



EAGLE EYES

Volume 12, Number 1

News From Winter/Spring Trimester 2004

FORMER ERS TEACHER SELECTED AS TOP MATHEMATICS EDUCATOR

(Reprinted with permission from the Trail-Gazette and features editor Lizzy Scully; picture from the Trail-Gazette)

Former Eagle Rock teacher Jason Cushner recently received a presidential award as Colorado's best in mathematics.

Cushner recently visited Washington, D.C., to receive an important award recognizing his achievements in science and math education. Cushner, an Eagle Rock school teacher from 1996-2003, visited D.C. the third week in March for an awards ceremony, to meet with education leaders and to participate in a series of professional development activities.

"I am excited and honored," explained Cushner, who is Colorado's only presidential award recipient in the field of mathematics and one of only 95 teachers nationwide to be recognized with a 2003 presidential award. All awardees for 2003 are K-12th grade teachers. Kindergarten and elementary school teachers are eligible for the 2004 presidential awards.

Established by Congress in 1983, and administered for the White House by the National Science Foundation, the annual presidential awards program identifies outstanding mathematics and science teachers in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico, the U.S. Territories and the U.S. Department of Defense Schools. This year's recipients – chosen by a panel of esteemed mathematicians, scientists and educators in conjunction with the White House – receive \$10,000 from the National Science Foundation.

"These outstanding teachers show us what excellent teaching looks like," said Mark Saul, the presidential awards project director for the National Science Foundation. "They have a passion for their subject and a dedication to their students. They know how to bring out the best in every student, in every kind of school. We hope their example will stimulate the creativity of other teachers and help to

attract new recruits to the mathematics and science teaching profession."

According to Cushner, "I started tutoring and I realized that I loved working with people, and I had a desire to work with struggling youth. I think high school students are at an age where they can be transformed by teachers."

Cushner, now a teacher at Feinstein High School in Providence, R. I., believes in using math as a vehicle to understand what's important in life, and he used Colorado's natural resources to teach math through rock climbing and many hands-on activities.

"I've directed a summer program for the last four years," he said. "My students and I studied math and physics, and then we went on a six-week trip through Arizona, Utah, and Colorado. It was amazing. We had class sessions in the morning based around mathematical and physics concepts, and then in the afternoon we would go rock climbing. It was a great exploration of practical, real-world applications of academic principles."

At Eagle Rock School, the majority of Cushner's students had either dropped out of traditional schools or had been unsuccessful in the study of mathematics. Cushner had to find a way to spark the interest of these students.

"The first way to draw kids in is to make our studies relevant to their lives," said Cushner. "And then, I give my students complex, open-ended problems that let them explore concepts. Their self-confidence increases and they experience positive academic transformation in all subject areas.

Cushner added, "Teachers have to be passionate about their students' learning. Also I try to remove myself from the role of an 'expert.' I let the students think about math themselves and try to achieve consensus through dialogue in the classroom."

For more program information, or for details on how to nominate K-6 teachers for the 2004 presidential awards, please visit www.paemstorg. For more information about Cushner's teaching, visit www.eaglerockschool.org.



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

Editor:

Lois Easton
P.O. Box 1770
2750 Notaiah Road
Estes Park, CO
80517-1770

Phone Numbers:
(970) 586-0600

FAX
(970) 586-4805

An initiative of the
American Honda
Education Corporation

**American Honda
Education
Corporation**

Hiro Matsumoto
Chairman

Gary Kessler
Executive Director

Sheri Bullock
Secretary

Llyn King
Treasurer

**Eagle Rock School
and Professional
Development Center**

Jon Anderson
Human Performance

Burt Bowles
Facilities & Maintenance

Robert Burkhardt
Head of School

Dan Condon
Public Allies

Lois Easton
*Director of Professional
Development*

Cynthia Elkins
Arts

Jacques Fournet
*Wilderness & Outdoors
Education*

TWO MORE GRADUATE FROM EAGLE ROCK

By Mohammed Elgazzar, Fellow

Bringing the total number of graduates to 92, Zach Brick and Philip O'Mara received diplomas on Friday, April 9, 2004.

PHILIP O'MARA

In September of 2000, Eagle Rock's twenty-second trimester saw the arrival of Philip O'Mara, a young man who had almost completed his traditional high school career. In need of a change of environment and a push to succeed, Philip peered over the 640 acres of Eagle Rock School with hope, and of course, a healthy dose of skepticism. Don't let this young man's intelligence and charm fool you though. Be wary! He is a black belt in multiple martial art forms ranging from Jujitsu and Shoaling K'ung Fu to Chi Tai Ru. He also has an active interest in Capoeira.



Born in Po Hung City, South Korea, Philip came to the United States through an adoption program; he arrived in Virginia speaking only Korean. Philip adapted to his new environment, currently speaking English without a trace of an accent. He was raised by parents of European descent, a mother with German roots and a father with an Irish background, hence the last name: O'Mara. In Philip's cultural future exists the attainment of at least ten languages: French, Spanish, Latin, Arabic, Italian, German, Japanese, and Mandarin, to name a few.

Philip was drawn to Eagle Rock for several reasons, some perhaps a bit deeper than others. First and foremost, he wanted a change in his lifestyle and a change in his environment. As one of only five Asian Americans in his high school of about 3,000 students, he was clearly marginalized. He also faced "a rampant stereotypical Southern attitude regarding diversity" that did not help his situation much either. Philip's sexuality pushed him farther away from a healthy social environment. Since being at Eagle Rock, Philip has never felt ashamed

or embarrassed for being who he is. He has allowed himself to open up to the community, unabashedly admitting and embracing his background and his sexuality.

In his future shines a bright light. Due to his hard work and perseverance, Philip landed an early decision acceptance to Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts. There, he intends to pursue World Studies, Cross-Cultural Anthropology, and Linguistics. His personal interests are parallel to his academic interests, revealing a passion and a drive to learn and to succeed, becoming a master in his own art form. He has combated racism and homophobia in his life as well as the demons in his own head. Philip is racing into his future with a quiet drive that is unstoppable and undying, forging new paths and a new model for success.

ZACH BRICK

Zacharias Tocawa Brick's learning has been somewhat different from Philip's. Zack arrived here from New Hampshire. Perhaps Zack's greatest learning has been in respect: self-respect and respect for others. He sees Eagle Rock as "the solution to the lack of absolute respect and fairness for those who have helped mold us and for those who have come before us."

This young and exuberant man has faced many struggles, mostly the death of his father. Zack's family was supportive and pushed him along the way. They knew that coming to Eagle Rock was the best thing for him, but pulling a young depressed kid out of the party scene and then convincing him of what is best for him is a whole other story. It took witnessing a horrendously dreadful experience at a party to convince Zack that the road he was going down may gratify him instantly but was by no means leading him to happiness: an overdose.



Zack filled out the paperwork and enrolled himself at Eagle Rock. Along the pathway to graduation, Zach has dealt with his anger and pride. He has challenged

...See Graduate - Page 3

...Graduate - Cont. from Page 2

his own arrogance and has learned to choose his battles wisely. While he may still have a passion for partying, and more specifically, performing music on his turntables at parties, his own matured sense of consciousness will help him draw the boundaries and keep him focused on what he really wants in life.

Along the way, he has acquired the will to physical fitness, focused academics, dancing, art and music. He uses these mechanisms to cope with the stresses, long

term and daily, of simply being a functioning human being in the world today. He recognizes that he loves personal time and needs to take more of it. He most definitely wants to take some personal time before he charges full speed into the future that awaits him.

Zach has been accepted at the University of Denver and intends to concentrate on business. Look out, DU! Zack's attention and focus are to be reckoned with; he is a fireball, a comet, burning to the core, explosive, volatile, and moving at a fierce rate.

ERS WELCOMES NEW SPANISH TEACHER

By Mohammed Elgazzar, Fellow

Born in Denver, brought up in Littleton and Durango, and educated in Ft. Collins, Russ Rendon can truly call himself a "Colorado Native." His roots in this state are as deep as his removed Mexican and Apache roots. Russ is the newest addition to the Eagle Rock staff, coming in as the Instructional Specialist in the Spanish Department.

In the 1930s, during the depression, Russ's grandparents never allowed his father to learn Spanish. Knowing Spanish, or having an accent, meant you were ostracized since you were perceived as "one of the Mexicans who stole a job away from a white American." In reality, being raised Catholic in a predominantly Protestant society was bad enough. Like his father, Russ never learned Spanish till he got to college. During his work towards what eventually became a Teaching Certificate and a Bachelor of Arts degree in History with a minor in Spanish, Russ traveled to Mexico for a semester and then spent a year in Ecuador. He learned Spanish and taught English simultaneously. He was able to complete his student teaching at Eagle Rock School in 1996, ER-8.

Clearly, his taste for travel was not satiated by his visits to Latin America. His passion led him to Europe, where he lived in Spain for one year, selling his own recycled paper products in the market places. He later moved to Italy and met up with a couple that



he had previously built a connection with in the Galapagos Islands. He went in search of work and ended up working in the wine industry harvesting grapes for the Italians. From there, he traveled to Israel through North Africa, on his way to discovering his mother's Ashkenazi Jewish roots, stopping in Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya and Egypt. He remained in Morocco for two months, flew to Egypt, stayed two weeks and then worked on a kibbutz in Israel for five months.

Russ was in a state of utter culture shock when he returned to the United States. He kept himself busy to ward off the nostalgia of travel. He busied himself with a position teaching Social Studies at a Denver high school. He started a literacy program, planned a motorcycle trip with his good friends and then decided to go back to

Morocco. He returned to North Africa for a woman he had met on his prior trip. He wanted to know if this was love.

This young romantic rushed back to the United States to find a job and establish some stability and then flew a third time to Morocco, converted to Islam and married his love, Wafa'a. He stayed in Morocco for one year, picked up some Arabic, taught English, heard about the position at Eagle Rock and flew back to the United States.

Russ is still in a state of culture shock. He was forced to stay apart from his wife for a number of months and then had to reconcile some different teaching styles with his Fellow, who had led the class since August. This adjustment has led to most of Russ's learning

Mike Glowacki
Head Cook

Richard Gordon
Learning Resources
and Information

Linda Sand Guest
Director of Curriculum

John Guffy
Service

Dick Herb
Director of Operations

Sheri Jackson
Business Administration
Specialist

Janet Johnson
Science

Janice Lee
Registrar

Jeff Lemon
Sous Cook

Jeff Liddle
Wilderness &
Outdoors Education

Karolee McLaughlin
Music and Performance

Jen Morine
Human Performance

L'Tanya Perkins
Admissions Associate

Tim Phelps
Chef Instructor

Scott Rashid
Cook

Russ Rendon
Spanish

James Sherman
Society and
Social Studies

Philbert Smith
Director of Students

Lisa Spring
Administrative Assistant

Terry Tierney
Assistant Facilities

Lan To
Life After Eagle Rock

Jesse Tovar
Health and Wellness
Counselor

Alison Trattner
Language and Literature

...See New Spanish Teacher - Pg. 7

ERS CHALLENGED TO REBUILD COMMUNITY

ERS Community Challenged by Students Breaking Non-Negotiables

By Sevi Foreman, Student

This trimester, as with any trimester, has had its share of ups and downs. For the most part, this trimester has been a good one for me, but around the fourth week some long concealed issues came to the surface. I would not say that these issues were mysterious to the greater community, though I would say that as things started to emerge the community was hit in the face hard. It was as if we had been taunting a cornered animal for a long time and were suddenly surprised when we were bitten.

It all started at a Wednesday community meeting when some issues were brought to our attention by Philbert [Smith, Director of Students]. These issues dealt with some rumors having to do with certain students and their involvement with the “underground” at Eagle Rock. It turned out later on in the meeting that these rumors were not completely fictitious when one of the students stood up and confessed to his involvement [in one of the non-

negotiables. The five non-negotiables at Eagle Rock are no alcohol, no drugs, no tobacco, no violence, and no sexual relations.]

This action then led to what one could call a chain reaction, and by the end of what turned into a three-day meeting, forty-three students, myself included, had confessed their own personal lapses.

The following week, twenty-one of those students were asked to leave the school and the rest, except for myself and three others, were given consequences, but were allowed to continue as students. Those two weeks were really hard for the whole community, and it showed. I personally struggled with the loss of a few good friends; it is always sad to see people leave this school. Staff as well as students seemed to have this ever-heavy cloud fogging up their realities for a few days.

ERS Community Takes Up the Challenge of Rebuilding

By Lois Easton, Director of Professional Development



Following the events of the fourth and fifth week of the trimester, a design team made up of students and staff convened to plan a week of community rebuilding activities. Classes were suspended for the community rebuilding week, and all students and staff participated in activities that ranged from a silent walk through the forest to creating proposals to improve the community and from poetry to a buffet dinner and dance at Mary's Lake Lodge.

Design team members included these students: Jill Weiser, Dominique Millett, Shandi Fraley, Sevi Foreman. Staff included Jen Morine, Mohammed Elgazzar, Jimmy Frickey, Janet Johnson, Molly Nichols, Jesse Tovar, Penda Horton, and Lois Easton. The design team met frequently during the week preceding the community-rebuilding

week to make plans and create materials.

The goal of the week was simple: The community (students, staff, and families on campus) will create strategies that “attract” behaviors that ensure community. In addition, the design team wanted to be sure that everyone understood at a deep level what community is, why it is important, how community and the individual are related. Finally, they wanted everyone to commit to actions that create community.

In terms of design, they did not want to do activities *about* community. Rather, they wanted to let community happen when people work together. They designed an experiential week, with as little “talky-talk” as possible.

On the first day, students and staff participated in a rousing game of Capture the Flag instead of doing regular morning exercise. Then they created a list of what they loved about Eagle

Rock, contributed something precious of themselves to an “altar” in the hearth area of the Lodge to represent their commitment to the process, and took a silent walk through the snow, stopping periodically at signs that were placed to



...See Rebuilding - Page 5

...Rebuilding - Cont. from Page 4



prompt their thoughts. Among the signs were these questions:

1. What are the challenges, problems, and obstacles at Eagle Rock? What's not working?
2. How is the situation at Eagle Rock making you feel?
3. What has been your general contribution to what has happened at Eagle Rock?
4. How can you make this week count?
5. What are you willing to do to create the community that you crave?

important?

Still silent, they made their way to the Human Performance Center and posted answers to the questions they had read during their walk on butcher paper placed on the walls of the gym. Working together, they then "named the problems" they thought Eagle Rock was facing. Following an afternoon



of various activities – yoga, art, a hike, basketball, open discussion, and a jam session – they met again as a whole group to evaluate the day.

On the second day, students, staff and families of staff worked together to "name the solutions" and then began the hard work in small groups of framing those solutions as proposals.



At this point, the meeting took on an "open meeting" format as individuals formed groups that were working on something about which the individuals were passionate. The day concluded with a trip to Boulder to see an inspiring movie about climbing Mt. Everest.

On the third day each small group was challenged to refine



those proposals and present them to others in what is called a "Gallery Tour." Critiques as a result of the tour led each small group to do more revision but, eventually, about 15 proposals were ready to present to the whole group.

Team-building, storytelling, poetry reading, play, a silent meal, a meal that had to be eaten – somehow – with four-foot long spoons, a buffet dinner and dance

at Mary's Lake Lodge, freeze tag, intense feedback sessions, a trust walk, and other activities spread throughout the week ensured that fun and spirituality were part of the proceedings.

During the community-rebuilding week and in subsequent weeks several proposals were presented to the whole community which used a "fist of five" technique to respond



to the ideas (a fist or one or two fingers raised meaning that the proposal was unacceptable as it was; five fingers meaning commitment to action; and four or three fingers meaning support).



Three proposals were revised and presented again to the whole community which approved them. Thus, an anger management support group has been established, advisories have been strengthened,

and a better staff orientation process has been described.

Other proposals have yet to be presented to the whole community for the first time or as revisions. These proposals address improvements such as a different sleep schedule, a student commitment rubric, intensified work with prospective students, increased spiritual activities, and time management. They are being worked on by small groups of staff and students. The community rebuilding process continues into ER 33, the trimester that begins in May.



ACT OUT ACTS OUT

By Lois Easton, Director of Professional Development

The class description hints at the excitement that is produced in the class Act Out:

Feeling brave? Feeling shy? Does an audience make you cry? Perhaps you were born on the stage and have basked in the footlights since early childhood. Or maybe the words "acting" or "audience" fill you with loathing and dread. We invite you to lose your self-consciousness, explore human nature, and sample some of the finest plays ever written. Find out that ACTING IS DOING, NOT PRETENDING. Act Out is a timeworn classic at ERS that, like fine wine, only improves with age. We are an acting, literature and psychology class all in one. Daily warm-up exercises, scenarios, improvisation, and some basic acting techniques will help you develop a character in depth and understand your motivation in any scene.

In Week 7, having explored a series of plays ranging from classical drama to contemporary theater, you and a partner will choose one scene to rehearse for the Sixth Annual Act Out evening performance for the whole community. Extra perks include guest instructors (one from the Denver Center Theater Company), a matinee or evening at the theater, and an opportunity to critique several films. We will focus part of one week on developing your essay of literary analysis. We also would like to encourage a student written scene.

Be prepared to embarrass yourself daily in an atmosphere safe in love and laughter.

Students were able to earn credit in the following areas: Performance, discussion skills, student-led discussion, essay of literary analysis, and creative writing.

But what really counted in Act Out, co-taught by Alison Trattner, Instructional Specialist, and Molly Nichols, Fellow, was the excitement that came when students in the class

produced scenes from several plays that they read deeply, understood, and relished.

On Wednesday, March 31, the class presented scenes from four plays to the entire community in the amphitheater of the Learning Resource Center. Between scenes, they demonstrated some of the drama exercises they did to warm-up, refine diction and reflect each other's actions.

Students presented scenes from *The Importance of Being Earnest* by Oscar Wilde, recently a popular movie.

Set in Great Britain in the 19th century, one scene took place in the city between Jack, played by Bryant Preston and Gwendolyn, played by Kate Bowen. Later, Gwendolyn and Lady Bracknell, her mother, played by Nathalie Donchery, and Jack, this time played by Sevi Foreman, had a confrontation. In another scene, in the country, Martin Emmes played Algernon and Jill Weiser played Cecily. This

comedy of mistaken identities and overwrought manners frequently brought laughter from the audience.

More serious were the scenes from *King Hedley II* by August Wilson. In this play, part of a series Wilson wrote to chronicle the black experience in America, Pittsburgh of the 1980s came alive. In the first scene in King's mother's front yard, Elmore, played by Jose Rivas, and Mister, played by Sevi Foreman, exchanged a gun that will bring no good to King Hedley. Later, King, played by Oye Odutola, Mister, played by Bryant Preston, and Elmore, played by Jose Rivas, met in the neighborhood.

Hell was the setting for scenes from the third play, *No Exit* by Jean-Paul Sartre. In hell, Garcin, played by Martin Emmes, Estelle, played by Jill Weiser, and Inez by Kate Bowen reflected their jealousy and argued in a rather hopeless way with each other. Already dead, they threatened to kill one another.

Finally, Blanche, played by Nathalie Donchery, tried to seduce a Young Man, played by Bryant Preston in Tennessee Williams' *Streetcar Named Desire*. Set in New Orleans in the 1940s, the scene was steamy and seductive with the young delivery boy barely escaping Blanche's clutches.

...See Act Out - Cont. on Back Page



ERS SURVIVES WHOOPING COUGH OUTBREAK

By Lois Easton, Director of Professional Development

It seemed possible that a pertussis (whooping cough) outbreak could occur at Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center when one student tested positive for the disease on Friday, March 26. However, campus officials working closely with the Salud Clinic and Colorado and Larimer County Departments of Health quickly moved to contain the disease.

The entire campus – students, staff and children of staff - went into quarantine from Saturday, March 27, to Wednesday, March 31, the five-day period recommended by the Colorado Department of Health.

In addition, students, staff, and children of staff with cold-like symptoms were tested for pertussis. Out of approximately 25 tests, only two were positive, and the students testing positive for pertussis took antibiotics so as not to spread the disease.

The student body, staff, and staff families also began a five-day regimen of antibiotics known for killing the pertussis bacteria.

Upon announcement that one student tested positive for pertussis, the school immediately contacted the Colorado Department of Health and the Larimer County Department of Health and worked with officials to prevent spread of the disease.

The worst cases occur in infants in which the “whooping” sound that gives the disease its popular name “whooping cough” is made when babies find it difficult to breathe between coughs. Older people, especially those with respiratory diseases, are also susceptible to pertussis. Vaccinations, often part of a series called DPT that children receive, do not remain effective beyond five or six years after inoculation.

The first symptoms of pertussis are a dry cough and a runny nose. Other cold-like symptoms may suggest bronchitis. As the disease progresses, the coughing may become more protracted and breath harder to catch between coughs. Only a test of nasal secretions can determine if the cough, runny nose and other cold-like behaviors are pertussis.

A person is contagious with pertussis (able to spread it to others) only when symptoms are evident, unlike other diseases such as measles, which are contagious before symptoms appear. Although use of antibiotics renders a person non-contagious (unable to spread the disease), coughing may occur for weeks, even months, in some people because of the non-contagious toxin the bacteria produce.

EAGLE ROCK ART FEATURED AT THE ESTES PARK ART CENTER

By Lois Easton, Director of Professional Development

The Sunroom of the Art Center of Estes Park featured a variety of artwork by Eagle Rock students and staff. The local Estes Park newspaper, *The Trail-Gazette*, promoted the exhibit in an article “Art in the Process of Life,” by Janice Mason (Friday, April 9, 2004).

Mason described the show as exhibiting a “broad range of talent and inspiration,” “an eclectic collection of plaster, painting, batik, printmaking, political cartooning, and photography.”

Student Sevi Foreman shared some of his photographs, including a self-portrait conveying his interest in music. Graduate Philip O’Mara shared his “bromoil” print photography, which, according to Mason, “consists of developing the photograph, then applying ink.”

Taylor Clemants, ERS student, displayed “Cloth Man,”

a design made of fabric and dye. He was inspired by seeing a woman at the side of the road who “seemed very uncomfortable.” Student Reina Aguilar, who recently completed a trip to Mexico on a Rotary scholarship during which she translated for a doctor during surgery, was called a “Spanish language interpreter” in *The Trail-Gazette*. Her drawing and painting activities keep her focused at Eagle Rock.

Student Jamaine Porter contributed a plaster and painted piece called “Prisoner of War.” For him it represented the pain of gang wars and violence of any kind. Jose Rivas shared a piece called “Roses,” made of mixed media and batik.

Cynthia Elkins, Art Instructional Specialist, and Anna Mc-Canse, Art Fellow, also contributed pieces of their work.

...New Spanish Teacher - Cont. from Page 3

since being here. As an open individual, Russ is a good fit for Eagle Rock, continuing his own learning while inspiring the learning of his peers and his students.

This young man of thirty-three years is still a romantic, totally pleased with the arrival of his wife, Wafa’a, to the

states. Certainly, he intends to continue his travels around the world. For now, he is working with the young constituency of Eagle Rock, helping young people get their lives together and providing leadership for justice and a model for behavior. Students are excited about his presence here at Eagle Rock, and Russ has met their excitement with smiles and a smooth transition.



AMERICAN HONDA EDUCATION CORPORATION
Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center
2750 Notaiiah Road, P.O. Box 1770
Estes Park, CO 80517

NON PROFIT
ORGANIZATION
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT #380
ESTES PARK, CO