesting it may be the appropriate next stage of this rollout.

For more information Big Picture Learning please visit [www.bigpicture.org](http://www.bigpicture.org)

## EAGLE ROCK WELCOMES NEW STAFF

by Dan Condon, Associate Director of Professional Development Center

Eagle Rock welcomed its newest staff member Jonna Book as our World Languages Instructional Specialist this past trimester.

While Jonna was born in the United States she grew up internationally having lived in England for two years, Zimbabwe for six years as well as Nicaragua, Colombia and Brazil.

As an adult she has also traveled extensively to locations including Mongolia, Cambodia, Lao, Samoa, Ghana, Central and South America, Spain, France, Europe. She has lived in 10 different states and lived or traveled in over 25 countries.

Jonna attended Messiah College in Pennsylvania where she majored in Anthropology and Language and was particularly interested in studying culture and religion. She studied abroad in both Thailand and Japan.

After graduating, Jonna joined AmeriCorps for three years first as an NCCC (National Civilian Community Corps) member in Sacramento and then as a VISTA (Volunteers in Service to America) member at Warren Wilson College where she worked with Campus Compact connecting students with service learning opportunities. She first learned about Eagle Rock through the Public Allies Teacher Fellowship Program at Eagle Rock School while she was a VISTA and also connected with Warren Wilson alum Ryan Morra, a former Public Allies Teaching Fellow in Science and Kate Bowen, an Eagle Rock graduate.

Jonna moved to New Hampshire with her husband Rick Gaukel, where he led the adventure programming at the Oliverian School and later moved into the role as residential life director. They house parented for the first three years of their time at the school. Jonna helped tutor students and eventually moved into the role as the Spanish Teacher where she served for three years. The Oliverian School provides an inspiring, supportive, and challenging educational alternative for students in grades 9-12. Rick also joined Eagle Rock's Outdoor Education team as a contract staff member to help facilitate the ER-52 new student orientation wilderness trip.



This trimester Jonna instructed Spanish where she as been working with students on seeing further into the differences and similarities of Spanish speaking cultures and people both inside and outside of the classroom. Students dove into culture, history, film, music and art as a gateway to learning the language and culture of people across Spanish speaking areas. She also taught Comparative Cultures where students were asked to ponder the meaning of identity. They were asking how culture, upbringing and surroundings shape and influence who they are. Through literature, discussion and dialogue students dissected topics of culture and identity. Students also examined how their Eagle Rock experience tied into their cultural background.

High points for Jonna this past trimester have included creating her own curriculum. She has enjoyed seeing students find that they enjoy school and languages after not succeeding previously.

Since joining the Eagle Rock community Jonna has noticed, "How personable everyone is and how nice the students are. I've been impressed with how much work students produce in classes."

Jonna explains, "Having gone from teaching by figuring it out to having a strong internal professional development program, in particular, project based learning, the workshop model, literacy strategies, and building background knowledge has already strengthened my instruction at Eagle Rock."

While new in her role she is excited to further explore differentiated and non-sequential instructional strategies in languages.

Down the road Jonna and Rick hope to House Parent and they look forward to getting to know students on another level in order build stronger relationships.

When she's not teaching she enjoys travel and would like to visit Tibet, Nepal and Indonesia. In addition to travel, Jonna is passionate about the outdoors, reading and her friends. Jonna is also a skilled trail and long distance runner and has run two 50K's and six marathons.

Jonna stated, "I'm passionate about language because it can serve as a gateway to learn about different cultures."

## EAGLE ROCKERS "ROCK OUT" FOR CLIMATE CHANGE

by Jeanine Cerundolo, Public Allies Fellow in Professional Development



One of the values of Eagle Rock is to become a "steward of the planet." Another mantra at the school is "find a need and fill it." Students embodied both these values in their recent efforts towards education and action around Climate Change. Through their service-learning curriculum, in mid-September, Eagle Rock was introduced to ACE, the "Alliance for Climate Education" and formed a partnership that would inspire both parties. Eagle Rock students each work towards personal growth and transformation as much as on their academics. ACE's mission is to spread the message of climate change to schools across the country. Upon seeing an ACE presentation led by Amy Atkins, our students became enthusiastic about stepping up as leaders in the community to address the issue. Most decided to take an in-depth approach and became part of event planning with Amy, attending a training workshop and subsequently working with "The Lorax," an environmental action group from Fairview High School.

Eagle Rock encourages students to become "global citizens" and what better way for students to "think global, and act local" than to become involved in a local event for climate justice held in Boulder, CO.

Students were invited to attend the "350" Global Work Party to combat climate change. The 350 event is so named since 350 parts per million is the level of carbon dioxide deemed acceptable in the atmosphere by scientists, including NASA's James Hansen. The current level of carbon dioxide in our atmosphere is now at 392 ppm and rising. "What interests me most about climate change and the 350 cause is finding out about the earth heating up" said Eagle Rock student, J.R. Yama. This fact certainly heated up discussion and concern for Eagle Rock students. Thus, when presented with the opportunity to be involved with 350's larger efforts, many students immediately expressed interest.

On October 10<sup>th</sup>, an eight-foot tall polar bear marched through the streets of Boulder from Naropa University to the University of Colorado- Boulder, preceded by a torch from the Dalai Lama and followed closely by 18 Eagle Rockers and others. Bear, torch, and Eagle Rock School were part of the youth "I Matter March" set up by the Earth Guardians, an environmental education group for children. "Even though it was a rainy day we had a strong showing for the youth march from Naropa to the CU campus. People were chanting

and expressing enthusiasm for the healing of the planet from a perspective of unity and commitment to change," said instructor John Guffey. Three of the Earth Guardians, aged 10 to 13, spoke later that afternoon at the rally at the UMC. The Eagle Rock Students were impressed by the Earth Guardians message. Children spoke of the mess left behind by the generations before them and how they would be left to clean it up. They encouraged adults to care, if not for themselves, then for their children who would inherit the problem. The strength of student voice was shown powerfully in their speeches. Student Janice Soto commented: "The experience of the event was great because it was something I had never done."

The Boulder event was a significant part of a monumental effort around the globe, where 7,347 events in 188 countries were carried out, all centering around reducing carbon emissions. Cities celebrated the day by planting trees, installing solar panels, and painting the tops of buildings white. Over 1,000 of these events happened in the United States, with about 55 located in Colorado. The Boulder Global Work party offered over 40 low-carbon workshops which students attended to learn more about the issues. "Something I learned from participating in the Boulder 10-10-10 event was how bio-diesel fuel has a low impact on our environment" said student, Hector Verdugo. Overall, students expressed curiosity, learned, and shared their new knowledge with each other.

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Volunteers at the event were excited about the rally because a seeing a gathering of people getting together around a cause really demonstrates that one is not alone in caring about the issue, but that it is a passion that is shared. "I was impressed by the amount of people who showed up not only out of interest but also for support," said Jo-Ann Reid, a student at Eagle Rock. Not only did students from Eagle Rock just show up, but

they also prepared a workshop to present to fellow teens covering different themes such as climate justice, food and agriculture, and economics, as well as noting small acts folks could do to make a difference. "It was obvious that Eagle Rock made this event a priority. Our group stood out through its presence and leadership. When an organizer asked for a show of hands from those facilitating small group discussions almost all of our group of 18 students had their hands up.

It was very gratifying to see this level of involvement from our community," said Service-Learning Instructional Specialist, John Guffey. Public Allies Teaching Fellow in Service-Learning, Kari Liotta, emphasized this point: "One thing that impressed me from the event was our student leadership. I'm so proud of the students who stepped up to facilitate at the 'High School Students Can Change The World' session. They did a wonderful job and represented Eagle Rock well!"

"Graduate Profile" - Continued from Page 7

Eagle Rock who gave her the confidence to believe that what she was doing mattered. Naeha says the diversity of the Eagle Rock population gave her a unique ability to adapt to any situation, to look outside her 'box', and to be able to be objective and empathize with others. She explains, "To attempt to stand in another's shoes has been one of my most valuable assets. I thank Eagle Rock's foundation for instilling that in me." She

encourages present students to "take advantage of every day you have with these amazing individuals, both staff and students. In all my endeavors, I always have Eagle Rock Staff members in the back of my mind as a guide. Create big goals and see them through to fruition. Eagle Rock has taught me that it is most important to believe in yourself and your goals, and everything and everyone else will fall into place."

*From all of us at Eagle Rock School & Professional Development Center*

