



EAGLE EYES

Volume 17, Number 2

News From Summer 2009 Trimester

EAGLE ROCK FEATURED BOOK CHAPTER

by Dan Condon, Associate Director of Professional Development

Dan Condon, Associate Director of Professional Development, and Lois Easton, former Director of Professional Development, co-authored a chapter entitled "A Schoolwide Model for Student Voice in Curriculum Development and Teacher Preparation" for *Learning from the Student's Perspective: A Methods Sourcebook for Effective Teaching*, by Alison Cook-Sather.

Paradigm Publishers explains, "Much has been written about how to engage students in their learning, but very little of it has issued from students themselves. Compiled by one of the leading scholars in the field of student voice, this sourcebook draws on the perspectives of secondary students in the United States, England, Canada, and Australia as well as on the work of teachers, researchers, and teacher educators who have collaborated with a wide variety of students.

See "Eagle Rock Featured" - Continued on Page 2

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

by Michael Soguero, Director of Professional Development

"The school exists for the purpose of professional development. It is through professional development that Honda's investment is leveraged into the greater good."

—Tom Dean, co-founder of Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center; former Executive Director of American Honda Education Corporation



Eagle Rock's mission is to improve public secondary education nationally through our Professional Development Center and to serve and graduate students who will make a difference in the world, through our high school. Considering that organizations like Gates, Annenberg and Carnegie have collectively poured billions of dollars into the selfsame goal the enormity of the task cannot be exaggerated.

The Professional Development Center enjoys several advantages that are unique in their combination and provide a strong platform for fulfilling on that part of our dual mission.

First, we have Eagle Rock School. We have a strong history of success with just the kind of youth that are

See "Professional Development Strategy" - Continued on Page 13

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Editor:

Dan Condon
2750 Notaiiah Road
Estes Park, CO
80517

Phone Number:

(970) 586-0600

Fax Number:

(970) 586-4805

Website:

www.EagleRockSchool.org

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Sheri Bullock
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Burt Bowles
Facilities & Maintenance

Robert Burkhardt
Head of School

Dan Condon
Associate Director of
Professional Development

Susan D'Amico
Administrative Assistant

EAGLE ROCK STAFF MEMBER RECEIVES EDUCATION AWARD

*Reprinted with permission from the July 31, 2009,
edition of the Estes Park Trail Gazette*

Dan Condon, Associate Director of Professional Development at Eagle Rock School & Professional Development Center, received an inaugural CES Small Schools 'Commitment to Equity' Award for his work in making education more equitable for all young people. The award was presented at the 2009 Coalition of Essential Schools *Summer Institute* held in Providence, Rhode Island.

For over twenty years, the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) has been at the forefront of creating and sustaining personalized, equitable, and intellectually challenging schools. Essential schools are places of powerful student learning where all students have the chance to reach their fullest potential. A common principle that the Coalition of Essential School promotes is democracy and equity.

Condon explains, "Eagle Rock School's students and staff strives to demonstrate non-discriminatory and inclusive policies, practices, and pedagogies. We model democratic practices that involve all who are directly affected by the school. Eagle Rock works to honor diversity and builds on the strength of its communities, deliberately and explicitly challenging all forms of inequity."

Eagle Rock School & Professional Development Center is a Mentor School and Affiliate Center as recognized by the Coalition of Essential Schools.

"Eagle Rock Featured" - Continued from Page 1

Highlighting student voices, it features five chapters focused on student perspectives, articulated in their own words, regarding specific approaches to creating and maintaining a positive classroom environment and designing engaging lessons and on more general issues of respect and responsibility in the classroom. To support educators in developing strategies for accessing and responding to student voices in their own classrooms, the book provides detailed guidelines created by educational researchers for gathering and acting upon student perspectives.

To illustrate how these approaches work in practice, the book includes stories of how pre-service and in-service teachers, school leaders, and teacher educators have made student voices and participation central to their classroom and school practices. And finally, addressing both practical and theoretical questions, the book includes a chapter that outlines action steps for high school teachers, school leaders, and teacher educators and a chapter that offers a conceptual framework for thinking about and engaging in this work.

Bringing together in a single text student perspectives, descriptions of successful efforts to access them in secondary education contexts, concrete advice for practitioners, and a theoretical framework for further exploration, this sourcebook can be used to guide practice and support re-imagining education in secondary schools of all kinds, and the principles can be adapted for other educational contexts."

Friend of Eagle Rock School, Ben Daley, Chief Academic Officer with High Tech High in San Diego, CA explains, "Cook-Sather makes the case that the best teachers of teachers are in fact the students with whom they work. After reading this book, I renewed my efforts to include my students in important decisions that affect them."

To purchase the book visit <http://tinyurl.com/neejh6>.

EAGLE ROCK BOOK NAMED 2009 EDUCATOR'S AWARD RECIPIENT

by Dan Condon, Associate Director of Professional Development

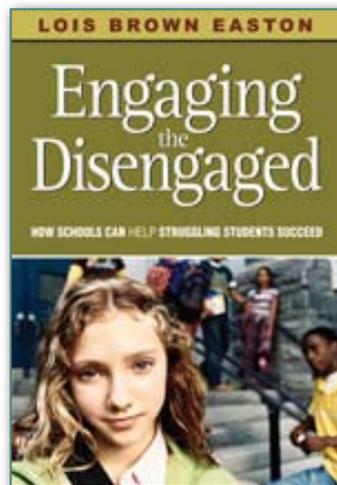
Engaging the Disengaged: How Schools Can Help Struggling Students Succeed by Dr. Lois Brown Easton won the nod as Delta Kappa Gamma's 2009 Educator's Award recipient.

Dr. Easton directs the reader to the moral imperative of educating all students, specifically those students needing the most help. They are the "dis" kids: disinterested, disappointed, disenfranchised, disenchanted, discredited, and disenfranchised. This book describes practices and changes that educators have made to the culture of schools to better serve all learners, especially those who are disengaged. Easton's book, *Engaging the Disengaged*, is a worthy contribution with a potential to influence educational practices.

To qualify for the award, books must be written by a woman in one of the Delta Kappa Gamma's 16 member countries and published in 2008. The Educator's Award recognizes educational research that may influence the direction of thought and action necessary to meet the needs of today's complex society. The Educator's Award Committee also looks for broad appeal and a clear, informative style. The selections were made from 17 books nominated for consideration.

Far too many young people sit in classes disengaged; far too many drop out of school altogether. The dropout statistics are frightening enough, but no one really knows how many more students merely endure school, sitting in the back of the room, tuned out. *Engaging the Disengaged* is addressed to those of us who work with such students, and also to those who work with the teachers and principals who work with such students – district administrators, for example. Finally, it speaks to teacher education and

continuing education programs that prepare teachers and administrators to work in schools that "house" such students. The reader will encounter many different voices from K-12 schools throughout the country: students, their teachers, and those who observe these students and teachers working together.



This book is about changing the culture of schools so that they are more humane and habitable for struggling learners – really, for all learners. Easton argues that schools should make important changes, such as creating whole-school learning communities. Teachers can certainly change their own classrooms, but school wide change is likely to have a greater effect. Redesigned schools – not just high schools but all schools that serve struggling students – can help keep such students in school, learning, graduating, and contributing to a society that needs them.

Easton organizes her ideas into two sections: Culture and Curriculum, and Instruction and Assessment. The final chapter looks at the effect of school on the whole student. Topics include a testing culture vs. a learning culture; the importance of building relationships and creating community; how principles govern a school better than rules; building a democracy in schools; how really to be standards-based; innovative instructional strategies; and performance assessment for learning.

For more information about purchasing the book visit <http://tinyurl.com/kpqtej>

Mark Dougherty
Sous Chef

Denise Dunn
Business Administration
Specialist

Cynthia Elkins
Arts

Beth Ellis
Learning Resources
and Information

TBA
Wilderness & Outdoor
Education

Mike Glowacki
Head Cook

John Guffey
Service Learning

Berta Guillen
Society and Cultures

Karen Ikegami
Mathematics

Janet Johnson
Science

TBA
Registrar

Jeff Liddle
Director of Curriculum

Denise Lord
Life After Eagle Rock

Susan Luna
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Dave Manzella
Language Arts & Literature

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Public Allies

L'Tanya Perkins
Admissions Associate

Tim Phelps
Chef Instructor

Scott Rashid
Second Chef

Russ Rendón
World Languages

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

SERVING NEW MEXICO: STUDENTS ATTEND A TEONEZAHUALIZTLI

by Mike Dunn, former Public Allies Teaching Fellow in Service-Learning

If you have never been to northern New Mexico in the summer, you surely should add it as a desirable destination in your future. Although not as magnificent as the Rocky Mountains outside Eagle Rock, what the northern New Mexican mountains lack in size, they make up for in beauty and serenity. Lush and green with beautiful grasses, juniper, piñon pine and other equally stunning deciduous trees, the area is truly magnificent. This was the setting for an ER-48 Explore Week trip led by Service-Learning Instructional Specialist John Guffey and myself.

Each year, David Young, an indigenous spiritual leader/teacher from Boulder, CO, and his family host a traditional spiritual camp nestled in the foothills of these northern New Mexican mountains. This camp is located on David's family's land, which they call Tlaltapac, and is hosted by La Familia Esquibel y Garcia. The land's region has been traditionally designated as Navajo and/or Apache, and lies in a larger region the Navajo call Dinétah.

Regardless of these designations, ceremonies at the traditional spiritual camp, translated literally as Teonezahualiztli in Aztec, were an amalgamation of varying indigenous traditions. Because of the land's location, the variety of indigenous traditions was vast and included pieces from Navajo, Apache, Pueblo, Lakota, Cheyenne, Aztec and other native Mexican traditions. David more readily describes the practices of a Teonezahualiztli as Mexica (meh-SHE-ka) or traditions that are derived from the Aztec and other indigenous people of the now

American Southwest.

One of the primary ceremonies that occurred throughout the week was the Inipi or what is more commonly known as a sweat lodge. Constructed out of young willow branches bent into a half-dome shape and then covered in blankets, the Inipi is a common structure and ceremony in many indigenous traditions. The structure itself represents the connection between those participating in its ceremonies and the earth, universe and spiritual world. Students were invited into the Inipi to sing, pray, meditate and reflect on the struggles that consume their daily lives. Eagle Rock student Dennis McNeal, who attended the camp the year previous, stated: "this experience was great learning for me! I loved being able to participate in the culture deeper than I did last year. The [Inipi] is so hot, but a great experience!"

Although the participation in the Inipi was a new experience for many students, the purpose of the camp was focused well beyond its vistas. Over the year previous to the camp, two individuals, Blake and Jose, undertook a spiritual journey that culminated with the camp. While on their journey, both individuals committed to "sit on the hill and fast." The participants in this camp served as their support as they upheld this commitment. While on the hill, Blake

and Jose sought spiritual guidance in their own life as well as for the lives of those in their communities. They deprived themselves of food and water for four days and came down from the hill, sun burnt and exhausted, to share their enlightenment with those supporting them. This journey has deep roots in the Cheyenne tradition where, as described by Jose, many community members would "sit on the hill and fast" to gain guidance about their community's direction. Blake and Jose undertook the same quest as



they sat upon the hill often seeking their own personal guidance as well as guidance for their greater communities.

In addition to support Blake and Jose in their quest, students participated in the refurbishing of a traditional nomadic structure called a Hogan. Crafted from logs, stones, cob, clay and cement, the Hogan serves as a traditional ceremonial structure not unlike the sweat lodge. Created as a dome structure with a cement roof in 2008, the Hogan was in bad shape after the harsh New Mexican winter. Students worked

FELLOWS MOVE ON

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

Each year Eagle Rock School welcomes twelve new individuals as part of the Public Allies Teaching Fellowship Program. Sadly, every August we say goodbye to these dear friends as they move on. Over the year they have been a friend to share with, a shoulder to cry on, a joker to laugh with and a teacher of life lessons. Even though they move on to their next experience what they leave behind is immeasurable. No matter if it is the mad scramble before opening curtain of a *Midsummer Night's Dream* to coaching soccer in a course called *Soccer Savvy* to taking time out of their day off to host a dance party or having a long talk on the Lodge Hearth, the fellows of 2008-09 will be missed but not soon forgotten. We celebrate not only what they have given Eagle Rock School and Public Allies, but also where

they are going.

When we think of **Liz Berliant**, Music Fellow, amazing music gatherings come to mind. One of Liz's goals for the year was to have our community engage fully into morning music gatherings. Job well done. (That's right, one morning we sang the theme song to the Fresh Prince of Bellaire) Liz has moved to San Francisco and continues to teach music.

Alyssa Chen, Math Fellow, will be taking a year off to travel. Throughout her year at Eagle Rock, Alyssa brought her sense of adventure to our students with rock climbing, mountain biking and buying a pair of used rollerblades and skating on our rock paths. This will all come into play when she hikes the Appalachian Trail. Alyssa's future plans are to once again bring her

experiences back to the classroom as a teacher.

Libby Cole, Health & Wellness Counseling Fellow, continued to want to work with adolescents with a health and mental health focus. She headed back east to her Boston roots and is exploring work in schools, nonprofits, and education consulting organizations. Eventually she hopes to return to school and get her masters in public health.

The Professional Development Center Fellow and All-Star Play Director, **Carter Cox**, is teaching 11th and 12th grade Arts and Humanities classes at Francis W. Parker Charter School (a CES school) in Devens, MA. He is living in Boston. Carter not only was a great representative of the Professional Development Center, he also lend his skills as a Director of the summer production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

Mike Dunn, Service Learning Fellow, moved to Philadelphia where he will be on the founding staff for a new Big Picture school called El Centro de Estudiantes. The school started its first class of students in early

This will be Mike's second foray with a Big Picture school.

Berta Guillen, Societies and Culture Fellow, will be joining Eagle Rock School as the adjunct Societies and Cultures Instructional Specialist. We're glad to have her on board to continue the amazing work she began as a Public Allies Teaching Fellow.

Beth Jackson, Outdoor Education Fellow, spent 106 days in the woods with our students over the past year and that just was not enough. Beth continues her role as an Eagle Rock School Contract Wilderness Staff on the ER 49 Wilderness Course in late September.

Andrea Fullington, Language Arts and Literature Fellow, relocated to Philadelphia to earn a Masters in Education, Culture and Society from the University of Pennsylvania. The program focuses on how education is shaped by the dynamics of society, culture and the political economy, as well as socialization practices inside and outside of the classroom. After earning the degree Andrea will be pursuing her certification as a Secondary English teacher in order to work as an educator in the public school system.



"Fellows" - Continued from Page 5

Immediately after the fellowship, **Christi Kramer**, Curriculum Fellow enjoyed a few adventures: canoeing the Green River with ERS staff, hiking Mt. Meru in Africa with her family, and spending a month on the Long Trail in Vermont. She has decided to return to Maryland and is currently researching opportunities to continue working with AmeriCorps. Christi is determined to remain in the fields of education and service, and to incorporate environmental stewardship and awareness into her work as much as possible.

Katie Leonard, Visual Arts Fellow, traded in the mountains for the beach. She moved to the Bahamas to teach Environmental Art at The Island School, a semester study abroad program for high school students. She is looking forward to teaching, sea kayaking, camping, and raising her very own piglet.

For **Ryan Morra**, Science Fellow, a two-year adventure calls. Ryan was nominated to serve in Latin America with the Peace Corps beginning in January,

with a placement in Environmental Education. All those days on the river with *River Watch*, on the mountains with *Colorado Rocks* and riding the trails with *Physics of Mountain Biking* will come in handy.

Henry Schrader, the Human Performance Center Fellow, will be taking a year off from teaching and doing some traveling around the world. Henry plans to resume his career in the education world in a year after some soul searching. In the winter Henry will coach a girls middle school basketball team in Central Massachusetts.

Change is what makes Eagle Rock thrive. We know the Public Allies Teaching Fellowship class of 08-09 will take what they have learned and make their part of the world a better place. We welcomed our newest class of Public Allies Teaching Fellows to campus on August 29.

For more information about the Public Allies Teacher Fellowship Program visit www.publicallies.org/eaglerock

GRADUATE PROFILE – WHERE IS SHE NOW?

by Carter Cox, former Public Allies Fellow in Professional Development

Brianna Lopez, ER-3 (Spring, 1994)
Graduated ER-12 (Summer 1997)
Geography: Campbell, California

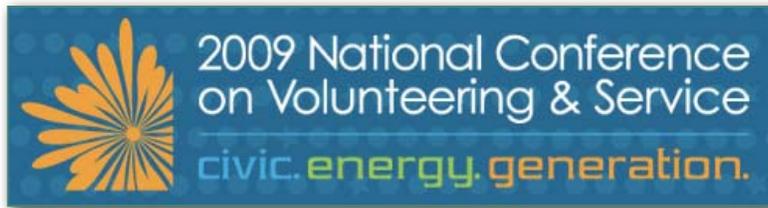
Every edition of Eagle Eyes we feature an Eagle Rock graduate to give readers some sense of where our alumni are in the world and what they are doing. For this ER 48 edition I am giving an update on alum Brianna Lopez.

Brianna grew in Broomfield, Colorado, just outside of Denver with her two parents and four sisters. "My parents had several problems with my sisters," she told me, "and I was heading down the same path. My older sister was using drugs and drinking, one of my other sisters' was pregnant at 15 years old and another sister was ditching school to hang out with her friends." When Brianna's middle school advised her parents that Brianna would do better in a technical school (cosmetology was recommended), she and her parents agreed to look for other options. Brianna's mother was good friends with a person who, as it happened, was Eagle Rock's travel agent at the time, and so the connection was made. She was accepted with just a few days until the start of the trimester. "I got off the phone and started packing the items on the list and went to one more day of school and soared toward Eagle Rock."

Brianna has a lot of memories from school. Her funniest memory was walking into the Lodge one morning to find all the chairs hanging from the rafters. She remembers tough times and fun times, whether it be getting in trouble (with Robert Burkhardt) for pulling a prank on another student, or being woken up in the middle of the night (by Michael Soguero) to dissect lamb hearts.

Growing up with four sisters Brianna often had a hard time finding room for her voice in the family, but she says Eagle Rock helped her with that. "For the first time in my life I heard, 'you have NO right to NO opinion.' That is when I started to talk." The confidence she gained at Eagle Rock served her in school and has continued to serve her in the years since.





EAGLE ROCK PRESENTS AT NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON VOLUNTEERING AND SERVICE

by Dan Condon, Associate Director of
Professional Development

In July, Dan Condon, Associate Director of Professional Development, attended the 2009 National Conference on Volunteering and Service held in San Francisco, CA.

First Lady Michelle Obama kicked off the opening plenary session with a keynote address, confirming the Presidential Administration's commitment to service and announcing the United We Serve initiative. Obama explained that United We Serve is a sustained effort to expand the size and impact of volunteer efforts in America. United We Serve kicked off at the conference and runs for 81 days through a new National Day of Service and Remembrance on September 11. She also announced an initiative of the Entertainment Industry Foundation: during the week of October 19, plots and themes on ABC, CBS, FOX and NBC television programming will center on volunteering to inspire Americans to serve.

Other highlights from the opening plenary of the conference included comments by California Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger, First Lady Maria Shriver, Matthew McConaughey, House Speaker Nancy Pelosi, Arianna Huffington and an inspirational performance from Jon Bon Jovi. Clifford the Big Red Dog also made an appearance.

Graduate Tahira Ali joined Condon to present *Creating a Tone of Decency & Trust - working with youth who find success elusive*. Participants pondered how schools and youth serving agencies create a tone of decency and trust with young people who have not experi-

enced decency and trust in previous experiences. Using Eagle Rock School as a lens for the EssentialVisions DVD & Toolkit (winner of the Aegis Award for Best Educational DVD & Finalist for the Distinguished Achievement Award, presented by the Association of Educational Publishers) participants learned how to transform challenging school and youth settings into trusting and decent learning communities. Participants also learned to approach learning community-building focuses on the skills, strengths, resources and assets already available to the community and its members instead of depending on "outsiders" to bring positive development and change. Often, the process of asset based community development includes identifying already present resources, people, and institutions; defining or redefining their roles; and together, creating and implementing actions steps that lead to sustainable community-driven changes. Condon worked to help schools and youth serving agencies to introduce this approach to their learning communities.

Conference organizers explain, "The 2009 National Conference on Volunteering and Service, June 22-24 in San Francisco, was the world's largest gathering of volunteer leaders from the nonprofit, government and corporate sectors. Co-convened by the Corporation for National and Community Service and Points of Light Institute, the hallmark event was a true demonstration of Civic. Energy. Generation. The 2009 conference far exceeded attendance goals and inspired all."

"Graduate Profile" - Continued from Page 6

Those years have been good ones, too, from the sound of it. After graduating, Brianna took a road trip: "I went on a two-month road trip by myself a year after I graduated. I saw an organ donation from a 26-year-old woman. To see the human body fully function and then be able to give life to so many other people was amazing." About four years ago Brianna took another trip with old friends from Eagle Rock. The trip finished in California, and she liked it so much she has stayed there since. "Eagle Rock is a true family. I still keep in touch with a lot of [people from ERS]."

Today Brianna is working at Stanford Hospital in Palo Alto, California as an Emergency Room Technician. She is also taking classes in nursing school to complete her RN, an idea she told me she got while at Eagle Rock. As the hospital is a research hospital for Stanford University, Brianna says there is always research going on around her and there is always something new to learn.

Congratulations on everything, from the Eagle Rock community to Brianna. From lamb hearts to nursing at a top hospital, Brianna is a model to all our graduates for what great journeys lie ahead!

EAGLE ROCK'S IMPACT ON BIG PICTURE LEARNING

*by David Cass, advisor at Liberty Big Picture in Providence, Rhode Island
who visited Eagle Rock's Professional Development Center in Early June, 2009.*



This past week I had pleasure of attending a conference at the Eagle Rock School in Estes Park, Colorado. The conference was organized and facilitated by Michael Soguero, who also happens to be the founder of the Bronx Guild. Michael brought Big Picture folks from Highline Big Picture High School (SeaTac, WA), Mapleton Early College (Thornton, CO), Bronx Guild (New York), Liberty Big Picture (Providence, Rhode Island) and Newport Big Picture (Rhode Island) to pursue the answer to one central question: What is it that leads to great, academically rich, Learning Through Internship/Interest (LTI) projects, and how can we repeat those successes?

True to Michael's belief in an asset-based approach – starting from our successes – we used a set of protocols from National School Reform Faculty to test a model of applying critical friends groups to Big Picture work. We broke into small groups with members from other BP schools to share examples of great LTI projects, searching for commonalities. The projects shared much in common; however, I noticed one interesting thing amongst the three exemplary projects—each project was created with varying levels of collaboration between students. The first exemplary LTI project was a MySpace page created for a nonprofit working with young mothers, and the student who created the project got the idea from a classmate and friend with a similar LTI project for another organization. The second LTI project was a music production business created in tandem between two students. Finally, I presented my student's project, a youth resource guide for young people in Department of Children Youth and Families care, which was created in collaboration with other Met students and youth at her internship.

This got me thinking: How many of our students produce LTI projects in a bubble consisting of the student, mentor and advisor? Wouldn't they benefit from having the feedback and support of other students way before the exhibition? What if students with similar internships, and interests, were given the opportunity to build relationships and, in turn, build their LTI projects?

Interest-Cluster Groups

There are 120 students at Liberty, all working on their own LTI projects. While they benefit from the feedback of their advisory mates, each student works on a project for different LTI's in sometimes very different interest areas. While there may be a couple students within an advisory who share the same career interest, the vast majority of their like-minded peers are scattered across the school (and across campus). The solution is to have weekly interest-cluster groups (we're still working on the language), where Liberty students with similar interests and LTI's (i.e. education, culinary, arts) can come together to get feedback on LTI projects.

After examining the LTI projects in our small groups, we all broke into our school teams to collaboratively develop a plan for our schools. I shared the idea with Arthur [Baraf], and he added his own take, adding to and refining it, and then we ran with it, brainstorming all the possibilities: Students sharing, critiquing, and building upon LTI projects; mentors and guest speakers in the field sharing their knowledge and experience with the group; LTI's being passed down; even field trips to colleges specializing in their career field. There are so many possibilities. Above all else, the student relationships are what will drive the group. It will be student-centered to the point where they practically run it entirely.

For more information about Big Picture Learning Schools visit www.bigpicture.org



PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT CENTER ATTENDS SUMMER INSTITUTE

by Dan Condon, Associate Director of
Professional Development

This past July, Professional Development Center staff embarked on a week long journey to Providence, Rhode Island to exchange practice and theory with other educators from around the country at the annual Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) *Summer Institute*. Throughout the week, many institutions, schools, staff and students presented workshops and presentations on practices that they have incorporated into their daily routines. The theme of *Summer Institute* was 'Principles and Practices for Equity and Achievement'. As this is the 25th anniversary of CES it was particularly fitting to hold the institute at the birthplace of the Coalition of Essential Schools near Brown University.

The Director and Associate Director of the Professional Development Center, Michael Soguero and Dan Condon respectively, capitalized on the opportunity to facilitate two three-hour workshops and two one-hour Equity Inquiry Groups.

First Eagle Rock presented *Making Change Stick: Restorative Justice Case Study*. During the three-hour delivery, participants explored what it takes to make change stick?

Participants were invited 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. Participants gained an understanding of how to implement any change process. Educators left with stories, energy and practical tools as they returned to their school.

Later in the week Soguero and Condon presented *Creating a Tone of Decency & Trust - working with students who find success elusive*. Educators pondered how schools create a tone of decency and trust with students who have not experienced decency and trust in previous educational experiences. Using Eagle Rock as a lens for the Essential Visions DVD & Toolkit (winner of the Aegis Award for Best Educational DVD & Finalist for the Distinguished Achievement Award, presented by the Association of Educational Publishers) participants learned how to transform challenging classroom and school settings into trusting and decent learning communities. Educators also learned to approach school community building by focusing on the skills, strengths, resources

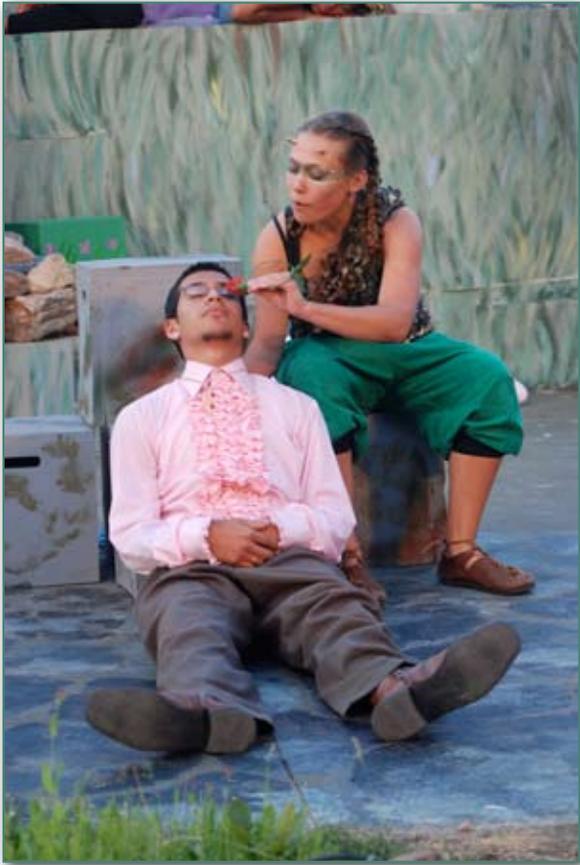
and assets already available to the community and its members instead of depending on "outsiders" to bring positive development and change. Often, the process of asset based community development includes identifying already present resources, people, and institutions; defining or redefining their roles; and together, creating and implementing actions steps that lead to sustainable community-driven changes. Michael and Dan worked to help schools introduce this approach to their school communities.

The ERS staff also worked with their CES mentee schools: Odyssey – The Essential School in SeaTac, Washington and Skyview Academy in Thornton, Colorado.

The CES Summer Institute is a smaller version of The CES Fall Forum. The Fall Forum, which invites many more participants from all over the country and world, will occur this November in New Orleans, LA. Please visit essentialschools.org for more information on the workshops offered during the Summer Institute as well as additional resources regarding the Fall Forum.

A MIDSUMMER NIGHT'S DREAM DESCENDS UPON EAGLE ROCK

by Liz Berliant, Former Public Allies Teaching Fellow in Music



This past August, Eagle Rock School proudly presented a production of William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. The cast took the audience into the mischievous world of the fairies and swept them up in the dream. Music Instructional Specialist, Jon Borodach, and Public Allies Teaching Fellow in Music, Liz Berliant, teamed up with Public Allies Fellow in the Professional Development Center, Carter Cox, who has had previous experience directing school plays, to head up the all-summer production.

A Midsummer Night's Dream is a classic Shakespeare comedy complete with love triangles, mistaken identity, fairies, goblins and magical mischief. The play begins in Athens, where Hermia (Cara Burns) is scolded by her father because she will not marry the man he has chosen for her. Upset, Hermia and her lover, Lysander (Hernando Martinez), flee to the forest to be together. In the forest, the fairies, King Oberon (Omar Knight) and his helper, Puck (Povi Chidester), cause chaos by anointing the lover's eyes with magic. In the trees, the fairies watch the happenings of the forest and in the end, turn all that was wrong, right again. The lovers awake in a haze to find love, although unsure of what was a dream and was a reality.

During the last ten weeks, fifteen students worked hard to memorize lines, block their scenes, and learn how to interact with each other on stage. Students created and developed their character and can now speak and understand Shakespearean English. Robin Harrell, a 16-year-old student from Chicago,

played Helena in the play this summer. She explained, "I've loved finding out what the words and phrases have meant. Now with a better understanding of the text, I can interpret other parts of the play without being in that scene."

The same students also worked as the crew of the production gaining experience with costumes, scenery design, painting, make-up and musical aspects of the play. They worked hard with Service Learning Instructional Specialist, John Guffey, and Art Instructional Specialist, Cindy Elkins, to build and paint the set and stage to set the ambiance. In the end, John designed and constructed a layered mountain that gave the students a place to climb on and gave depth to the stage. Cindy spent time in the early morning and in class painting the backdrops and the mountain. It blended perfectly with the natural beauty of the campus.

A class designated to set building met during the first five week. Melvina Walker-Moore, an 18 year-old student from Chicago, Illinois, who not only acted in the play, but worked in the set-building class described her experience in this way, "We first read and analyzed

the play so that we could come up with an image of how we felt the set should look. We then made sure what we wanted for the set was realistic, worked on scaling it, and also worked on the colors."

Students collaborated with Public Allies Fellow in Art, Katie Leonard, to design the costumes. They combed through the archived costumes in the Human Performance Center to create a look for each character. "I connected with my inner elf to craft low-budget masterpieces of silk flowers, ribbon and tulle for each of the fairies," Katie said.

The cast performed the play three times: twice under pristine night skies and once as a matinee. Each performance gained energy as the cast felt comfortable in front of an audience and on stage. The inspired set design, costumes, and music choices combined with the students' hard work on their acting culminated in a great experience for both the cast and the audience.

FIGHTING FOR FAIR FOOD! CONSCIOUSNESS + COMMITMENT = CHANGE

by Berta Guillen, Instructional Specialist in Societies and Culture

In the short span of five weeks, Chef Instructor, Tim Phelps and former Public Allies Teaching Fellow in Societies & Cultures, Berta Guillen, took four students on a journey through the lives of farm workers. Beginning with first legal immigration agreement with Mexico, the Bracero Program (1942-1964), students learned about this workforce that sustained the American agriculture during World War II. Through video and photographic documentaries, they also discovered the conditions of Mexicans in their own country that made the job offer appealing and later the conditions of life as a farm worker in the 40's and 50's in the United States. For most of the students, their initial reaction was one of anger and disbelief at the treatment these workers received. Yet, there would be one student who would point out the obvious, "But they still get paid and it's better than life in Mexico."

Students shifted from investigating of the impacts of Mexican migration during the Bracero Program to the effect the North American Free Trade Agreement has on current immigration and farming practices. They looked closely at the actual agreement and found parallels with the Bracero Agreement.

So ensued a debate that would permeate the remainder of the course: Were these agreements and the life of a farm worker, an opportunity or exploitation? As stu-



dents grappled with a little known part of American labor history and modern legislation, the instructors introduced an unfamiliar term: Fair food.

"How can food be fair?," they asked. "I've heard of fair trade, they'd say, but fair food?" Tim explained that Eagle Rock's own philosophy in Food Services was based on this idea. He re-introduced the terms that all students learn when they first enter Eagle Rock School. This philosophy states that our food should be ethical, sustainable, local and seasonal. Throughout the course, they would learn first-hand the meaning of local, seasonal and sustainable fruits and vegetables by volunteering at Stonebridge Farms once a week. The remainder of the course was focused on creating awareness around the need for ethical food. In other words, food that is grown, harvested and sold in a manner that respects and values the work of those responsible for its production.

Increasing Consciousness

In the farming community of Immokalee, Florida, immigrants from Haiti and Mexico work side by side picking nearly 80% of this country's tomatoes. The majority of the tomatoes harvested and are in turn sold to suppliers of the largest fast food chains in the nation. Chipotle, Taco

Bell, Burger King and other chains, purchase tomatoes from suppliers to provide our nation with fast, cheap food. Most students couldn't deny the benefits of having access to a cheap and filling Gordita's or a Big Mac. Their moral and food values were challenged, however, when faced with the gripping realities of life for those same immigrants on a farm in Immokalee.

So began the process of *concretization* for these Eagle Rock students, which Lucas Benitez, an organizer with the Coalition of Immokalee Workers, describes as the process of raising awareness or consciousness. They learned how immigrants and natives organized themselves to demand a higher piece-rate per bucket of tomatoes in this region. Furthermore, to demand quality housing, rest and meal breaks, and a working environment free from harassment. Furthermore, organizers were uncovering cases of documented slavery and with the

ONE MORE GRADUATE TAKES FLIGHT

by Carter Cox, former Public Allies Fellow in Professional Development

On August 7th Eagle Rock School said farewell to another graduate, moving on into the world. As the sole graduate of the trimester, Adrienne Bovee spent the summer with the community's spotlight squared directly on her, and it was my pleasure to spend some one-on-one time talking with her about her experience.

"I know I'm ready to leave Eagle Rock because it doesn't destroy me to be here anymore," Adrienne told me. My first reaction was to laugh, but my next was to think that was about as wise a thing as I had ever heard a student say.

Adrienne was born in Seattle, Washington, but she grew up in Eugene, Oregon. She went to public schools through 10th grade, but "I loathed it and my entire life that had anything to do with school. I didn't know how to be in public school and be happy," she said. As we sat at dinner, Adrienne laughed as she came up with metaphorical descriptors for public school up to and including "the cattle farm" and "the robot programming technical institute." In other words, she felt public school lacked a certain individuality in its philosophy. She told me, "Robert [Burkhardt] said, when I was a prospective student, that 'at Eagle Rock we conform to you,' in terms of your educational needs... in the classroom I think that's very true." She told me that in public school she struggled with feeling like she had no control over her education. "I wanted to learn so much but I felt like a lot of it wasn't addressed in public school, or I had no way to relate to it. It took Eagle Rock for me to realize that I need to direct my own education no matter where I am."



When asked about things she will remember from Eagle Rock, Adrienne had an eclectic list: She will miss good times with Aspen House like family vacations, intramurals, pizza-making, otter pops, playing the ukulele, and building and enjoying Aspen's deck. Adrienne has had some amazing opportunities in her time at Eagle Rock including trips to the Arctic, New Orleans, and Montana. This trimester she has been working in an internship for the Rocky Mountain National

Park. She said she will miss "all the things I used to hate and learned to love, most notably, Kitchen Patrol," and she will miss some everyday things like gathering and community meetings.

Adrienne feels she has grown quite a bit in her time at Eagle Rock. Before ERS she said she was cynical, judgmental, individualist, egotistical, pessimistic, valueless, and confused. She told me that when she first came to the school, she used to resist community systems and norms, because she felt like it was outside her, irrelevant, and therefore a source of antagonism in her life. She realized something, though: "It's so hypocritical to be critical of those systems and yet benefit from them," she told me. Describing herself now, Adrienne said she is happy, optimistic, able to build positive relationships with people different from herself, and participate in her community.

Adrienne's plans for the future include "a tree house, a falcon, a fly-rod, and a hammock; lots of reading, an attempt at a college degree, an MTV reality show made about Cherie and me, a trip to Disney World, seasonal positions in the National Park Service, Ultimate Frisbee and general adventuring." She begins classes at the University of Vermont in September and says she is looking forward to a life.

“Professional Development Strategy” - Continued from Page 1

dropping out of schools around the country. Thousands of visitors over the years have come to observe what we do and apply new thinking back home. The school also serves as a laboratory for our own improvement projects. Articles that have been published in Eagle Eyes told the story of our struggle with discipline issues and separating students. Two years worth of work on Restorative Justice not only reduced our separation rate to one-eighth of what it was formerly, but has also served as a case study we can present to other schools to support them in addressing student culture.

Second, in the spirit of philanthropy we offer our services for little to no cost. The hosting we do at the school as well as consulting and presenting we do in our travels does not present a burden on poor school budgets. In these days when the national economy has forced school districts to freeze travel budgets, we are still able to come to them and support them in meeting their organizational goals.

Third, we take an asset-based approach as opposed to an expert model characteristic of many other high-priced organizations. Most organizations that are designed to help schools charge thousands of dollars for providing materials and expertise. Those organizations do not adapt their approach to the context of the schools they are working with. Our Professional Development Center spends significant hours observing and interviewing the staff at the schools we work with. We then adapt our approach to working with the strengths and assets that already exist at the school.

Finally, we are action-oriented. We pay strict attention to turning insights of visiting educators into actions. This is in contrast to focusing exclusively on outcomes. Instead of simply saying, “you need to

develop strong relationships with your students,” we conduct workshops that model specific actions to take that would lead to stronger relationships. In order to increase the chances that these actions will take place, we work with selected schools on follow up coaching.

Since it is difficult to have a national effect by working one on one with single schools, we have established relationships with larger organizations that can bring many schools together. That strategy has led to our work with the Coalition of Essential Schools, Big Picture Learning, New Mexico Building Education Congress and Envisions Schools. Collectively these organizations represent hundreds of schools that are engaged in missions similar to Eagle Rock School: to graduate students who have previously been disengaged in their schooling experience.

As this article is being written, a new Envisions school to be located in Denver, Colorado is engaged in week long professional development here at our Professional Development Center. Next week, we will provide a two-day principal training at Big Picture’s annual gathering of principals from around the country. Through the school year we have a multi-stage work plan with various Coalition schools we mentor. This work plan combines visits to schools, work at Eagle Rock and working together at conferences. Finally, we have just completed a week long study of a project in New Mexico to launch a network of charter schools connected to the building industry. This will be followed up by a visit to Eagle Rock in October 2009 by the founding team of the New Mexico schools.

If you are interested in engaging with the Professional Development Center please visit www.eaglerockschool.org/pdc

“Serving New Mexico” - Continued from Page 4

with members of David’s family to refurbish the structure, providing it with new inner-walls and a water drainage system. Through the blazing sun, students worked hard and finished the refurbishment of the structure in time to see Blake and Jose return from their quest.

In a celebratory Inipi and gift ceremony, students shared prayers and thoughts about their week. Eagle Rock students echoed their feelings in a statement by fellow first time participant Sarah Rosenbloom. Sarah stated: “It was great to get to know the members of the small community. Basic truths are often forgotten during day-to-day living, but nature gives us context to relate and be with one another.” With these feelings of inspiration, connectedness and family, students returned to Eagle Rock with a renewed understanding of one another and their own community experience.

A spiritual leader / teacher, David Young is a former adjunct professor of Naropa University located in Boulder, CO. While living in Boulder, David is involved in many things including the spiritual guidance of young people, several groups as well as singing in a group called Tzotzollin. David is also currently working on publishing a book about his life and its teachings.

"Fair Food" - Continued from Page 11

help of pro-bono lawyers, bringing these cases before the Department of Justice.

The student response went from sadness to anger fairly quickly. With this renewed energy and passion, our students were eager to tell others what they learned and share their knowledge with the outside community. Fortunately, they had many opportunities to do so.

As mentioned, the students volunteered weekly at Stonebridge Farm in Lyons, Colorado. They learned to discern spinach from lettuce and tomatoes from turnips. Through discussion with Farmer John, they learned why certain flowers bring good bugs when planted next to the tomatoes and why it's important to pick spinach by a certain time of the month. For some students, this was the first time they picked the same food that would be at Eagle Rock's salad bar later that day. The work was never strenuous, water and bathroom breaks were encouraged and usually our spirits were light after a one-hour and a half sweat from the sun. We would return to school tired but not nearly as tired as those workers we talked about in Immokalee. For this, we were all grateful and at the same time more concerned for the lives of those workers.

In an effort to gain more first-hand, personal accounts of life as a farm worker, a group of students from the Migrant Education Program in Greeley, CO visited Eagle Rock. During this exchange, three students shared their experiences as immigrants from Mexico, working on onion fields in Colorado and their desires to never return to such work. Eagle Rock students asked them questions about NAFTA

and whether or not they were aware of the Bracero Program. Without much prompting, students shared their new knowledge, exchanged opinions, and eventually spoke to each other about partying, clothes and dating. It was an incredible dialogue to witness.

Yet, the quest for deeper discussion and life stories would not stop here. One week later, through a contact from the Migrant Education Program, Tim and Berta were driving students to a farm in Fort Lupton. With poor directions but great enthusiasm, we located the farm. A dusty road leading to a whitewashed building was where we parked our cars and stepped into the greatest moment of our class. Nearly 18 male workers, all from Mexico, all undocumented, were making breakfast in a long kitchen. No one told them we would be arriving nor was the contact present. So, we improvised. We asked permission to stay and asked whether or not we could talk to them about their lives as farm workers. Most agreed but some slipped away into the sleeping area which looked very similar to the bunkhouses we had seen in photographs from the Bracero era.

Demonstrating Commitment

Eagle Rock students Nicole, Vanessa, Cynthia and Tyler ensued a dialogue with these men that covered everything from their family life in Mexico, past occupations, treatment by the current employer and their future goals. Students once again asked them if they knew anything about the Bracero Program, effects of NAFTA on farmers across borders and again, shared their passion and knowledge with these workers. Furthermore,

they shared the stories and lives of the workers in Immokalee, who unlike these workers, were not given as many amenities or rights. At about lunchtime, Tim whipped out bags of sandwich meat, bread, chips and fruit galore to share. The atmosphere changed completely with the presence of good food and together we shared a meal and continued discussing life and learning.

Before leaving the farm that day, the workers thanked us for having taught them so much. At first they thought we had a hidden agenda but when they realized that we were only interested in hearing their stories and engaging in dialogue, they felt we had come to teach them. The students shined that day, demonstrating what they knew and a renewed passion for how this knowledge could affect real lives. For a few hours, the students and instructors were committed to sharing this knowledge and this new awareness. We would like to believe that we created a change in the awareness of those workers as well.

Change Within

The Coalition of Immokalee Workers (CIW) has a philosophy for change, which is that consciousness plus commitment can lead to change. During this course, students built their knowledge, raised their awareness of where their food comes from, demonstrated this knowledge and were committed to the power this information could have on others. Two weeks after the course ended, their enthusiasm and commitment remained as they delivered their service learning presentation to the Estes Park community.