



EAGLE EYES

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OUR EYES ARE WINDOWS

Guest Editorial by Mr. Osamu Iida, Executive Vice President of Honda North America and Chairman of the American Honda Education (AHEd) Board of Directors

My first visit to ERS was for the groundbreaking of what was then still a dream. That beginning was alive with men and women who visualized classrooms where only pine trees stood. Now, as I return at a time termed "the end of the beginning" at Eagle Rock, I am genuinely impressed by the huge strides made by both students and staff in so short a time.

Such accomplishments make me proud to be on the AHEd Board, whose responsibility is to help steward this unique enterprise. It is gratifying to witness the intellectual growth of the many students with whom I have spoken, and to observe the staff's leadership.

Visiting Eagle Rock recalls memories of my high school days in Japan, in a small seaside town near a U.S. Air Force base. In the 1950s, after the war, Japan was flooded with American culture—movies, music, and other icons of American life. What revelations! Often I envisioned how Americans lived. In turn, I was inspired to imagine what might be beyond the borders of Japan. One such musing led me to enter a speech contest in English. My

little speech was titled, "Open Your Eyes Wide to the World." The speech won. As the Air Force Base Commander presented the award, he placed his thumbs and forefingers on his own eyes, opening them wide as if to say to the audience, "Yes, open your eyes!"

Encouraged by early experiences, my professional career has now taken me around the world many times, where I have lived and worked in several countries. My goal and dream all along has been to work cooperatively and effectively through an understanding of the people and cultures of many lands and languages. It has been a fulfilling and fascinating experience.

I have great faith in Eagle Rock's potential. And I have a new dream, too. That its students will act meaningfully in society, inspired by their peers, their instructors and their unique environment at Eagle Rock School. With their eyes wide open to the world.

Old Oriental wisdom teaches the importance of education in a way worth remembering:

If you have one year, grow a flower.

If you have ten years, a tree,

If a hundred years, a person.

EAGLE ROCK OPENS DOORS TO FOXFIRE CREW

~ by Bob Jones, Foxfire Staff ~

This article was written as a result of a nine-day professional development experience that brought thirteen educators (including two course facilitators and two facilitator interns) to Eagle Rock to live and learn.

The Foxfire course participants had no clue that Eagle Rock School would be the ideal setting for a Foxfire Level One course, but it was clear from the moment this incredible setting came into view, cradled between Shaman Rock and Long's Peak, that they were to embark on a truly remarkable experience. Usually, the Foxfire summer courses take place in some unused urban classroom. Sometimes it happens in some very beautiful places. This summer, it was in a valley filled with magic.

The Foxfire Level One course is an opportunity for educators to examine their own classroom practice, with a goal of developing a more active, collaborative, and learner-centered classroom when they return to their schools in August. Using the tenets of John Dewey as a philosophical underpinning and eleven core practices as guides, participants discover the Foxfire

approach by engaging in their own experiential learning project. Although this project lasts for only a few days within the course, teachers experience the frustration as well as the joys one has in taking control of one's own learning. This personal experience becomes a basis in which teachers develop a framework that they can take back to their own classrooms.

Eagle Rock's commitment to a rigorous but thoughtful education gave the Foxfire course a backdrop that could not be ignored. Nestled in the Professional Development Center, course members were riveted by healthy, articulate students they met, who seemed in love with life as well as learning. Participants wanted to know what the secret was, and how that secret could be taken back to their own classrooms. It didn't seem to matter that the nine course participants came from urban communities such as Denver and Houston, or mountain areas like Carbon-dale, or that they taught kindergarten, fourth grade or secondary education, or taught shop, art, English, Spanish, or math, or had two years teaching experience or

twenty-three; they wanted to capture the vitality they saw here and somehow bring that home. Thus, it came as no surprise that the Foxfire course participants roved the Eagle Rock campus asking students the question, "What does Eagle Rock offer you that public schools didn't or couldn't?" What effect did these few days have on the Foxfire participants or the Eagle Rock students? Their comments are as follows:

"You being here has been okay; you integrated with us. It wasn't like other groups who made us feel as if we were in a fishbowl, being stared at." (*James Masters and Kelly Pankow, ERS*)

"I would like to bottle the Eagle Rock experience and give it to every traditional school in the country." (*Jerry Bell, Foxfire*)

"Well, it has been a learning experience for me because I got to ask questions about Foxfire and hear ideas from other people besides the staff here. Also, I think it was a learning experience for Foxfire because I saw students, including myself, who answered a ton of questions." (*David Hernandez, ERS*)

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ADMISSIONS

~ by Yee-Ann Cho, Admissions Specialist ~

This is the second of two parts of an article on admissions. In the first part, Yee-Ann answered the question, "How do students apply to the school?" In this part, she answers the question, "Who gets in?"

While the steps needed to apply to Eagle Rock are straightforward enough, the process of choosing who will attend is much less clear. In fact, when people ask me, "So what is your student profile?" or "Who gets in?" I have to admit that Eagle Rock doesn't really have a student profile or clear-cut criteria for determining admission. And, looking at each of our students, most people would agree that they are as different from one another as they could possibly be. One thing they have in common, however, is that they have not done well in their past school environments for a variety of reasons including poor family background (no support or stability), past involvement with gangs or problems with the law, substance abuse, and an inability to learn in large, impersonal schools.

A second, and perhaps more important, commonality among all our students—and what I look for in all the applicants I meet—is a drive, a real desire and commitment to change their lives. It doesn't matter so much what their past behavior has been, whether they have partied hard, been arrested, dropped out of school, or run with the wrong crowd. What IS important is that they want to give up those behaviors which have negatively affected their lives, they want to finish high school, and they want to have productive futures. Given Eagle Rock's environment, these students have a chance that they did not have before. They recog-

nize that and hunger for it.

Finally, when it comes to selecting which students will actually attend Eagle Rock, John Oubre, Director of Students, and I look not only at students' needs but also at Eagle Rock's needs. In trying to develop a safe, supportive culture at Eagle Rock, we need to see that students will be able to contribute to our community as well as benefit from what we offer. We also come back to the issue of diversity as we make our decision.

However it may appear to the outsider, selecting a student is not an easy decision to make. Time and again, students who have not been accepted to Eagle Rock ask me, "What could I have done better? Did I do something wrong?" More often than not, my response to them is, "Nothing. You presented yourself well during the interview. No, you didn't do anything 'wrong' nor could you have done anything else. It's just that we have to look at the school's needs, too." As much as possible, I try to ward off those questions during the first interview by telling students, as John puts it, that the chances of getting into Eagle Rock are about as good as winning the lottery. Unfortunately, there is an overwhelming number of young people who need a school like Eagle Rock and who could benefit from a program like ours, but we can accommodate only a small number of them.

Those students who do make it through the application process end up at Eagle Rock with a chance to change their lives. Whether or not they succeed is up to them, but having gotten themselves here in the first place is a huge step forward.

STAFF PROFILE: TIM PHELPS

My position at Eagle Rock is Chef/Instructor, and I'm responsible for the food service operation as well as a Restaurant Careers program that is being developed.

My experience previous to coming to Eagle Rock includes serving as Executive Chef at various resorts and restaurants in Colorado, New York, and Wyoming, and working as Chef/Instructor at the Career Development Center in Longmont and for the American Culinary Federation (ACF) at Emily Griffith Opportunity School in Denver.

I am a graduate of the Culinary Institute of America and currently serve on the state Technology Preparation Task Force for Foodservice here in Colorado.

My interest in food and my love for people are my drivers for teaching and sharing. I got these from my parents, and I carry them on with my wife, Red, and my children, Jeremiah and Jeryca. A lot of the interactions we have as a family are lessons I use here at school; one of these is exposing my kids and my Eagle Rock family to a wide variety of foods they've never seen before. I have a rule about unfamiliar foods: You can't not like something here unless you've tasted it first.

We show students how to eat a balanced and healthy diet and also educate them about where the foods come from. I like them to look at what they eat from beginning to end—that is, how things are raised and what environmental and/or ethical issues are involved. I challenge them to take responsibility for what they eat, as well as how they live. I love the quote from novelist Laura Esquivel (*Like Water For Chocolate*): "Cooking is a sacred activity. It is an act of love making. . . Society is spiritually malnourished because we have abandoned the kitchen."

I feel we show our students this love—on a larger scale, because of the numbers we serve—but, no matter what, the passion and love need to be there. I like students to hear it in my voice when I describe a favorite lunch: Tear a piece from a fresh baguette and eat it along with some sundried tomatoes soaked in garlic, olive oil and fresh basil; a nice piece of provolone cheese; and a glass of *Vino Nobile de Montepulciano*. This is a little slice of heaven I hope to pass on.

REFLECTIONS ON A WORLD DIVIDED

~ by Tara, Student ~

The Sustainable Living class decided to conduct an experiment that arbitrarily divided the Eagle Rock community into first world and third world peoples for a day. Community members ate accordingly and found they thought about themselves and treated each other differently. Tara reflects on this experience.

Well, dinner just ended. With it ended the day of first world, third world eating. I was first world. I couldn't even eat everything that was given to me. As I sat at my table covered with china, food and linen and watched people on the floor eating with their hands, memories of my childhood came tumbling into my mind.

I remember when, "You have to go to bed without dinner" wasn't a threat—it was a sadly spoken truth. I remember when "Mom, there's nothing to eat" wasn't whined because there was nothing I wanted—I whined because there was no food in the cupboards. I remember when free school lunches weren't nasty—they were my largest meal of the day. I remember when eating one or two meals a day wasn't because I was a teenager trying to lose weight—it was simply because that's all the food there was.

Out of all the memories, my biggest is of happiness and laughter. I was a kid who didn't complain about food because I didn't know people lived any differently. I ran around, climbed trees, and bruised myself to cloud nine every day. I idolized my sister and loved school just like every other kid did when they were two to nine years old.

There were nights that my stomach hurt when I went to bed, and there were times that I cried when I opened the fridge and saw it was empty. But those times didn't stop me from being a care-free, fun-loving kid. I wasn't any less of a person because I didn't eat. I didn't get mad at my mom because we didn't eat. I was just thankful for the little bit that I did get, and I went on being a care-free, fun-loving and happy kid.

I guess the thing for me is that a lot of people don't have a clue how much they have. They don't begin to understand how quickly everything can be snatched away from them! They just don't know how much is given to them. And while all those people ramble on about politics, gang violence and world hunger, the rest of us watch them, feel the pain of hunger, and then turn, laugh, and go climb trees.

EAGLE ROCK GRADS GRANTED DUAL DIPLOMA

~ by Lois Easton, Director of Professional Development ~

Joelle Strasser became Eagle Rock's third graduate when she completed graduation requirements at the end of June. She will participate in August graduation ceremonies. In addition to the diplomas she and spring trimester graduates Jeff Blackman and Addie Russell received from Eagle Rock, all three were awarded diplomas by the Colorado districts they attended before coming to Eagle Rock.

Joelle, Jeff, and Addie revised the half-hour Presentations of Learning they made to the entire Eagle Rock community and a specially chosen panel. They made these presentations more meaningful to the panel convened within the districts they once attended. They also prepared a slightly revised Presentation Packet for the district panelists and responded to questions for more than the fifteen minutes required at Eagle Rock.

Triumph came when each of the three panels announced that they were impressed with how students could document their learning and were confident that students had met or exceeded district requirements.

"It confirms the quality of our program," Judy Gilbert, Director of Curriculum, commented. "I look at the presentations we make for dual diplomas as a way of keeping us accountable."

In addition, the dual diploma presentations served as a form of professional development. At each presentation, panelists were excited about having students demonstrate their readiness for graduation and exhibit their talents, skills, and knowledge. Panelists decided that a diploma really means something when it is backed up by evidence of what students really know and can do.

STUDENT DEMOGRAPHICS, AUGUST 1995

MALE

5 Latino	1 Native American
8 Caucasian	1 Asian/Caucasian
4 African American	1 African/Caucasian

FEMALE

3 Latina	3 Asian/Caucasian
12 Caucasian	1 Latina/African
6 African American	American
1 Asian	1 Latina/Caucasian

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Eagle Rock School
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Bonnie Vavra
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**Bob Van
Der Wege**
Learning Resources
and Information

THE EAGLE ROCK ROAD TO SERVICE: FLOOD CONTROL

~ by Maya Greenly, Student ~

The splashing of raindrops echoing in my ears from my raincoat brought me back to the reality of two hours earlier when I was dry and warm back at school.

"Let's go! Let's go! It's flooding in town!" yelled Erol then as I walked out of the gym.

I ran down the steps in excitement. "Are we leaving?" I asked as I was passing an instructor.

"Yes," he answered, "meet in the office."

I ran to my dorm and up the stairs. I packed a backpack full of dry socks, an old shirt, a water bottle, and an extra coat in case we were out there all night. There were students running back and forth, to and from their dorms, all overwhelmed and excited with the talk of a flood.

We all piled into the cold Suburbans and crouched together to keep warm. As the "burban" was getting turned on I glanced at the clock, and it read 9:36 p.m. In all the rush I never even noticed how late it was.

We drove down the "Eagle Rock Road to Service" with flashing lights and noises coming from our mouths as if we were sirens. We were the Eagle Rock Rescue Team.

As we pulled into the muddy driveway of the ranch, we could see people with shovels racing and weaving in between trucks and cars to save the land from floating away. We came to a stop and all jumped out, threw on our raincoats, grabbed our tools and gloves and, like a pack of ants, followed the leader to where we

would work. No supervisor waited for us there; we had to decide ourselves what to do.

I automatically started digging into the soft but rocky earth. Our mission was to save a building from floating away, but my mission was to work and get as dirty as possible! We had to widen the small stream that was now overflowing with muddy water so that its banks could contain the water. After digging and damming for what seemed like hours, we remembered the culvert that ran under the road. The water was so high that if you had fallen in you would have been thrown around like a rag doll, and who knows where you would have ended up. It was a scary thought.

We kept switching from area to area, and our last spot of rescue was to save the mess hall from becoming a swimming pool. We dammed up the sides of the building with sod from their lawns, and I was in the middle of the whole thing, muddy from the waist down and wet from the waist up.

I had never found something to make me happy and feel so good. As I packed my shovel and gloves in the back of the Suburban, a smile radiated and gleamed from my face in the darkness. Once again I jumped into the front seat and glanced at the clock. 12:32 AM. I was wet, cold, tired, and covered from head to toe in mud, but the only thing I was concerned about was the rest of Colorado that might need our help.

Foxfire (continued)

"Eagle Rock exemplifies that all students learn differently and that all students can be reached." (*Bob Gelston, Foxfire*)

"I love seeing new faces. It takes awhile to get to know them, but after awhile, they're just like family. It's always hard to see guests leave that have been here for more than a few days. Getting to know new people is a highlight of my day!" (*Jessica Hickey, ERS*)

"Everybody wants to learn. You put them in the right situation and there will be no stopping them." (*Aubrey Tate, Foxfire*)

"It was neat to have visitors who didn't ask stupid questions. It seemed like they were truly interested in learning how our school worked in order to make a difference back at their own schools. Another great thing was that they participated in our activities, intramurals, morning exercise and classes. It was great to have them! Come back anytime." (*Kate Fiegen, ERS*)

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