



# EAGLE EYES

Volume 13, Number 2

News From Summer 2005 Trimester

## STUDENTS AND STAFF PRESENT AT SUMMER INSTITUTE

*by Dan Condon, Acting Director  
of Professional Development*

Eagle Rock students Coral Ann Schmid and Vanessa Harvey joined Philbert Smith, Director of Students; Jeff Liddle, Director of Curriculum and Dan Condon, Acting Director of Professional Development to the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) Summer Institute held at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington this past July. We joined over 250 teachers, school administrators, students and parents at the Institute. In the tradition of CES, an essential question served to frame the work throughout the week: How do we design and continuously improve schools that support powerful instruction and success for all students?

*...See Students & Staff - Page 11*



## EAGLE ROCK FEATURED ON CHANGLAB

*by Dan Condon, Acting Director of  
Professional Development*



Eagle Rock School & Professional Development Center was recently added as a mentor school resource to

the innovative and interactive ChangeLab website. CES ChangeLab is a program of CES National, the national office of the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES).

The goal of CES ChangeLab is to provide educators with behind-the-scenes access to the best practices, tools, and strategies of some of the most effective schools in the country, the CES Mentor Schools. This site aims to help educators envision what their school could be, provide easily accessible, useable resources for teachers and principals to put into practice in their own schools and classrooms, and allow educators across the country and around the world to interact on pertinent educational issues.

ChangeLab offers multimedia examples of curriculum and professional development materials, how-we-did-it

lessons and ideas, question-and-answer opportunities with veteran CES teachers and administrators, and other such resources. Intended for educators, the CES ChangeLab will help users get directly to the inspiration and answers they need, with ways to search for resources by area of interest or by school. For example, users could search for lots of ideas about how to structure off-campus internships, or for sample budgets and schedules from a given mentor school.

Users interact with CES ChangeLab resources in a number of ways: through evaluating and commenting on the Mentor Schools' resources, through scheduled panels with educators from the featured schools, and through more general online discussions.

People working to create new or restructure existing schools will be able to find the keys to whole-school change that will powerfully and positively affect their choices and direction.

Shilpa Sood, Director of Interactive Design for CES explains, "ChangeLab finally gives small schools tangible resources to improve their practice."

To visit ChangeLab direct your web browser to [http://www.ceschanglab.org/cs/clpub/view/ces\\_sp/555](http://www.ceschanglab.org/cs/clpub/view/ces_sp/555)

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**PUBLIC ALLIES FELLOWS  
AND STAFF MOVE ON** \_\_\_\_\_

*by Margrette Castro, Public Allies  
Teaching Fellowship Director*

*As we prepare for our new group of  
Public Allies Fellows' who arrive on August  
28, the 2004-2005 Fellows bid farewell to  
Eagle Rock.*

**Andrew Barron**, Language Arts and Literature Fellow, had many successes including teaching Literature Circles for the first time. Andrew plans to continue teaching in the public schools and will take with him many tools. For the next year, Andrew will be in Buenos Aires, Argentina with the Presbyterian Church Mission working at a boys' home.

**Sarah Ballard**, Visual Arts Fellow, hopes to continue with Art and become an Art Therapist. During her year long Fellowship Program, Sarah used her Professional Development Fund to attend a conference on Art Therapy and would like to continue using art to encourage individuals to express themselves.

**Adrienne Kovacik**, Science Fellow, found her passion in teaching science. Adrienne had many successes in developing students' passion for science, including supporting a student-initiated group, Quantum Quartet, which explored deeper into science through books, films, and discussions. Adrienne hopes to teach high school science and pursue her Master's in Education.

**Donnie Adams**, Social Studies Fellow, will move into the Instructional Specialist position in ER-37. Donnie, with his extensive experience at Eagle Rock as graduate and Fellow, make him a valuable addition to the Instructional Specialist team. Donnie has great passions in teaching and has been involved in many aspects of the ERS community, which include developing the new POL standards, supporting the gender meetings, and being part of the diversity planning team.

**Chase Orton**, Math Fellow, came to ERS with several years teaching experience, and leaves with a greater passion for experiential teaching and school culture devel-

opment. Initially, Chase plans to work the next few months in Oregon and Wyoming. Beginning next year, Chase plans to continue his passion in education by teaching and working with teachers in school curriculum and professional development.

**Beth Ellis**, Learning Resource Center Fellow, gave much to the ERS community, in both the Learning Resource Center and directly in the classroom co-teaching Graphic Design and Mountain Biking. Beth will continue to work with ERS on small projects while she pursues positions with the Rocky Mountain National Park.

**Matt Dexheimer**, Service Learning Fellow, had many successes working with the department and students making service



learning a greater part of the curriculum. Matt co-taught classes that incorporated service into the curriculum. Matt plans to return to school next fall to receive his Master's in Counseling. Matt will take the next month off to travel and visit friends and family before he heads to Wyoming to become a ski instructor for the season.

**Marya Washburn**, Foreign Language Fellow, had one of her greatest successes in working with Russ Rendon, her Instructional Specialist, in planning and implementing the Guatemala class. Marya co-led a group of students to Guatemala to teach, do service, and learn about Guatemala and its people and culture. Marya will be starting her new position in Maine doing Wilderness Therapy a week after she finishes at Eagle Rock.

**Jessica Buboltz**, Outdoor Education Fellow, will be traveling the next few weeks

...See Public Allies Fellows - Page 11

## FIVE MORE GRADUATES FROM EAGLE ROCK

*by Kristina Lobo, former  
Public Allies Fellow in  
Professional Development*

Katherine Manzanaras, Kelly Morris, José Orellana, Charles Reeve, and Diana Torres graduated from Eagle Rock on August 5, 2005, bringing the total number of graduates to 105.

Born in Argentina and raised in Honduras and Houston, **Katherine Manzanaras** came in ER-22 (Fall 2000).



She credits Eagle Rock with helping her find her own voice, become a leader, and take her learning into her own hands. Katherine is particularly proud of the major research project she completed on bilingual education, the many social events she organized here, and the considerable effort she invested in sports and physical fitness. Katherine only has a couple of weeks to rest before she starts at Pine Manor College in Massachusetts, where she plans on studying international law and cognitive psychology.

**Kelly Morris** came in ER-22 (Fall 2000) from Windsor, Colorado. While at Eagle Rock she was especially passionate about art, poetry, theater, playing music, and finding needs and filling them. Kelly

says her time here helped her develop skills in research, writing, and building and mending relationships. She intends to get a job in Greeley, Colorado, move out on her own, and eventually enroll in art school and work in New York City.

**José Orellana** entered Eagle Rock in ER-28 (Fall 2002) from Houston, Texas. During his time here he was particularly passionate about science and history, outdoor and athletic activities, cooking, and teaching and performing Latin dance. In the past year José was selected by Eagle Rock to keynote a national education conference in Orlando, Florida, to learn about our nation's government in Washington DC, and to teach and serve in Guatemala. He plans to travel and work for a few months and then to start culinary school in Austin, Texas.

Having grown up in varied places including Minnesota, Germany, and Colorado, **Charles Reeve** came in ER-26 (Winter 2002). He considers his most significant growth during his time at Eagle Rock to be in learning the importance of applying himself and in establishing a daily routine that keeps him focused and successful. Charles is headed to Alaska, where he aims to split his time between waiting tables, life guarding, and enjoying himself for a while before attending a university to study engineering.

Also from Houston, **Diana Torres** came in ER-25 (Fall 2001). She says the most important thing she learned here was to take control of her own learning and life. Some highlights of Diana's time at Eagle Rock include going to Italy during ER-27 (Summer 2002) to do a language / study abroad program, volunteering her time as a tutor and mentor for kids in Estes Park, and covering local events as an intern with the Estes Park News. She will be moving to Austin, Texas and pursuing a one-year college photography course, after which she hopes to move to Seattle to pursue a career in photojournalism.

**Mark Dougherty**  
*Sous Chef*

**Cynthia Elkins**  
*Arts*

**Eric Farmer**  
*Language and Literature*

**Jacques Fournet**  
*Wilderness & Outdoors  
Education*

**Jimmy Frickey**  
*Mathematics*

**Mike Glowacki**  
*Head Cook*

**Richard Gordon**  
*Learning Resources  
and Information*

**John Guffy**  
*Service*

**Dick Herb**  
*Director of Operations*

**Sheri Jackson**  
*Business Administration  
Specialist*

**Janet Johnson**  
*Science*

**Janice Lee**  
*Registrar*

**Jeff Liddle**  
*Director of Curriculum*

**Karolee McLaughlin**  
*Music and Performance*

**Jen Morine**  
*Human Performance*

**L'Tanya Perkins**  
*Admissions Associate*

**Tim Phelps**  
*Chef Instructor*

**Scott Rashid**  
*Second Chef*

**Russ Rendon**  
*Spanish*

**Anna Ridder**  
*Wilderness &  
Outdoor Education*

**Philbert Smith**  
*Director of Students*

**Terry Tierney**  
*Assistant Facilities*

**Lan To**  
*Life After Eagle Rock*

**Jesse Tovar**  
*Health and Wellness  
Counselor*

## FIRST INTERNATIONAL TRIP EXPLORES SAN ANDRÉS, GUATEMALA

*by Marya Washburn, former Public  
Allies Fellow in Foreign Language*

Spider monkeys, ancient Mayan ruins, pan dulce, and mixing cement. All of this, and more, were what five Eagle Rock students and two instructors got to experience the first five weeks of this trimester as their class embarked on a service and Spanish learning trip to San Andrés, Guatemala. The students, Ana Alarid, Evan Wells, José Orellana, Kate Bowen and Tah'nee Coleman, along with Instructional Specialist Russell Rendón and myself, Public Allies Fellow Marya Washburn, spent over two weeks living and learning in the Petén region of Guatemala. The trip lasted from May 24<sup>th</sup> to June 8<sup>th</sup>, and the learning continues.

The entire class began meeting and planning for the trip last trimester, in ER-35. During our weekly meetings we spent time getting to know each other, practicing our Spanish, and applying for our passports. By the time ER-36 rolled around, with a few more lessons about the history and culture of Guatemala and the Spanish language under our belt, we set off for San Andrés, Guatemala.

After three plane flights and a bumpy mini-bus later, we arrived, tired but excited, in San Andrés, Guatemala. San Andrés is a small town located on Lago Petén Itza in the Petén region of Guatemala, the northernmost region of the country. Petén is known for its many Mayan ruin sites as well as its jungle-like humidity and easy going people. In San Andrés each student was placed with their host-family, where they would be living for the next two weeks. We also met our San Andrés contact, Mateo, who ran the local volunteer program called Volunteer Petén. We would be working with him for the next two weeks.

Our days in San Andrés revolved around the service that we did for the community through Mateo. Every morning we woke at seven in the morning in order to make it to our own version of morning gathering by eight o'clock. After morning gathering and a Spanish lesson taught to us by Jose and Kate, the students divided up to teach English or start working on our main service project, building a new schoolroom. After the English lessons we all reconvened at El Norte and began to work on creating a wall and floors for a new kindergarten classroom, finishing the hanging of a fence around the school's perimeter, and constructing a water tank so the school could have flushing toilets and running water all day instead of sometimes only until nine in the morning.

After a few hours of hard work in the morning we would all return to our homes for lunch and a much deserved siesta and swim in the lake, waiting out the hottest part of the day. By two or three o'clock in the afternoon

we would be back at the El Norte School, working hard once again for a few more hours until night came, and with that, the knowledge that we had done a good day's work. We spent our evenings with our host families or exploring the town, sometimes swinging by the local library run by Mateo to catch a movie or at a store to have some cold drinks and sweet bread, pan dulce.

As the first international trip that Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center has ever embarked on, we are very proud of how successful the trip was and how much we each got out of it. There is no way we will forget our last day in San Andrés, as the El Norte School sang us the Guatemalan national anthem and gave us certificates of appreciation and a wooden plaque which now hangs proudly in the Professional Development Center. The school and the town were in no doubt touched by our service to the community and all that we did, and we were, in turn, touched by their thankfulness and willingness to let us enter their lives, even if it was only for a short time. We hope to explore longer and even more successful trips of Eagle Rock to San Andrés in the years to come, and if you ever find yourself in San Andrés, remember to say hi to everyone for us, and don't forget to try the pan dulce.



Eagle Rock School & Professional Development Center mourns the passing and celebrates the lives of Eagle Rock School graduates Billy Henninger and Emily Peterson.

**BILLY HENNINGER (ER-1)**  
10/19/76 – 5/10/05

**EMILY PETERSON (ER-12)**  
10/6/81 – 7/2/05

## FROM STUDENT TO TEACHING FELLOW TO INSTRUCTIONAL SPECIALIST

*by Mohammed Elgazzar,  
former Society & Cultures  
Instructional Specialist*

Many of the instructors and administrators at Eagle Rock School are highly invested in the lives of the students they work with and in tune with the social, academic, and personal growth of the organization at large. Few staff members, however, have as intimate a connection with the school as Donnie Vincent Adams. Eagle Rock School is proud to welcome Donnie as the new Societies and Cultures Instructional Specialist.

Donnie's story begins in a middle class neighborhood of Chicago, Illinois, where he was enrolled as a student in a Catholic middle school. It was there, at a relatively early age, that he became conscious of who he was: a young African-American male surrounded by classmates and teachers that did not know how to accept him. His grades weren't the problem; it was the health of his social life that he and his family recognized as a concern.

Approximately seven years ago Donnie embarked on the twenty-five day wilderness trip designed to help him understand what forces were acting on him, internally and externally. He successfully became a student of the Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center.

It was clear from the start that Donnie's heart was intent on achieving one major goal: graduation. The first and last thing he saw everyday was his Individualized Learning Plan;

posted beneath his bunkmate's bed. He would gaze hopefully at all the graduation requirements that were slowly met, box-by-box. His focus and attention yielded magnificent results. In the matter of only six trimesters, Donnie outfitted himself in a teal and purple robe with tassels on his cap. He entered stage right empty-handed and exited stage left with the integrity and power of the Eagle Rock Diploma.

Philbert Smith, Eagle Rock's Director of Students, drove Donnie to Boulder, Colorado, where he would lose himself in the parties and studies of the University of Colorado –

Boulder. Four years later, once again, Donnie outfitted himself in another graduation robe. This time, it was black with gold trim and in his hand: a Bachelor of Arts degree in History.

One year ago, Donnie Adams joined the Public

Allies-Eagle Rock program. His position was the Societies and Cultures Fellow. Throughout the year, he was to work closely with his Instructional Specialist and learn the ropes of teaching and facilitation. The department has shifted its focus and Donnie helped spur the transition. It moved from a department that focused on the timeline of leaders, battles, and conquests to a department that validated the experiences and struggles of the young and placed them in the larger contexts of social movements, people working together, and justice. This type of transition could have only been made possible by the passion that Donnie brought.

Donnie's enthusiasm, amiability, and charisma make him easy and

fun to work with for both students and staff members. Furthermore, his passion, intelligence, and innovative mind-set make him the facilitator of learning for this generation. He communicates with students with a wide-spectrum of styles. Sometimes Donnie will be the compassionate leader and other times the frank and direct bearer of bad news. The experiences that he shares with the students make him memorable and thought provoking. Young people at Eagle Rock School need him.

Students at the school are not the only ones who need Donnie to be himself. The overall life and culture of the school benefit greatly from his presence as well. Donnie has taken aggressive steps to reform the Presentation of Learning practices at Eagle Rock School. He worked, and continues to work, closely with other staff members to change presentations from lists of activities to accurate articulations of the specific higher and transferable concepts that students are learning throughout their stay at the school. He has regularly organized social events for the students and has brought a strong sense of music back to the school, introducing us to different musical styles and tastes on Wednesdays during "Donnie's Discs."

It is no surprise that Donnie was selected to replace Mohammed Elgazzar as the Societies and Cultures Instructional Specialist. Donnie is the first person to extract and serve the school in three unique capacities: Student, Public Allies Fellow, and Instructional Specialist. As a former student, he knows what forms of support and learning he needed. As a Fellow, he learned the hard hours and intricacies of planning, instructing, and assessing a class. As an instructor, he will have the most rounded approach to alternative education, knowing and having dealt directly with the needs of young people. Welcome Aboard Donnie! Congratulations! We Are Proud of You!



## SCHOOLS ACROSS THE COUNTRY

**by Sarah Bertucci  
and Jason Cushner,  
former Eagle Rock staff  
members**

How does an Eagle Rock Honeymoon look for two former staff members? After enjoying our August 28, 2004 wedding where the many Eagle Rockers in attendance sang and did Kitchen Patrol, we spent a year traveling the country to learn from different schools (interspersed with backpacking, Master's work, and a trip to Thailand). We visited schools; talked with students, teachers, and administrators; and sat in on classes. Essential questions around culture, content areas, and critical thinking guided our visits. The experience made for a spectacular learning expedition!

We were inspired by the many different schools dedicated to caring, quality education. One of our initial questions was "How does a school create a strong culture?" We were pleasantly surprised by the number of schools that had wonderful community and by the variety of ways that they created it. Overall, students liked their schools and were proud of them. We believe that finding this level of student satisfaction may be a result of our focusing our visits on small schools, which create such safe environments.

Academically, we saw some outstanding examples

of math and science classrooms in which students were thinking deeply and grappling with complex problems. For example, Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning (RMSEL) was doing a unit on surveys. When one group of students presented their results and conclusions, other students were able to question the results by drawing a bell curve on the board and showing how their small sample size made their results vulnerable to the effects of outliers. The students were able to think critically and apply their statistical knowledge. Similar critical thinking was the norm in a science classroom at the Community High School for Social Justice in the Bronx. Students there were engaged in scientific experiments with the goal of turning waste into energy to grow plants. They composted everything from carrots to Ritz crackers. The semester-long experiments were engaging. They involved important scientific skills like forming and testing hypotheses, and critiquing each other's experiments.

Overall, we were very impressed with the schools and enjoyed sitting in on classes. The largest area of growth that we saw was in pushing students' to think on their own. With such incredible cultures, we felt that many schools could more effectively build on that foundation with challenging, thought-provoking schoolwork such as that mentioned above. It

remains a challenge, especially in math and science, to align classes with an alternative school philosophy.

The challenging circumstances faced by many schools made their success even more remarkable. New York City named 12 schools the "Dirty Dozen" for being the most dangerous and worst performing schools in the city. These schools are now being progressively broken down into small schools. For these school visits, we passed through metal detectors operated by police officers to enter. We then walked up to the Bronx Guild or Bronx Lab School, small schools within the large ones, and entered caring, comfortable environments where the schools are pushing the boundaries of how we view education. Also, in an era of increasing government involvement and regulation of schools, there are many schools pushing to be independent and innovative. We witnessed impressive small-school movements in New York City, Providence, and Denver.

We saw ingenious ways that schools challenged and supported students to grow personally. Jefferson County Open School uses "Walkabouts," which are personally challenging projects developed by each student in six different areas (Adventure, Career Exploration, Creativity, Global Awareness, Logical Inquiry and Practical Skills). One student was traveling to Japan for his adventure walkabout,

while another was studying bipolar disorder as a way of facing childhood fears that arose when her dad was institutionalized with the disease. At RMSEL, students' careers begin with thematic experiential classes called "Expeditions." Then in the students' final year, they design and execute their own independent "Expeditions." One student studied genetics and crime by examining how DNA labs work and researching genetic predisposition towards crime. Another student was studying the physics of snowboarding and traveling to different areas in the world to study snowboarding culture.

Eagle Rock was mentioned all across the country. We even became impromptu consultants for the Hershey School, a private tuition-free school of 1,200 low-income students in Pennsylvania. We spent an hour answering their questions about Eagle Rock's orientation program, which they wanted to use as a model, and we were generously compensated with two pounds of delicious chocolate. Many schools had adopted Presentations of Learning, Gathering, and other components from Eagle Rock. We visited Pioneer School and Bronx Guild, both schools run by former Eagle Rockers. We also spent a week observing classes at Eagle Rock; it was a wonderful experience we never had the opportunity to do while working there.

*...See Schools Across the  
Country - See Page 7*

## LITERATURE CIRCLES: PROMOTING STUDENT CHOICE AND VOICE

by Molly Nichols, former Language Arts and Literature Instructional Specialist

Near the end of Trimester 34, Andrew, the English Fellow, approached me with wide eyes about an idea he had for a literature class. "Lit Circles...Harvey Daniels" he said. "You've got to check them out." I knew I had heard of them. I had just seen Daniels lead a session at the National Council for the Teachers of English Annual Convention. His focus had been on reading strategies; he mentioned Lit Circles, but I didn't really know what they were. Andrew explained that they were, in the words of Daniels, "small, peer-led discussion groups whose members have chosen to read the same piece of literature." "Sounds great, Andrew. Let's do it."

That conversation changed the way we taught literature this year at Eagle Rock. Daniels and his colleagues had been "dazzled by what the kids could do when given choices, time, responsibility, a little guidance, and a workable structure. Our [Daniels'] students were reading lots of good books, thinking deeply about them, writing notes and journal entries, and joining in lively, informed literature discussions." A similar thing happened here.

During ER-35 we taught "Literary Revolutions," a course to study post-colonial literature and theory. In honor of the value of self-determination, students were given the freedom to choose from a selection of short stories, articles, poems, or novels. The instructors "sold" the texts, and the students self-selected into reading groups. They determined their reading schedules, wrote responses to their reading, and discussed the texts together in class. Andrew and I would often be a part of a reading group, not as leaders, but as members of the discussion.

Some students were excited about reading, in ways they had never been before. It wasn't about the teachers standing at the front of the room, telling them what they were going to read, and then driving the content of the

discussion. Andrew and I had no "agenda," just to expose students to post-colonial literature and theory, and in a constructivist manner, see how the students ran with it. We often began class with "mini-lessons" on history, theory, or reading strategies. Then the students had the opportunity to discuss the content they had learned and the texts they had read. They constructed their own meaning; some, for example, saw parallels between a colonized person and a high school student. Students then explored specific issues in depth to pursue credit.

After the success of this class, I decided to offer "Whatever the Heck You Want" where the students would have even more choices. "Choice" was the theme of the class. Students had the opportunity to find whatever texts they wanted, to "sell" to their classmates. With the Literature Circles model they read, responded, and discussed works such as *Live from Death Row* by Mumia Abu-Jamal, *Naked* by David Sedaris, *Lovely Bones* by Alice Sebold, "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman, and "The Guest" by Albert Camus. Again, they selected issues like the death penalty, women's rights, and the colonization of Algeria to pursue credit. Students said they really liked getting a choice about what they read and studied, instead of having it forced upon them. They also enjoyed being exposed to the books their class members had decided to sell.

Giving students ownership over what they read and how they respond is a powerful way for them to see the value in reading literature, learning from it, and applying it to their lives. They can also gain valuable reading comprehension and analysis skills in the process. Steven Maestas "paid more attention to what he was reading." And Dexter Friedman said "I read with a pen in my hand for the first time in my life." After experiencing literature circles, students are in a better place to become life-long learners, motivating themselves to read and critically think, without imposition from a teacher.

Source: Daniels, Harvey. *Literature Circles*. Portland: Stenhouse, 2002.

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*Schools Across the Country - Cont. from Page 6*

We ended up at The Watershed School, an innovative high school committed to service, diversity, and place-based experiential classes. For example, their last Expedition was based around water and the West, studying literature, science, and social issues around the water in the Boulder Area with a project that kept sewage out of the local streams. The head of school visited Eagle Rock many times, and it has been a significant influence. The school is only one year old and still learning the best method to put its philosophy into practice. It is an ideal place for us to apply what we learned at Eagle Rock, from our travels, and with our experience teaching in other schools in creating an extraordinary school.

There are so many exciting things happening in education in the country and to see the impact Eagle Rock is having with many schools. There are some wonderful possibilities for collaboration between Eagle Rock and a variety of other innovative schools. Each school that we visited had much to offer and to learn. We want to offer a huge thank you to all the incredible schools and people that were so generous to us!

## THE 5<sup>TH</sup> REUNION AT THE ROCK BRINGS THE FAMILY TOGETHER AGAIN —

by Lan To, *Life After Eagle Rock*

“Come Unity” was a befitting theme for the fifth reunion at Eagle Rock, June 17-24, 2005. Newer graduates and former students were welcomed into the “old school” Eagle Rock crew. Alumni from all areas challenged the current ERS community with their questions and hopes. Ideas for the role of alumni and the future of the alumni network were discussed and put into action.

Reunions at Eagle Rock can be good for the soul. With the unfortunate passings in our alumni community this summer, many of us reflected on our lives and how we support each other as an Eagle Rock family. This time around we extended the reunion to a week-long experience which coincided with Explore Week. Most Alumni came for the Kick-off Weekend, and some continued their visit into parts or all of the following week, taking Explore Week classes with current students, teaching Explore Week classes, doing service for the Graduate Fund, or just hanging out in the lodge or on the esplanade with some great conversations.

The weekend started with the traditional Welcome Forum in the Hearth. Each former student, graduate, and former staff member sat on the Hearth individually and introduced himself or herself to a relatively new ERS community. Some alums endearingly recalled the last time they sat on the hearth between Robert and Philbert years ago. Alumni then gathered as a group on the Hearth to ask questions of the current student body. “What does it mean to you to be a graduate?” “Why do the houses seem so dirty?” “What are you willing to commit to in this moment?” The energy in the room seemed to heighten and grow deeper as Eagle Rock old and new forged through a conversation we recognized as the essence of

community.

Afterwards, the traditional ice cream sundae bar was set up so that more individual connections could be made over heaps of mint chocolate chip, hot fudge, whipped cream, and cherries. As students headed to their houses for curfew, Alumni were invited to Ed’s Cantina both Friday and Saturday night to continue their reminiscence.

The next morning, the community hiked up to the Sacred Site for the ERS Community Memorial which was a time designated for our collective whole to honor the memory of all Eagle Rockers who have left this world. A psalm was read by Marion Blakeney. A song, “Blackbird,” was sung by Andy Artz, and current student, Sevi Foreman. Cristina Paglinauan shared a beautiful solo. Philbert led us in prayer, and then we all sang “Dona Nobis Pacem” in rounds lead by brass instruments played by Robert, Andy, and former student, Patrick O’riel. There was time afterwards to continue reflections at the Sacred Site and slowly meander down towards campus.

The kitchen staff greeted us with a delicious BBQ lunch on the esplanade. The rest of the day had Community Forums spread throughout: Staying Sober & Drug-free, Planning for Retirement, Cool Experiences for Post-High School Life, What About Math?, The College Connection, and Integrating ERS in Traditional Schools. Attendance was not overwhelming. However, the community soccer game on the Field of

Dreams drew a great crowd. Some others found precious serenity and joy in the lower art room as they created another tile for the HPC walls.

House Reunions began as dinner concluded. Each house had their own ways of welcoming their alumni. Some houses were very loud and proud (Piñon had the largest contingent of graduates). Open Mic started off with a set from the Eagle Rock a capella group, highlighting graduates Philip O’Mara and Dominique Millett who rejoined us



for the evening. Current student, Peter Herlihy, also debuted his solo “So Much In Love” for the first time. Current community members and alumni gathered together at picnic tables on the Esplanade as alumni Seth Hansen, Amy Sedillo, Melanie Dowers, and Karen Sumey shared their talents. Eileen Burkhardt sang a song from this year’s summer production of Lucky Stiff, and students Sevi Foreman and Tahnee Coleman also shared their musical talents.

The students left at six AM the next morning to volunteer, and some to run, for the Estes Park Marathon. Alumni had the campus to themselves including brunch KP. It was great to see alumni like Jerry McGinnes and Jason Cushner donning the new purple KP hats and

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## THE DIARY OF A TRULY NON-TRADITIONAL STUDENT

**by Priya Prashad, former  
Eagle Rock staff member**

*Priya penned this piece at the request of Dr. David Satcher, President of Morehouse School of Medicine. He asked who of the med students had unique experiences or a career before medical school. He wanted to include this information as part of the admissions' brochure. Priya was inspired to write this essay that talks about her experiences teaching in experiential schools and contrasting that with the medical education process. Priya just complete her third year as a medical student at the Morehouse School of Medicine in Atlanta, Georgia.*

Due to my myriad of interests, I have fortunately never been labeled as a "typical" anything. In college, my interest in foreign languages led to me majoring in French and engaging in as my travel experiences as possible including months spent in Ecuador and Honduras and a semester abroad in France. My volunteer experience in college included founding a HIV/AIDS prevention group geared toward peer education and spending summers volunteering at a camp for children and families living with HIV. So, my group of friends at a small, conservative highly regarded college were often described not only as "liberal," but "revolutionary."

My passion and enthusiasm for service-based learning led to a job at the experiential high school founded as a philanthropic initiative of the American Honda Motor Corporation. Eagle Rock School, a year-round, tuition-free, progressive high school, was located in the picturesque Rocky Mountains of Colorado and attracted students from all over the country who needed a more hands-on and individualized learning environment. There I taught and co-taught French

and Environmental Science inside and outside of the classroom. I designed a class called "Virus Hunters" that had my students searching all over campus on an epidemiological scavenger hunt frantically trying to locate the clue to discovering the world's next deadly virus. I drove students in a tiny yellow school bus to California to restore trails with the California Conservation Core while telling them about the flora and fauna of the desert and the geological formation of volcanoes. For my French students, we met every Wednesday at a local French bakery and for our final class; we dined at one of the most upscale French restaurants of downtown Denver. I also taught classes on the portrayal of women in the media, endangered fish of Lake Victoria, and two innovative classes that involved the Denver Public School system. In one class, our high students wrote, edited, and published books on an elementary school level which they donated to various Denver schools who could not afford to buy any more books for their students. The other class involved elementary schools taking a field trip to our school which is set on 640 acres of land and our students serving as tour guides educating them about local plants and wildlife.

The following year, I decided to combine my experience and interest in experiential education with my love for travel and spent the next 8 months teaching at an alternative school in Khon Kaen, Thailand. Why Thailand? I was curious to see how the two cultures in my family's origin, Chinese and Indian blended together and evolved into its own unique culture. While the philosophy of this kindergarten and elementary school was similar to the high school in Colorado, my experience was very different. I was the director of the kindergarten program, and designed the curriculum to teach them English. The school was considered alternative compared to the government schools because we had a Thanksgiving feast with turkey and celebrated the Thai festival of Loy

Krathrong where the kids released wreaths of banana leaves and flowers into our school's pool to honor the water goddess. The school was known for its caring, nurturing teachers, small classes, and hands-on curriculum. I learned so much that year from my students and the Thai teachers I worked with, but most of all I learned about the undeserved privilege and entitlement that comes with being a Westerner in a developing country.

It was during this year of personal growth and self-reflection that I decided to pursue my lifelong dream of becoming a doctor so I began the process of applying to medical school. I realized how much our country takes its unparalleled educational system for granted, and that I could not turn my back on an opportunity that so many others I met everyday could never have. Also, as much as I loved teaching, I wanted a skill I could use to help the people I encountered during my travels. So, I came back to where I grew up and was hired in the school district of my childhood. I taught middle-school French for one year and a class I designed that served as an introduction to language. I taught rudimentary conversation French, Spanish, German, Latin, and Thai to students who had never spoken a word of any language other than English. It was one of my greatest challenges and one of my greatest joys because the majority of my students could have easily benefited from a non-traditional school like the one I taught at in Colorado.

It was a huge adjustment trying to incorporate hands-on and experiential learning into 6 classes per day and 125 students per week. But I was able to incorporate many service-learning ideas from my previous schools into the curriculum such as writing bilingual books for the local elementary school and reading them to their students and having a French food day for a local Boys and Girls' club and teaching them about French culture. At the end of this year, I was

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## WE WERE *LUCKY STIFF* THIS SUMMER

by **Andy Artz, Adjunct  
Music & Performance**

For the eighth year in a row, Eagle Rock presented a summer musical. Weeks of planning, rehearsing, and preparing culminated in seven performances of *Lucky Stiff*, July 15-22. Audiences of family, friends, fellow students, and Estes Park community members reveled in the story of a hard-luck British shoe salesman who inherits six million dollars from an uncle he's never met. There's one catch,



though: to inherit the money, he must take his uncle's corpse on vacation to Monte Carlo!

Our small cast gelled almost from the beginning. Bern Lee portrayed the lead, Harry Witherspoon, as a young man who could not quite know what to make of the situation he in which he found himself. Should he feel lucky to have a chance at millions, or was he being taken for a ride by his dead uncle? Annabel Glick, played by Eileen Burkhardt, did her best to convince Harry he had no chance of sticking to every detail in the complicated will, and tried to win the money for her Universal Dog Home of Brooklyn. Cybil Martinez mastered the role of Rita LaPorta, the legally blind lover of Harry's dead uncle who pursued Harry and Annabel, trying to get back the money she'd embezzled in the first place. Rita dragged along her brother

Vinnie Di Ruzzio, an optometrist who'd been pushed around his whole life, played by Peter Herlihy. Robert Burkhardt lurked about the action as Luigi Gaudi, a mysterious fellow whose true identity was not revealed until the final scene.

In addition to these roles, there were four actors and actresses who played many different characters depending on the scene. Adam Kittler played a Solicitor, Lorry Driver, Nun, and Texan, among others, and wowed the audience as the Emcee. Sia Yang stole the show as Dominique du Monaco, a risqué nightclub dancer, and also played a Southern Lady, a Spinster, and a Gambler. Heidi Bingham was hilarious as the Drunk Maid, and appeared in other scenes as a Landlady, Nurse, and Secretary. The Bellhop was played by Mikki Jackson, who was also a very busy Waitress, Punk, Gambler, and Leper.

And where would our show have been without a Stiff? Defonté Ashby spent countless hours playing dead in a wheelchair, and mastered the moments when his arm was to be "disturbed" or his head was to loll. (He also gained a new appreciation and respect for what it means to be disabled.)

The cast was joined during the trimester by two members of the crew: Asha Thompson, who was in charge of sound, and Shawn Williams, who ran the light board.

This summer marked the first production since our long-time director, Alison Trattner, left Eagle Rock. Stepping ably in as her replacement, Rick Roberts acted as director, making this the eighth year he's been involved with the summer show. We were also happy to have Suzanne Garramone back to accompany us; the music for the show was extremely complicated.

Karolee McLaughlin acted as Music Director and Andy Artz was Stage Manager. John Guffey was our Set Builder and fantastic as a member of the stage crew. In addition to these producers, we were very lucky to have the assistance of Devin Cruikshank, a student from the University of San Francisco who was our technical director extraordinaire, and Lillie Hughes, a Bonner Scholar from Mars Hill College who managed our publicity, designed our program, took charge of ticket sales, and acted as House Manager.

Lillie had no small task, as for the first time we presented the musical as a Dinner Theater Production. Modeled after the Boulder Dinner Theater, we invited our audience to come to the Lodge an hour before the performance was to start so they could enjoy the gourmet dinner prepared by Eagle Rock's Head Chef, Tim Phelps. The show began as they were finishing their entrées, and the cast served dessert in costume during intermission. We also moved the production to the Other Side Restaurant for three performances. About a dozen student volunteers were invaluable to us throughout our production; they helped backstage, in the kitchen, and out among the audience as servers; we couldn't have done it without them.

Finally, Karolee put together an ambitious schedule for academics related to the plot of the musical which was very successful. With the cooperation of IS's like Jimmy Frickey, John Guffey, Cynthia Elkins, and Jesse Tovar, the students studied units on gambling and probability, service learning, art history, and personal growth (among others!).

We are very proud of the cast and crew and would like to thank everyone involved for making *Lucky Stiff* a resounding success. See you next summer!

*Students & Staff - Cont. from Page 1*

Yee-Ann Cho, former Admissions Associate at Eagle Rock School provided the opening address at the Institute. In her role as Senior Program Officer for Education at the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, she spoke to the essential question and provided a framework to understand the extended work that needs to be done in education reform.

The Eagle Rock team, led by Jeff Liddle presented a three-hour workshop on Integrated Curriculum. The presentation used a class at Eagle Rock called Colorado Rocks which integrates personal growth, physical education, environmental science, science and English disciplines to demonstrate how we deliver a comprehensive, integrated learning experience. Participants shared the following about the workshop: "It made integrated planning realistic." "I loved the specific model to guide us through the planning process." "I enjoyed talking with students about what they are doing at Eagle Rock." "It's a very

impressive model. The staff of Eagle Rock really respects the values of the school in a very healthy, holistic way. Very impressive." The workshop presentation can be viewed online at [http://www.ceschangelab.org/cs/clpub/view/ces\\_sp/555](http://www.ceschangelab.org/cs/clpub/view/ces_sp/555)

Throughout the week Eagle Rock met with partner mentee school, Skyview Academy. During a variety of team times, we worked with the Skyview Academy staff as they tackled real issues in moving forward with becoming one of Skyview High School's new small schools.

In addition to participating with the larger group, the students worked amongst themselves learning from each other, assessing their roles in their schools and attempting to carve a role for students in the larger CES network. They presented their findings at the closing with specific requests and needs in order to increase student voice at their schools as well as in the network at large. Among these suggestions were the creation of CES student committees at the schools, increased student involvement in teach-

er hiring, the creation of a CES student blog site where students can post successful student leadership models, and the establishment of communication lines to keep students connected to the network.

A highlight of the week included a well-attended open space technology forum led by Vanessa & Coral on student voice where they shared the many ways that students at Eagle Rock are engaged in their education in the Eagle Rock learning community. Vanessa was also the lead speaker for the student team who introduced conference closer Tom Vander Ark, Executive Director for the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation's education initiatives.

Vanessa shared, "The Summer Institute has motivated me to get more involved as a student with the CES Small School movement. I look forward to working with our mentee school, Skyview Academy, as they start up this August."

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

*Public Allies Fellows - Cont. from Page 2*

before she returns to Eagle Rock in September. Jessica will be part of the team in the fall that takes ER-37 into the field; this will be her fifth trip with ERS. After the fall trip, Jessica plans to continue with Outdoor Education working with youth and hopes to improve her Spanish skills by living and studying in Latin America.

**Ty Holmberg**, Human Performance Fellow, has many passions in life including working with youth, teaching, and agricultural work. Ty combined all of these passions in one of his classes at ERS, Green Thumb Bums. One of Ty's legacies at ERS is Team Kazoo, a student led group that provides support and activities to the community. Ty will be working with Habitat for Humanity in Philadelphia.

**Lesley Lemire**, Counseling Fellow, had many great successes developing trusting relationships with students. Lesley helped create support groups for students and avenues to explore and learn about different emotional struggles. Lesley will continue with counseling in New York this fall.

**Kristy Lobo**, Professional Development Center Fellow, had many successes in the PDC as well as in the classroom teaching, in the play working with students with their personal growth, and in the arts singing and playing music. Kristy has many talents and she plans to take a few

months off as she decides which of her passions to pursue.

**Kim McIntosh**, Human Performance and Outdoor Wilderness Intern, joined the Fellow group in September. Though she is not formally a part of the Fellowship Program, she has been a significant member of the group and their learning. Kim will be returning to Scotland and finishing her degree where she is excited to share her experiences about community, teaching, and learning.

*Two Fellows from the class of 2003-2004 move on as well.*

**Mohammed Elgazzar** started as the Professional Development Fellow in 2003-2004. Mohammed stayed on for another year as the interim Social Studies Instructional Specialist. Mohammed is highly respected by the students as he continually challenged them in his classes and other community activities. Mohammed plans to continue working with youth and community development.

**Molly Nichols** was the Language Arts and Literature Fellow in 2003-2004 and stayed on as the interim Instructional Specialist for the past year. Some of Molly's successes came outside the student classroom as well, training and teaching staff in literacy, which included coaching reading and writing. Molly will continue as a 10th grade Humanities teacher at Skyview Expeditionary Learning High School in Denver, Colorado.

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*...5th Reunion - Cont. from Page 8*

aprons. The Alumni Network community meeting commenced at noon. Topics included: the next reunion, the role of alumni in the ERS community, increasing reunion attendance for alumni and current students, and the creation of an Alumni Council. Finally, "It's In Every One of Us" played as our traditional closing. Most alumni departed that afternoon, and many stayed the next day, and some all week for Explore Week activities. With their reunion T-shirt, water bottle, picture frame, and Eagle Rock Classic Rock Volume One CD, one by one, everyone headed back to their lives after Eagle Rock.

Overall, it was great to have members of the family home, again. For everyone, and especially those of you who were unable to come home this time around: wherever you are in your life, we love you and we hope to see you home again soon. Peace be with you.

More news about Alumni at Eagle Rock can be found at [www.eaglerockschool.org/alumni.htm](http://www.eaglerockschool.org/alumni.htm)



*...The Diary - Cont. from Page 9*

granted a tremendous opportunity to enroll in a school that was dedicated to training minority physicians and serving the underserved. It was a mission that reflected every one of my endeavors and journeys from the very beginning. So, imagine my shock and surprise when I learned that medical school basic sciences' curriculum was taught by rote-learning and memorization! I had worked so hard to enhance the learning of my students through games, field studies, hands-on projects, and service and now I was sit-

ting in a classroom and being lectured to all day! So, the first two years were definitely an adjustment, but now in my third year, I can see how the process though painful, was necessary. I have met phenomenal preceptors who embody those ideas of Morehouse School of Medicine in their practice and teaching and have inspired me to use my gift for teaching to help students who need more than a book to learn.