



# EAGLE EYES

Volume 13, Number 1

News From Winter 2004/Spring 2005 Trimester

## **EASTON LEAVES EAGLE ROCK** \_\_\_\_\_

*by Robert Burkhardt, Head of School*

Eagle Rock has lost a treasure. Lois Easton, colleague, mentor, friend, teacher, consummate professional and Director of Professional Development for the past eleven years, resigned in April 2005 because of health issues. She leaves behind a remarkable legacy, buttressed by deep appreciation from Eagle Rock staff and students for the myriad ways she modeled and taught us excellence. We will miss her.

Lois arrived at Eagle Rock (ERS) in the summer of 1994 with the task of creating a Professional Development Center from the ground up. Working closely with then Director of Curriculum Judy Gilbert, Lois quickly established the Professional Development Center (PDC) as a significant resource for educators across America. Today the PDC hosts two thousand visitors annually

and is known for internships, fellowships, practicum opportunities, research, workshops, relationships, conferences, publications, technical assistance and more.

Lois Easton was the creative source, author, editor and publisher of the countless ideas that intentionally became the Professional Development Center at Eagle Rock. Here are just a few fragments of Lois' legacy,



*...See Easton - Page 4*

## **DATA COLLECTION ESSENTIAL TO EAGLE ROCK ACCREDITATION PROCESS** \_\_\_\_\_

*by Lois Easton, former Director of Professional Development*

Nine years after beginning and ending its first accreditation process – successfully – Eagle Rock is embarking on its second round of activities in order to be accredited by the Association for Colorado Independent Schools (ACIS, an affiliate of the National Association of Independent Schools) and the North Central Association (which accredits mostly public schools and universities). In this round, Eagle Rock is focused on data collection and analysis as the basis for its self-study and needs your help.

The first year of the accreditation process is self-study. Eagle Rock began its self-study in January 2005 by examining some demographic data (see box), analyzing its meaning, and designing surveys to collect additional, more subjective data. Eagle Rock needs YOU, the reader, to help with the additional data. Information is needed from the following people:

- Current students
- Former students (graduates or not)
- Parents of current students
- Parents of former students (graduates or not)
- Current staff (including interns/fellows)
- Former staff (including interns/fellows)
- Visitors to the Eagle Rock Professional Development Center

**Please help.** If you are a former student (graduate of Eagle Rock or not), a parent of a student attending or attended Eagle Rock (graduated or not), a current or former staff member (including interns & fellows) or a visitor to the Eagle Rock Professional Development Center, please go on-line to **<http://www.eaglerockschool.org/survey/>**, select the appropriate category and respond to the survey.

Please pass this information along to others. We need your help! Thanks!

*...See Data Collection - Page 3*

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and Professional  
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## GRADUATE HIGHER EDUCATION FUND NEWS

by **Richard Herb, Director  
of Operations**

### Eagle Rock Duckies Swim again for the Graduate Fund

On May 7, about 5,000 duckies competing for various charities in Estes Park will paddle 2.5 miles down the Big Thompson River trying to swim faster than the 500 or so Eagle Rock duckies. They won't. Robert has been training Eagle Rock duckies all year.

Top prize for the sponsor of the winning duck is seven nights for two to Hawaii, including airfare from Denver. That's only one of 5 trips (others include Disney-world, Seattle, Las Vegas, Colorado Springs and Glenwood Springs) not to mention the 400 other prizes!

Sponsorships are \$20 per duckie with most of that purchase price benefiting the Eagle Rock Graduate Higher Education Fund. Checks should be made out to "Estes Park Duck Race" in any multiple of \$20 and mailed by **early May** to Dick Herb, Eagle Rock Graduate Fund, Post Office Box 1770, Estes Park, CO, 80517. Then pack your bags. You need not be present during the race to win. All winners will be notified directly by race organizers.



Check out [www.eScrip.com](http://www.eScrip.com) and sign up

Members of the Eagle Rock family have been registering credit cards online with eScrip.com at no cost to the credit card holder. Select merchants like Safeway, Chevron, and L.L. Bean as well as tens of thousands of other merchants contribute a significant percentage of registered sales directly to the Eagle Rock Graduate Higher Education Fund bank account. It's easy and never costs you anything. Check out eScrip.com and sign up.

### Graduate Awards Increase Again

Add \$2,000. Total awards now amount to \$8,500 available to each Eagle Rock Graduate.

\$1,000 will be available to college sophomores and \$1,000 available for college juniors. These new awards are retroactive. That is, the awards can be used for current college and university expenses or to pay down government guaranteed educational loans. The freshman year award of \$1,500 can be applied toward a variety of higher education pursuits other than college or university such as training institutes and trade schools.

### Eagle Rock Graduate Fund Position

Fiscal Year 2005 (Beginning 9/1/04)

|                           |                 |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Beginning Balance         | \$469,250       |
| Gifts and Earnings        | \$ 29,482       |
| Change in Investment      |                 |
| Net Asset Value           | \$ 88,443       |
| Grants                    | \$ 18,274       |
| Expenses                  | <u>\$ 1,985</u> |
| Current Balance (2/28/05) | \$567,506       |

Thanks again to all who have helped build the fund and to those who are considering donations.

...Data Collection - Cont. from Page 1

The following facts are a result of collecting and analyzing demographic data about students, staff, and educators.

- The average number of trimesters a graduate spends at Eagle Rock is 8.957.
- Thirty-eight percent of graduates are from Colorado; 58% are from other states.
- Among graduates (as of December 2004), 43% are male, and 57% are female.
- The average age of graduates upon entering is 16.79 years.
- Average graduates' scores on the TAP (Iowa Test of Basic Skills) upon graduating increase by 5.4 points to 16.7 points in all subjects.
- Average SAT verbal score for all students taking the SAT is 498 (Colorado mean is 508); average SAT mathematical score is 456 (Colorado mean is 518).
- Average ACT score is 19.9 (2004 national average is 20).
- Staff is 58.2% female and 41.8% male.
- Thirty-six percent of visitors come in groups of 10 or more; 29% stay two days; and over 50% come for awareness purposes.

Using the objective data related to demographics as well as the more subjective data from the surveys, Eagle Rock staff will complete their self-study by writing a report that is due at the end of the year. This report will be submitted to team members from ACIS and NCA who will conduct a site visit at Eagle Rock in March 2006. They will present an oral report of their findings before they leave in March

2006 and also submit a written report that Eagle Rock will receive and respond to sometime during April or May 2006.

The year following the site visit, Eagle Rock will complete a one-year report and two years later a three-year report. Seven years later it will begin the cycle anew.

Accreditation is important to Eagle Rock. Although each of its graduates validates the quality of Eagle Rock's program and curriculum, accreditation is public recognition of what Eagle Rock does. Some colleges inquire as to whether or not applicants have graduated from an accredited school. Visitors to the professional development center have probably, themselves, been through the accreditation process and they know what the public "stamp of approval" means to a school. Eagle Rock is both an alternative and independent school, so accreditation represents an important "outside" review that all is going well. Finally, all schools participating in the accreditation process are engaging in continuous self-renewal, a process that is critical to being innovative and responsive to students.

Thanks for helping us with the process by responding to the appropriate surveys as soon as possible.

**Cynthia Elkins**  
*Arts*

**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*

**Molly Nichols**  
*Language and Literature*

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

**Tim Phelps**  
*Chef Instructor*

**Scott Rashid**  
*Cook*

**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*

...Easton - Cont. from Page 1

gifts she gave us for which she will be remembered. Because of Lois' work:

Eagle Rock is a mentor school under the Coalition of Essential Schools "Small Schools Project," and is working closely with Skyview Academy (Thornton, CO) as a large public high school transforms itself into six smaller schools; and

ERS is an alternative licensure site for the Colorado Department of Education enabling ERS Fellows to earn teaching certification during their year with us; and

ERS is the Rocky Mountain contact representative for the League of Small Democratic Schools, an exciting reform initiative spearheaded by John Goodlad at the University of Washington; and

Two terrific Lois Easton books, The Other Side of The Curriculum and Powerful Designs for Professional Development, are now required reading for educators everywhere; and

Our year-long internship program, which began with a single two-month stay in 1994, has evolved into the Public Allies Fellowship Program at Eagle Rock, bringing a dozen talented young educators to ERS every September; and

Eagle Rock Excellence Awards are eagerly anticipated at every graduation, when Lois eloquently reads her imaginative, inspired tributes to outstanding community members; and

Feedback became the air we breathed. Lois was the guru of constructive feedback for instructors, typing swiftly but silently on her laptop in classrooms, modeling for the staff how to record teaching data objectively and comment on it in a double entry journal; and

ERS now champions multiple strategies for reflecting on curriculum at staff meetings. Many staff (present and



past) will forever associate Lois Easton with the following terms: the Tuning Protocol; the Socratic Seminar; and

Many trimesters of Writers' Club participants reveled in the warm atmosphere of Chez Lois, where students were welcome to indulge themselves in the long, languorous check-ins, curl up with her cats, devour a brownie or three, and pour their hearts out on a blank page; and

We got letters (some even doused with perfume—we got dizzy from the smell). The individualized letters of praise many staff were amazed to receive (what with everything else Lois had to do) in the evening mail or in our

staff boxes, detailing specific examples of fine writing in an article for the newspaper, or a performance in the play, or a great job at a conference; (there were two-page letters addressed to a whole class, letters of thank you, notes inside beautiful cards; and

There were graphics. Lois became infamous for her 'mapping tools' that came in every variety imaginable: stapled sheets burgeoned with interconnected bubbles, balloons, squares, rectangles, octagons and parallelograms, printed on every color paper, designed to visually entice even the most intellectually exhausted; and

Lois staunchly supported Eagle Rock Amphitheater productions; she not only helped with ticket sales and advertising, and attended each show numerable times, she also performed the memorable role of Narrator in our 2003 Stephen Sondheim review: You're Gonna Love Tonight; and

Eagle Eyes has appeared three times a year for a decade, providing a continuing chronicle of Eagle Rock's early history.

These are among the more visible aspects of Lois' legacy, yet there is so much else for which we will remember her. Always gracious and eloquent, Lois is nonetheless a fierce facilitator, so skilled at team building that she can move seemingly intractable groups toward powerful learning. Her organizational skills and planning meant that every Trimester had a smooth first-week beginning for staff. When she read a story at Gathering (always showing us the accompanying artwork), you could hear a pin drop. Her tributes to departing staff in the Hearth (followed by ice cream and cake!) were filled with laughter and appreciation for work well done. Lois took students to national conferences as a matter of course, where they made presentations before capacity crowds. Her books and journal articles were as influential as they were well received. Her extensive professional network gave Eagle Rock entrée everywhere. ERS graduates studied grammar and composition with Lois. She was a solid member of the leadership team at Eagle Rock.

This must be said about Lois Easton. When the definitive book about Eagle Rock is written, her name will be in the Table of Contents. She is in that small circle of individuals without whom Eagle Rock would not be the success it is today. Thank you, Lois. May the road rise to meet you, wherever your travels take you.



## GRADUATE TOTAL REACHES 100

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

Receiving their diplomas on April 8th, 2005, Naehalani Breeland, Taylor Clemants, Tangereé Gillette, and Jillian Weiser helped Eagle Rock reach a major milestone.

Having grown up in California and Hawaii, Naehalani Breeland came in with ER-25 (Fall 2001). She credits Eagle Rock with helping her learn to challenge herself, develop a personal set of values consistent with  $8+5=10$ , and find the true value of community and service. Naeha went to Brazil with an exchange program during ER-30 (Summer 2003) and plans to return there to teach English this summer. Eventually she intends to go to college to study psychology, anthropology, and linguistics.

Taylor Clemants entered Eagle Rock with ER-26 (Winter 2002) from Vail, Colorado. During his free time here, Taylor enjoyed developing his knowledge of mythol-



ogy and his skills at musical instruments including bass, mandolin, accordion, guitar, and piano. He considers his most significant growth at Eagle Rock to be in learning to try his best academically. Taylor aims to get a job either in Colorado or in Mexico, and ultimately to become a "Renaissance man."

Tangereé Gillette hails from Leadville, Colorado and came in with ER-27 (Summer 2002). She says that, thanks in part to the Eagle Rock community supporting and believing in her, she has become much more confident in math and in herself. Tangereé is particularly proud of her work in developing the new student program, restoring the school dance team, and in utilizing the pottery studio. She will be juggling several jobs over the summer and going to college to study marine biology in the fall.

Jillian Weiser came in with ER-28 (Fall 2002) from Aurora, Colorado. While at Eagle Rock she was especially passionate about reading, free writing, and rock climbing. Jill says her time here has helped her develop a desire to learn as well as a sense of who she is and who she wants to be. She plans to move in with her aunt in Washington, DC and work to save enough money to volunteer for several months in India starting next April.

## DIFFERENCE MAKERS

### PEOPLE WHO MADE THE WORLD A BETTER PLACE IN 2004

by *Janice Mason, Trail-Gazette*  
(Reprinted with permission from the *Trail-Gazette* and  
community editor *Janice Mason*)

A champion for Native Americans, Eagle Rock School chef instructor Tim Phelps brings Christmas to people of the Oglala Sioux tribe every year. Phelps collects clothing, goods, and Christmas presents for the people of Pine Ridge Reservation in South Dakota. He solicits the help of the community and his students, and then travels to South Dakota to cook lunch, and deliver much needed supplies and gifts to the poorest people in the United States. He takes a group of students with him to allow them to experience the gift of giving and to provide an education regarding the history of the reservation.

Eagle Rock student Inawin Malesa visited the reservation last year with Phelps and his fellow students. Malesa's father was present during the Native American uprising in 1973, when the people of the reservation attempted to fight for the right to land promised to them by the federal government in an 1868 treaty. Over two months, in 1973, federal agents and the tribal government aimed automatic rifles at the protesters, killing two Native Americans. At the end of the siege, the government promised the Oglala Sioux tribe that they would listen to their grievances. But following one meeting with White House representatives, no further action was taken to support the people of Pine Ridge Reservation.

The Native Americans on Pine Ridge continue to live on the desolate land stripped of natural resources, barren of industry and employment possibilities. Cited as the poorest section in the U.S., the people of the Pine Ridge Reservation struggle to survive.

"The poverty really shocked me," said Malesa after his visit to the reservation. "I knew that they didn't live that well, but the house we were staying in had holes in the ceiling and the walls.

"I enjoyed giving out the gifts," he continued. "It was fun to see how they craved the presents, and ran back to their parents excited about their gifts. It was great to see the eyes of the children sparkle, and see them smile and say thank you. You don't usually get that opportunity."



## EAGLE ROCK BIDS FAREWELL TO JEFF LEMON

*(Originally printed in From Under the Rock,  
Eagle Rock's student run newspaper)  
by Adam Kittler, Student*

How can a man with such a sour last name be so sweet? Jeffrey Blaine Lemon is one of the most approachable people I have come across in my lifetime with his steady calm voice and collected presence. I do not think I am the only person in this community who feels that way. We are lucky to have had Jeff here for ten years. Jeff's journey to Eagle Rock School began at Aspen Lodge way back in the 90's, in a kitchen run by a man named Tim Phelps, yes, the guy who's the head honcho in our kitchen now. Tim went back to teaching high school, so Jeff had to find another certified chef to study under. Therefore, he went back to Loveland, Colorado to work. Jeff then needed Tim (who at that point was at ERS) to sign off on some papers for the final stage of his certification. After this encounter, the year was 1994, ER-3, one of the first summers of Eagle Rock's history, and who was working part time in the kitchen? Jeff! While at Eagle Rock, Jeff was still working in Loveland in another kitchen. Jeff had heart for working two jobs. He has been playing all 60 minutes from the moment he got to Eagle Rock.

Jeff finished chef school and left both jobs. Tim appeared to offer a full time job, which was unavailable when Jeff first applied. "I didn't think I would work here... it worked out great." Some of Jeff's favorite

memories come from being a house parent for Juniper for almost five years. Jeff enjoyed "just being around the students... most of the students have an optimistic view on life." Jeff loves helping people in or out of the kitchen. On his own time, he takes interested students to Bible study. "I think that was a help to some students." Jeff offers Bible study to students not to push his beliefs on others but to encourage students to look at themselves spiritually beyond religion. Another thing Jeff liked about Eagle Rock was the emphasis on integrity. "That's what creates a healthy community."

I tried to get him to talk about any bad times he may have had during his over ten year adventure at Eagle Rock, and all he said was, "There has never really been anything bad." So I asked about challenges he may have had. He said, "Understanding that people are at different levels." Jeff believes, "To be an effective staff member you need patience."

Jeff is not only smart at making meals we love; while being here he earned his degree in theology. "Eagle Rock creates an environment where it's cool to learn; people are really supportive up here." He began working on this degree right out of high school. He continued to work on his degree because "it's important to finish what you start - I think it builds character."

Jeff's three favorite things to do on his own time are: riding motorcycles, reading the Bible, and "smoking cigars with Tim, Scott, and Big Mike." I hope that my words give Jeff the respect he deserves. You da' man Jeff, and you will not be forgotten.

## A PARENT SENDS THANKS

*by Velma Bolyard, Parent*

*Eagle Rock recently received this letter from the mother of Eagle Rock School graduates Ian & Hannah Stevens.*

Dear Eagle Rock:

Consider this a love letter. I have thought long and hard about how it is that I can express my deep gratitude for what Eagle Rock School, staff and students, has done for my children and me. I have finally decided to just write it out and see if I can say what I mean. No doubt, I will be unable to say exactly what I need to, but I'll try.

Eagle Rock, simply put, saved Ian's life. He may or may not squander the great gifts he has been given, but it will not be for lack of incredible effort on your part. Eagle Rock taught him lessons of justice, equity, love and righteousness. I'm not sure he is able to be healthy, but he certainly knows how, that his gifts are unique and worthwhile and that he has a real obligation to society.

Hannah's recent graduation has been cause for great celebration for our family. I was very hesitant in sending Hannah to Eagle Rock. I knew that her sensitive and reticent nature could be overwhelmed by the boisterous and hard love of ERS. Indeed, she was challenged and within the framework of love and dignity for all people, she prospered. Her struggles were different than Ian's, but profound. Hannah found a passion for justice and her own voice at ERS. She is more mature than many 19 year olds I know, not perhaps in worldly ways, but in the ways of heart, mind and spirit. She has developed a keen and profound questioning.

And me, I have changed too. ERS inspires me to think and hard about what it means to be educated, what it means for me to be a teacher, why I continue to work with emotionally disturbed kids (under the umbrella of special education). I have suffered the agonies of long distance single mothering with two very different children. Phone calls have come telling me of great news triumphs,

*...See Parent Thanks - Page 7*

## EAGLE ROCK PARTNERS WITH SKYVIEW ACADEMY

by **Dan Condon, Associate Director of Professional Development**

With generous support from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, the Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) launched a five-year initiative to create a network of twenty CES mentor schools, actively engaged in fostering the creation of new schools through innovative practice. Eagle Rock School was named one of these new Mentor Schools.

In January, 2004 Eagle Rock formalized its mentoring partnership with Skyview Academy of the Mapleton Public School District of Thornton, Colorado.

A district-wide high school reform effort that manifested itself through Mapleton School District's strategic planning process is resulting in the large to small school conversion of Skyview High School into six smaller schools. One of these schools, Skyview Academy, is being designed and implemented based on CES Common Principles.

Skyview Academy is being designed to maximize the personal and academic success of all students. The Academy will be characterized by:

- ▲ Students who demonstrate strong intellectual habits of mind.
- ▲ The AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) Program.
- ▲ Project-based activities, resulting in portfolios, exhibitions, narratives, journal entries, and transcripts for demonstrating their learning.
- ▲ Opportunities to access internships and college level course work during the junior and senior year.

Eldon Wire, Director of Skyview Academy explains, "Skyview's reform or reinvention will impact students in many powerful ways. Students will as a result of the transformation to small learning communities students will know their teachers and peers, they will have a

menu of school with varying pedagogy's to choose from and they will have a staff that will connect learning to relevant life issues. Others will learn that there is power in partnerships. Partners pushing the bounds of thinking about how students learn, what is relevant and how student and teacher choices affect the learning of both students and adults.



Eagle Rock School has a long history of positive impact on young people that most public schools would have tossed aside; I have witnessed a purposeful, explicit, and transparent way of building and sustaining a positive culture. They have a dedicated, knowledgeable staff that connects life and learning for all students."

Commenting on the selection of Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center into the Mentor School Network, Mara Benitez

and Laura Flaxman, Co-Directors of the CES Mentor School Project noted that "The Eagle Rock community has created a safe space where students are encouraged to explore and embrace different aspects of their identity, leading them to discover new passions, talents and abilities that they might not have known they had." They also mentioned, "Eagle Rock is clearly a community of learners; there is a genuine intellectual exchange taking place between students and teachers in each classroom with the adults fully involved and continuously learning alongside the youth." Lastly, they pointed out, "The innovative, value-laden and democratic school practices and structures enable all members of the school community an opportunity to create a sense of mutual accountability and interdependence."

In speaking about the collaboration Wire shares, "The partnerships with Eagle Rock along with CES and the Public Education and Business Coalition have pushed the Skyview Academy staff to a much deeper level of looking at teaching and learning. We have learned to go deeper in our thinking about relevance and connections, relationships and offering all students access to deeper learning."

To learn more about the Small School Project visit: [http://www.essentialschools.org/pub/ces\\_docs/ssp/ssp.html](http://www.essentialschools.org/pub/ces_docs/ssp/ssp.html)

...Parent Thanks - Cont. from Page 6

and pain. Philbert's voice has surprised me more than once, for more than one kind of news! Emails have kept me in touch with ERS news (bless you, Robert). I have been honored to teach during Explore Week and have been asked to return. Each time I visit, I come away pondering deeply how I might be a better woman, mother, teacher and citizen. You have all made a huge difference in this small family and I am deeply grateful. I will always hold you very dear in my heart and mind, remembering wonderful conversations, beautiful faces, hugs that nurture, hard conversations, love and the desire to create a learning environment that is exceptional. Thank you.

## REMARKABLE LEARNING EXPERIENCES

by **Dan Condon, Associate  
Director of Professional  
Development**

Following a long tradition of creative, project based, experiential, interdisciplinary classes, the 2005 summer trimester schedule was recently announced at Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center. Curriculum at Eagle Rock School encourages student ownership of learning, demands documented or demonstrated mastery of graduation competencies (requirements) and allows for the individualization of credit toward graduation. It is distinct from curriculum at most other schools in several ways. Our goal is that every Eagle Rock graduate will be a productive, engaged citizen, ready and willing to make difference in the world.

**Guatemala** is the first class in Eagle Rock's history culminating with an international trip. Students will be providing service, learning Spanish, teaching English and living with host families in the town of San Andres, in the Peten region of Guatemala.

In **Let it Ride** - Mountain Biking and Math students will spend their time riding on trails near Estes Park or building a mountain bike trail on campus. Students will learn the motions and forces that govern the physics of a mountain bike. They will also study the law of conservation on energy and how it applies to our mountain biking experiences.

**Gallery & Museum Tours** will bring students to local front range historical museums and sites with the intent to attempt to answer questions about how, who, and why, different people are drawn to the Front Range. The art and culture of a variety of different groups will be looked at with specific interest in how the cultures were recorded, shared and lost. Several important geographical sites along with galleries and museums on the front range will be visited. Students

will travel on foot, by bike, and in a bus to get to these areas and places.

**Lucky Stiff** is this Summer's musical. The production will feature a small cast of twelve students and community members. Instructors have planned a full schedule including a trip to a theatre in Denver, acting seminars, and academics in a number of disciplines. The show is a comedy about a shoe salesman who unexpectedly inherits six million dollars -- if he can fulfill a number of bizarre requests from his deceased uncle.

**Learners Guild** is an internship opportunity for students to engage with a local professional in one of their areas of career interest. Students receive a real life experience in career exploration, work ethic, and professional conduct. Students will also gain transitional skills and information to prepare them for adult responsibilities after leaving high school.

**Elemental Poetry**, an outdoor class (in the elements), allows students the opportunity to read and write poetry. Students will gain familiarity with the basic elements of poetry - metaphor, simile, hyperbole, onomatopoeia, rhyming patterns, among others. The class will also publish a poetry anthology.

**For the Birds** allows students a learning experience though studying bird breeding behavior in Rocky Mountain National Park as part of an ongoing, nation wide study funded by Cornell University's Lab of Ornithology. Students will investigate the environmental issues surrounding birds and their habitats, both in Rocky Mountain National Park (RMNP) and throughout the United States.

In **Whatever the Heck You Want**, a literature and history course, students will have the opportunity to read and study "whatever the heck they want" as long as they can get other students interested in the same topic. This class is primarily based on Harvey Daniels' Literature Circles, with emphasis on student choice and student led discussion.

**Green Thumb Bums** incorporates gardening, service, environmental science, and botany. The class focuses are the resurrection of Eagle Rock's bio shelter (greenhouse) and participating in the full process of plant growth from seed to sale at a local farmers market.

**Keep Hope Alive** is an introduction to oratory and rhetoric. The focus is on oratory as it played a role in shaping history and societal discourse.

In **Colorado Rocks**, students will discover through the theme of "change over time" by studying geology and water issues in the West, reading and writing about nature, and rock climbing, with a focus on personal growth. This rigorous academic course focuses on science, environmental science, and environmental writing. The class will follow an expeditionary learning format and will be located primarily in and around the Estes Valley and Rocky Mountain National Park.

In **Math & Cooking** students will prepare food to be sold at the local farmer's market. In small teams they will plan, order, and prepare a dinner for the Eagle Rock community. All the while they will be learning about mathematical principles of optimization through profit maximizing lens.

**Free Form Funkafide Fiddles** examines music theory, music history and guitar playing techniques. Students will progress in scales, modes, chords, and understanding building chords and three-chord theory.

**Arnatomy** explores the human form through anatomy, physiology, and the visual arts. Students will examine how muscle and bone cells behave as individual microscopic units, and how they work together on a large scale to provide us with the bodies that we are so familiar with. By examining the portrayal of the human body in art over time and through various cultures, the class will strengthen understanding of how art and science have been integrated to create what we now know about the human body.



... Learning Experiences - Cont. from Page 8

**A Spike Lee Joint** will examine contemporary American society through the lens of Spike Lee's films. The essential question guiding this course is "What are the forces in society that drive people apart and bring them together?"

**Peacing Together the Middle East** focuses on the culture, politics,

and history of the Middle East. The class partially focuses on solutions to the Middle East crises and submerges students into the hospitality, religion, food, and family of the Middle East with an intent on understanding our global neighbors.

**Math & Music** involves using math to understand the physics of sound. Students will explore the shape that sound takes in the form of sound

waves with unique frequencies and amplitudes. They will also study the mathematical properties of the guitar.

**Paradigm Shift Ahead** serves as a consumer guide to wisdom. Students will learn to appreciate and evaluate a diverse array of wisdom traditions and consider how these relate to their own moral and ethical code.

## STUDENTS KEYNOTE NATIONAL CONFERENCE IN ORLANDO

by Dan Condon, Associate Director of Professional Development

Eagle Rock School students Tah'nee Coleman, Sevi Forman, Jillian Weiser and Jose Orellana with Dr. Lois Easton, former Director of Professional Development, serving as panel moderator, delivered the keynote address at the 11<sup>th</sup> Joint National Conference on *Alternatives to Expulsion, Suspension, and Dropping Out of School* on February 10 in Orlando, Florida. The conference was organized by the University of Wisconsin – Green Bay, the International Center for the Study of Social Issues, in collaboration with the Division of Outreach and Extension, and the National Alternative Education Association.

The keynote address, entitled *Voices from the Margin: Alternative Education Students Speak Out*, was delivered to over 250 participants including directors and staff of alternative education schools and programs, schools and community counselors, health workers, law enforcement personnel, religious and government leaders, security staff, agency directors and administrators and crisis workers.

Eagle Rock students pondered and addressed many of the following questions during their one hour address which ended in a standing ovation:

- What makes a good classroom environment for students?
- What qualities do people need to work with students who are in danger of dropping out?
- What did you learn by being expelled, suspended or punished?
- What alternatives are used by Eagle Rock School?
- What role do power, authority, control and ownership play in engaging students in learning?

- Whose responsibility is it to learn?
- What are the results of low expectations v. high expectations?
- Why is community important to learning and how does Eagle Rock build community?
- How does choice affect your learning and how does Eagle Rock provide choice?
- What can you tell us about being in charge of your own learning?
- What is the role of service in learning?
- What advice would you have for public high schools?
- When did school start getting bad for you and what could have happened to change how you felt?

The purpose of the conference is to share insights on the causes and problems related to school expulsion, suspensions and dropouts and to examine ways to deal with students who are considered delinquent, violent, or dangerous. The conference presentations, spanning three days, were charged to outline programs and practices designed to:

- Reduce the number of youth who are at high risk of expulsion, suspension and dropping out of school.
- Help youth return to school or engage in work and educational activities that increase their chances of becoming productive citizens.
- Change attitudes, increase skills, provide opportunities for youth, enhance staff development and increase community collaboration.
- Provide information on parent involvement, governmental policies, and legislative issues.

For information on the 2006 conference, being held February 16–18: <http://www.uwgb.edu/outreach/alternatives/>

## IMAGINE: THOSE WHO DARE

by *Caroline Correia and Danielle Skinner, visiting student teachers from Ontario, Canada*

Imagine a school that functions as a community. Imagine a school in which every practice is purposeful. Imagine a school where there are no limits for those who dare. Imagine.

Imagine a school full of minds that are challenged to inquire, to question, and to form beliefs. In using problem-based learning techniques, students would acquire the ability to think critically. Students would be encouraged to questioning the bias of the resources they use. Over the course of their studies, students would be asked to reflect upon and develop their own moral and ethical code. These approaches would equip students with tools to make educated and purposeful decisions in their lives.

Imagine a school where students and staff have voices. The opinions of students would be sought prior to any major decisions being made. Their ideas and concerns would be valued and taken seriously. Students would sit on hiring panels and be invited to ask questions of potential staff. Their thoughts and visions would be an intricate part of the school's growth. Additionally, staff would meet regularly to reflect upon the school's practices and to discuss ways in which to improve them. Advancement would not only be an individual goal, but one embraced school-wide.

Imagine a school where open and honest communication is emphasized. Staff would model healthy forms of communication. Small groups of staff and students would meet regularly to discuss personal and academic growth. Additionally, students would routinely share with the community obstacles that they are facing or joys they are celebrating. The community would then be invited to respond with words of encouragement, constructive criticism, and care. By practicing healthy communication, the founda-

tion for healthy relationships would be set.

Imagine a school where the lines between instructors and students are blurred. Students could help teach lessons or run clubs based on their interests and experiences. Here teaching and learning from peers would be a norm. In classrooms, it would not only be the teacher's responsibility to ask questions and provide answers, but the accountability would be shared by all members of the classroom. Each person would be responsible for contributing to his or her own learning process and personal growth.

Imagine a school that uses the physical structure of classrooms and living spaces to encourage the development of community. Round tables in classrooms would unify the learning community and empower each student to become an essential participant. Comfortable gathering spaces would create a relaxed environment contributing to open dialogue during community meetings.

Imagine a school that gives back to the greater community through acts of service. Students could be involved in tutoring school children, performing with local choirs, or providing service work in National Parks or on organic farms. By serving the local community, the school would create bonds of friendship and respect. Students would also be encouraged to find ways to help other people in need around the world.

Imagine a school that fosters environmental stewardship. Students would learn to become more environmentally aware and developing greener practices through recycling efforts, food waste minimization, and by turning off lights when not in use. Students would be invited to review and revise the school's environmental efforts.

Imagine a school where physical health and fitness are valued and actively pursued. The incorporation

of morning exercises and an afternoon siesta would reflect the school's attentiveness to the physical needs of its staff and learners. A holistic approach, which recognizes physical needs, would promote an optimal learning environment.

Imagine a school where the arts are celebrated. Art supplies would be available to students to use at their leisure. Daily community meetings would end with a sharing of music. Artwork created by students would decorate the entire campus. Dramatic performances would occur annually in an open-air theatre. Meaningful literature would be frequently shared during community meetings.

Imagine staff and students sharing a passion for reading. Stimulating literature would be freely passed throughout the community. By exposing students to exceptional material and letting the intrinsic value of that material serve as the motivation to read, literacy would naturally be promoted.

Imagine a school community that embraces a shared philosophy, which would be applied not only to teaching or learning, but also to living. With developed themes and expectations, staff and students would agree upon a clear set of commitments to which they would adhere. Together they would live in respectful harmony with others, practice effective communication, make healthy personal choices, be engaged citizens, and participate in democratic living, among others. By sharing a common philosophy

Imagine a school that functions as a community. Imagine a school in which every practice is purposeful. Imagine a school where there are no limits for those who dare. Imagine.

During our short time at Eagle Rock School, we have realized that the situations mentioned above are not simply imagined. These are dreams that we have witnessed as reality during our visit. It is possible.





# SALE EXTENDED THRU 8/1

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**All Proceeds Benefit the Graduate Higher Education Fund**



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# NEW LANGUAGE ARTS AND LITERATURE INSTRUCTIONAL SPECIALIST HIRED

by Molly Nichols, Language Arts & Literature Instructional Specialist

The English department is about to be transformed. Alison Trattner blessed Eagle Rock with her presence for eight years, developing a strong reading, writing, and drama program. Since her departure in August of '04, Molly Nichols, the Public Allies teaching fellow from '03-'04, has been working as the interim instructional specialist (IS). We are very pleased to announce that Eric Farmer will be starting as the new IS this September.

Eric hails from North Carolina and worked as the Learning Resource Center fellow from ER 19 to ER 21 (2000-2001). "Being able to work with students individually and forge lasting relationships is the cornerstone of my experience at Eagle Rock," Eric said.

After his year here, Eric began teaching English and Music at Life Learning Academy in the Bay Area, and has been there since. He has also been attending the University of San Francisco to earn his Master's degree in Education.

We are now very fortunate that Eric has "responded to a call coming from a place much stronger and more holy than I" by accepting the English IS position. In the words of Robert

Burkhardt, "Eric is eminently qualified professionally, he is steeped in Eagle Rock culture and values, and he brings a deep soul and abundant energy to this position."

Eric sees teaching as an opportunity to "give back," thanking the teachers in his life for "making him who he is." He also sees education as a form of liberation and a vehicle for social justice. In this pursuit at Eagle Rock, Eric hopes to not only integrate curriculum effectively but also "critique the boundaries of the so-called subject areas," which he foresees to be a "thought-provoking challenge." Eric considers these boundaries to be "artificial"

and knows that incorporating literacy across the curriculum is a strong first step to breaking them down.

It is clear that Eric will be a "positively contributing member of the community,"

which he articulated as one of his hopes. He will bring his expertise as an inspiring teacher, along with his passions for singing and making music, eating fabulous desserts, playing chess, and "learning more about the truths of who we are." Eagle Rock certainly looks forward to Eric's arrival in August, along with the energy and insight he will bring to our community.



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