Family and Children’s Services has taken the initial step towards improving services for youth in foster care.

If enthusiasm translated into a building, an education centre for foster children facing challenges learning in traditional settings would already be a reality if the first sessions of a two-day retreat are any indication.

A group of more than 20 individuals, including FCS staff members, board members and community stakeholders are working to develop an action plan for the centre which Ron Groskleg, FCS director of project development, hopes to have running by September 2009.

“We are creating a lot of energy here today and I am pleased to see the level of participation and involvement in the sharing of ideas,” he said. “Excitement needs to be generated from the community surrounding the project, parents, families and businesses.”

The centre will be based on the Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Centre in Colorado, which has provided its director and associate director of professional development Michael Soguero and Dan Condon respectively, to serve as facilitators for sessions throughout the retreat.

They, along with Jeff Palladino, co-director of the Bronx Guild High School and Dr. Sandra Gomez of Silver Hill Hospital in New Canaan, Connecticut are in Pembroke to share their struggles, successes and ideas with those who will ultimately work to develop the education centre’s vision and focus.

“We are sharing some of our own stories and struggles because we have all been involved in starting schools and programs,” said Mr. Soguero.

Mr. Condon is impressed with the group’s willingness to try something different to meet the needs of the young people it serves. He is honoured to be involved in the process.

See “Impact in Canada” - Continued on Page 8

---

**DEVELOPING COLLABORATION AND LEARNING AMONG MATH EDUCATORS**

*by Ben Shear, Former Mathematics Instructional Specialist*

During recent visits to small, alternative schools in New York, Colorado, and California, with an eye to teaching mathematics, I noticed two particularly common themes. First, many small schools struggle to teach math effectively using alternative methods and second, the math teachers I met were all incredibly open and enthusiastic about sharing resources and ideas with me. As a new math teacher at a small school struggling to effectively teach mathematics through problem solving and with critical thinking myself, I value the collaborative experiences I’ve had with other math educators. This same spirit

See “Collaboration” - Continued on Page 11
“They met as strangers and what they learned changed their lives forever. Featuring hit songs from the 1980s.” The tag line sums up Eagle Rock’s summer musical perfectly. Breaking from the traditional musical style, this year’s production was a different take on the popular 1980’s movie, “The Breakfast Club.” It followed the familiar theme of a group of teenagers from different walks of life stuck together in the library for weekend detention. Each character represents a different stereotype and as the day goes on, they realize just how similar they are.

Shaun Royer, former Music Instructional Specialist, wanted to do something that had never been done before. He feels “it’s relatable to what many people see at ERS: various, diverse people contained in one space, who have to figure out how to live together and interact.” He also wanted an active role in how the content would come out that encouraged students to create and develop additional characters. Students also updated some of the 80’s slang and made it more audience appropriate. The show debuted on Friday, July 25th with 2 additional performances on Saturday, July 26th.

Creating a musical is a lot of work, so “1985” was actually a collaboration of two classes: On With The Show and Hot Summer Nights. The latter was in the afternoon and consisted of the musical cast. Students had the opportunity to earn credit in creative writing, musical performance and music theory to name just a few. The cast members were: Xiomara Watson (who played Claire, the privileged princess), Hector Verdugo (Bender, the sly criminal), Aisha Davis (Mae, the smart prep), Tyler Hall (Brian, the brilliant brain), Brian Counselman (Andrew, the ultra athlete), Tatiana Vinzant and Katie Miller (both played Allison, the crazy, basket case), Diamond McNeal (Ms. Vernon, the overzealous principal) and Sheena McAllister (Carla, the blackmailing janitor).

Of course, no musical can be complete without a tech crew. On With The Show is a music production class, where the students learned about electric current and sound units, accounting and business management, and how to write, record and edit music amongst other things. These skills correspond to science, math, and technology credit. To better understand the business side of the industry, the class had the amazing opportunity to meet with Chris Lemaine, a savvy million-dollar business entrepreneur. To better explore the cultural side of the 1980’s, students also completed their own research. For example, students interviewed staff, who had attended high school during that time, to get a first hand account of what it was like to be a student then. Last, but not least, Michael Behm, a light and sound professional from California, also visited Eagle Rock to teach students about stage technology. With these new skills, On With The Show became the backbone of the production: Clara Valdes (stage manager), Ruth Toro (assistant stage manager), Fabiola Landeros (marketing assistant), Jasson Cardoza (crew), Ian Austin (crew) and Brandon McKesey (crew).

In addition to these two classes, there were many other volunteers helping to make the show run smoothly. Susan Luna and Rose Copeland worked tirelessly on set designs. During the finale,
“1985” - Continued from Page 2

David Peck and Brandon Johnson exhibited their acrobatic skills while Robert Burkhardt amazed the audience with his juggling prowess.

All of the students and volunteers worked feverishly through late night rehearsals to learn their lines, lyrics, choreography, staging, sound checks in order to nail down the final details. Some of the most memorable moments included the choreographed songs, such as: “She Works Hard for the Money” performed by Carla (Sheena McAllister) as the hard working janitor and her dancing custodial assistants, “Fast Car” sung by Claire (Xiomara Watson) to her new beau Bender (Hector Verdugo), “I Love Rock ‘n Roll” where Mae (Aisha Davis), sings about her newly discovered spontaneity and “Take My Breath Away” by Allison (Katie Miller), who serenades her new crush Andrew (Brian Counselman). The choreographed full and limited ensemble numbers consisted of: “1985”, “Walk This Way”, “Girls Just Wanna Have Fun” and “Our Lips Are Sealed.” The grand finale resulted in oohs and aahs alike as Katie Miller (Allison) sang the popular 1980’s teen icon song “Electric Youth” with full cast choreography, vocals, bows, acrobats and the dropping of a hundred balloons with streamers.

As with every year, the summer musical is a large undertaking. In the end the dedicated cast and crew indeed pulled it off all the while putting to practice a variety of newfound skills. Both the interactions of the 1985 characters and a reflection of the Eagle Rock experience provide a great lens for appreciating diversity and finding common ground.

See actual video clips of “1985” at http://tinyurl.com/ERS1985

---

TWO MORE GRADUATES TAKE FLIGHT
by Katie Miller, Former Public Allies Fellow in the Professional Development Center

On August 8, 2008, two more graduates walked the stage and received their diplomas from Eagle Rock School. For Haleigh Jackson-Oakley and Peter Herlihy, graduation is an exciting leap from the safe nest of Eagle Rock to soaring toward their dreams.

The graceful and intelligent Haleigh Jackson-Oakley hails from Windsor, CO. Before coming to Eagle Rock, she was going to school in Oregon, but not really liking it. She was looking for a way to come back to Colorado when she learned about Eagle Rock. The classes intrigued her and she felt that Eagle Rock was a place where she could succeed.

She began as a student in ER-39 (May, 2006) and has changed immensely during her time as an Eagle Rock student. One of her major learnings over the past two years is that her concept of what and who make up her surroundings has widened. She is more aware of herself and how her actions affect others. She has worked on this notion by taking time to think about the consequences before acting on her emotions. Another significant area of growth for her has been in the personal growth realm. At first, Haleigh admits it was hard to accept feedback and didn’t truly believe that she needed to incorporate it into her life or change at all for that matter. Now, she accepts personal growth and has learned to recognize it within herself.

Part of her personal growth has also included discovering what interests she has. When asked about her passions, Haleigh is quick to answer: “learning and educating people on the benefits of hemp.” She first became...
A POETIC APPROACH

BY CYNTHIA J. ELKINS, INSTRUCTIONAL SPECIALIST IN VISUAL ARTS

In the 1980’s Wendy Ewald began a program in rural USA that empowered young students to communicate more effectively through the use of cameras. She developed four themes, Family, Community, Dreams, and Self Portraits in her program entitled Literacy Through Photography (LTP). Duke University’s Center for Documentary Studies in Durham NC, hosts workshops and creates outreach programs for educators based on Ewald’s work. “Harvard University’s Project Zero ‘Arts Survive’ survey identified LTP as one of the ten partnerships in the United States that have successfully sustained a high quality work in collaboration with another institution.” In February of 2008, Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center sent Libby Widlic, Eva Rupert, and me to the two day training. We returned to ERS prepared to plan and implement the program during the summer trimester, ER-45. Prior to attending, we had some ideas for designing a class involving writing and art. Afterwards, we had a strong focus of how to tailor Ewald’s teachings into our own class, P2: Photography & Poetry.

In LTP students explore issues relating to their culture, bodies, and personal history through visual storytelling. This allows teachers to better understand the student that builds relationships and strengthens the ability to develop community within classrooms and schools. Students are asked to examine their challenges, fears, hopes, and childhood through powerful methods of communication, writing and photography. A body of visually stimulating images is extensively written about; writing acts as the catalyst for photography, drawing, and storytelling. While grammar and punctuation are important, the creative voice of the piece as it relates to personal history takes precedence. The LTP program validates the learner by making the student’s life the focus of study. It challenges students to open up to themselves and to their classmates, thus developing a strong culture within the classroom. Within this kind of class culture, conversations have potential to be honest amazing times of sharing from a safe place. During the P2 bi-weekly guided critiques, students spoke, shared stories and did reflective writings on their work and the work of others in class. One critique of student photos required everyone to reflect and write in silence their three best words on a sticky note, and then attach it to a drawing board that displayed the shots. These words were then used as inspiration for the photographer to write a haiku about the presented images. Gaining insight from classmates in this intimate setting encouraged the photographer to realize new aspects about themselves while developing their photography and writing skills.

The P2 class focused on self reflection using questions rooted in asking, “What is at my core?” Morning and afternoon rituals introduced, reviewed and developed student awareness of the enduring understandings embedded in the P2 course. The concepts of Self Knowledge, Expression, and Exploration were developed using the enduring understandings and essential questions that led the design of the course.

All forms of photography used in LTP require the photographer to plan, set up, and shoot the image in a very intentional manner. Planning the shot is a process that often has a pre-writing or drawing exercise, including talking it out with a partner or in a group setting. The structured intentional process emphasizes a strong distinction between observed facts and assumptions. When we look at an image we can read what is going on based on our personal prior knowledge or on detailed facts that are actually in the photo. Projecting a photograph up in the classroom and asking everyone to jot down observed factual details is the beginning step for many of the lessons. Afterwards, a round robin style listing and a discussion on the facts can lead to an in-depth imaginative storytelling based on those facts. Helping students distinguish between fact and assumption is powerful in that we can usually all agree on a fact in a photo but may have extremely different assumptions from the same image. Eva, Libby, and I presented this first step in the process at our staff meeting to share what we were up to with our co-workers.

Through the use of props, paying attention to the angle a photo is shot, realizing the relationship between the photographer and the photo, incorporating the needed background, middle ground, and foreground, students are taught how to intentionally convey their message. Thus developing a strong understanding of visual literacy. How and what the student chooses to include in the frame of the photo is analyzed before, during, and critiqued afterwards. Framing and executing the image became both challenging and exciting to everyone involved. Relying on classmates to stand in during the self-portrait posing and shooting continued to build communication skills among the participants. As we better understood the crucial elements of the story the integrity of the artists’ intention developed.
Polaroid, digital, film, and traditional black and white photography can all be used. Polaroid has a certain charm and allure to it that will be lost; the film will soon no longer be made. Instant gratification associated with a digital camera, makes it the least desirable of the photographic processes for the LTP program. If digital is used, students are encouraged to slow down and not delete. A limit on how many frames can be shot for any one project supports the challenge in getting students to slow down and think about the what and why. Our P2 class started with Polaroid, used digital extensively, and dabbled in traditional black and white dark room processing of film and printing of our own images. Teaching technical aspects including how to operate the different cameras and what makes a good photograph, launched students into understanding depth of field, framing, and point of view. As these ideas were brought to the attention of the photographer, they were able to capture the best possible visual story. Learning to lead the viewer into thinking about what is going on in the photograph and what might be going on just out of the picture was more difficult with some of the LTP themes than others. Creating stories that could be very literal or extremely imaginative posed challenges for the students as they explored the different photographic processes. Each student began developing a favorite process or relationship with his or her camera of choice. By the end of the course, students were allowed to choose which tool they wanted to use for their final projects.

While marveling at the photographic achievements of Hal Gould at the Camera Obscura Gallery in Denver, a deeper realization of what it takes to set up the perfect shot was acknowledged by the class participants. A tighter bond within our class culture and appreciation of who we are at our core as human beings was evident during five weeks of experiencing two arts. Whether using a manual camera with black and white film that you process yourself or a point and shoot disposable processed at the one hour photo, students exercised their brains and passions to tell their stories. With supportive guidelines from the Literacy Through Photography educators at Duke University’s Center for Documentary Studies, we successfully created a challenging summer course that bridged gaps and opened doors for more growth and creative efforts using writing and photography.

---

**LEARNING RESOURCE CENTER EXPANSION COMPLETE**

by Beth Ellis, Instructional Specialist in Learning Resource & Information

The finishing touches have been put on the Learning Resource Center (LRC) expansion, and it is now open for business. Ground broke last fall to expand the Instructional Specialist (IS) office as well as to add a new media and technology lab to the first floor of the LRC.

The LRC was built fifteen years ago before the Eagle Rock staff expanded to include twelve Public Allies Teaching Fellows. The IS office, which is designed much like the American Honda Motor Company offices with an open layout, has accommodated most, but not all of the teaching staff over the years. Jeff Liddle, Director of Curriculum, remembers, “When I was an IS, I found the proximity to colleagues would contribute significantly to collaboration. There were many conversations about curriculum, classes, students, and other school issues that would never have happened if staff were in separate offices around campus. Unfortunately the space did not fit everyone and therefore many folks were left out. We are looking forward to this new space being a vessel for collaboration, integrated curriculum, and teamwork.”

The Kinnikinnick space (in true Eagle Rock fashion spaces are named after a plant or tree; in this case the Bearberry) has become an unexpected bonus to the IS office addition. Located off the amphitheater and under the IS office expansion, it was originally planned as storage. We’ve re-imagined that space as a multi-media, language, and technology lab. The new space, lovingly named Kinnikinnick by LRC Associate Dan Madson, is well lit, spacious, and set up to be a multipurpose room capable of servicing classes, staff meetings, and other needs requiring flexible space.

We would love to show you our beautiful campus including our new LRC expansion. Scheduled tours occur on most Tuesday’s at 2:00 pm and Saturday’s at 2:00 pm. All tours must be arranged in advance by calling 970.586.0600. Tours take about 1-1/2 hours and involve walking, so be sure to wear comfortable shoes. (We tour in any kind of weather, so dress appropriately!)
COLORADO STUDENTS SERVE AS ETHNOGRAPHERS IN NATIONAL EVALUATION PROJECT

by Maddy Wegner

Reprinted with permission from The Generator, a publication of the National Youth Leadership Council. Volume 26, Number 2, Summer 2008.

What assets do out-of-school youths offer the workplace? Students at Eagle Rock School, a residential school in Estes Park, CO, for those who haven’t thrived in mainstream settings, figured that was a question worth asking their peers.

The Kellogg Foundation, sponsor of a 10-year study exploring various credentials as alternatives to high school diplomas, recognized that these Eagle Rock students offer perspectives that professional researchers don’t. Michael Soguero’s service-learning students have a base of empathy: All have opted out of traditional schooling themselves. They have come to this alternative school, an initiative of the nonprofit Honda Education Corporation, to try a new approach to education.

And the Eagle Rock approach, which emphasizes experiential education and service-learning, was also a fit for the study. In a sense, students engaged in a dual evaluation project over a four-month period. They were participating in a national evaluation project through a service-learning class, which had its own elements of “progress monitoring” to assess student performance and project efficacy. By its culmination, they had implemented most of the indicators related to the standard — collecting feedback from multiple perspectives, aggregating and analyzing their data, and presenting their findings to the Kellogg Foundation.

“We were really thought of as partners in the project,” says Soguero, a math teacher who is also the Director of Professional Development at Eagle Rock. Working with a research firm based in Atlanta, GA, Eagle Rock students received training in the ethnographic skills of neutrality and objectivity in interviewing, surveying, and documentation. Through their carefully designed protocols, eight students captured the sentiments of more than 75 of their predominantly male, black, and Latino 14- to 22-year-old peers who lived in Baltimore, MD, and Oakland, CA.

As student participant Amanda Hanson attests, “We were dealing with a real-life situations where we got to develop skills in finding a solution.” Posing questions such as “What do you want in life?” and “What makes it hard for you to get it?” they explored their interview subjects’ aspirations and hurdles.

Because the Eagle Rock students had faced similar hurdles themselves, their base of empathy made the experience powerful. “I feel like the public school system failed me as well,” said Hanson. “Now I get a chance to talk to youths ... who feel the same way, and our class gets to help out with a project that is trying to do what Eagle Rock does ... offer a different route to getting the same thing, but in different and better ways — in ways that youths want to be a part of, that get them excited about learning and being alive.”

While learning ethnographic skills, Eagle Rock students applied their technology and math skills. They learned to look for patterns among the responses, correlations between the surveys and interviews, and developed a typology of responses. “They learned about navigating the real world,” says Soguero — and an unanticipated outcome was the offer of an internship at the Kellogg Foundation for one of the students. Perhaps least surprising, they found that service-learning was among the programs that help out-of-school youths take meaningful first steps to employment.

Visit www.nylc.org for a free subscription to The Generator.
GRADUATE PROFILE – WHERE IS SHE NOW?  
by Katie Miller, Former Public Allies Fellow in the Professional Development Center

Ally Alexander, ER-18 (Summer, 1999)  
Graduated ER-31 (Winter, 2003)  
Geography: Cairo, Egypt (or El Sobrante, CA when she’s not traveling the world)

Cairo is situated on the Nile River and home to many famous ancient sites, like the Great Pyramids of Giza. It’s one of the most populous, bustling cities in Africa boasting millions of residents, including Eagle Rock alumna, Ally Alexander.

Ally’s story begins when she found out about Eagle Rock through her grandmother, who heard about it through a friend’s son. After viewing the materials and promotional video, her first thoughts revolved around how “very corny” the video was, but also that this was a place she really wanted to be. At Eagle Rock, she was known to “walk quietly and carried a big stick.”

After graduation, Ally immediately enrolled in college at Diablo Valley College in Pleasant Hill, CA for two years before transferring to San Diego State University. Currently, she is in her second to last semester at San Diego State University and majoring in International Security and Conflict Resolution (ISCOR) with a specialization in Global Systems. She chose this major because it matched her passions and affinities: “I don’t want to have to go to school anytime soon again to do something I love.” She would much rather follow her interests than choose a career just for the money. Ally also has a minor in Arabic and Islamic Studies, which has led her to her current location in Cairo for the summer. This program allows her to earn credit for both her final semester of Arabic and study abroad.

In terms of goals, Ally has plenty. First and foremost is to graduate from college. With her major, she feels that she has a wide range of career choices ahead of her, in both the public and private sectors; perhaps the State Department, CIA or FBI. She is also looking ahead to possibly getting her masters and taking part in the Assumption Program of Loans for Education (APLE) to help defer the cost and have an opportunity to work with young people. APLE is a program that certifies individuals as teachers either for high school or grade school in either a single subject or multiple subjects. Then for every year taught in a public (usually low-income) school, the organization pays back a part of the teacher’s student loans. Ally identifies three specific areas where ERS made and continues to make a huge impact in her life: first self-motivation and self-image, second the ability to communicate effectively, and third work well in a group and finally empowerment. These three areas combined have made a lasting impression on how she relates to herself: “I know Robert [Head of School] is still telling students that they can when they think they can’t. I think [the phrase] “I can’t” has really been removed from my vocabulary because of ERS. It’s about positive self-talk and self-image. I know I have struggled with both of those things, believing myself to be a victim of my circumstances, but this is not the case. Being honest with one’s self is a difficult and long journey to get to that place where one can be brutally honest. I still sometimes struggle in these areas don’t get me wrong, but ERS has helped me to learn tools and strategies to over come these or at the least cope better.”

She has also learned about limits (mental, physical and emotional limits), and when to keep pushing and when to say enough. She describes the difference between difficult and impossible as a wide canyon. For example while in Egypt, Ally described a great obstacle that she confronted: “I had the lovely challenge of hiking up Mt Sinai (or Mt Musa as Egyptians call it)...As many Eagle Rock staff know, I like to hike or run only from serial killers in my spare time...I knew it was going to be difficult, but that didn’t stop me from challenging myself with the task.”

During her time at Eagle Rock, Ally experienced personal growth and greatly matured. When asked about what advice she could give current Eagle Rock students, she said, “My advice is simply to keep it simple. Things at the Rock get magnified 100 times and drama only complicates matters. In coming to ERS, students’ core goal is to improve themselves the best way they know how and that differs for each person. Give each other the benefit of the doubt and live in the moment. And stay away from dings and non-negotiables too.” Ally values her time spent at Eagle Rock and hopes that every visitor, graduate, and staff member at ERS will share the values and mission of the school with as many people as possible. She will always carry a piece of it with her and hopes to pass the flame on to other young people and educators.
Recently Aspen House, one of the six student residences, took community based projects to a new level, literally. Over two years ago I thought of creating a deck for my house to enjoy. Two years ago the proposal was deemed too expensive to undertake. In April when Aspen met to discuss house retreat plans the deck came back into the picture as a topic of discussion. To reduce cost we agreed to build the deck out of the materials we found around campus and would take on the project during our house retreat in early May.

On May 13th the house was brought together out front looking at four posts in the ground. It was time to begin construction. As we progressed the metaphor of community building seemed to fall into place with each hammer of a nail. We started unstable as four individual posts and by attaching support to the house and connecting the posts with a frame we had stability. With each step there was communication and planning that involved the whole house not just one executive decision. We were building Aspen House community. The service was not only for Aspen House; it was also for the living village community to bring student life together.

We wanted to do this to build our house up and connect with each other. Aspen wanted to see a legacy left at our house that truly reflected who we have become. We wanted our stability as a house to be transformed into the physical stability of our deck.

The process was fairly quick once we understood the legalities of contracting and building on campus. We were set with a plan that was approved by administration and would abide by legal building codes. House parents Beth Ellis and Janet Johnson put the cement posts in a week before the students returned on May 11th. Our first step, as a house, was to make the frame (originally not attached to the house). We found difficulty in squaring up and being stable. Once we attached the backside of the frame to the house we were grounded and ready to complete the project.

I see the biggest change so far in the house mostly because we get up ever morning and see our hard work out in front of our house. Everyone in the house had a part in the planning, execution, and completion.

We wanted to facilitate conversations, raise questions based on our experiences and help make this project what it will become,” he said. “I am as excited to learn as I am to share.”

Mr. Groskleg appreciates the involvement of the facilitators and believes the local stakeholders will benefit greatly from the two-day retreat.

Joining Mr. Groskleg in the planning process are Jen Morine and Jimmy Frickey, a couple that has worked at the Eagle Rock School. They will be involved in curriculum development.

Considering there aren't many models in Ontario to choose from for this type of facility, Ms. Morine is pleased that Renfrew County is so open to exploring its options. She and Mr. Frickey agree it is important to tap into existing programs and give them a local spin depending on the needs of the youth in the community.

Since children from Renfrew County are currently participating in other programs outside the county, the centre's creation will allow them to be brought home closer to family and friends, freeing up some money in the process, which will be redirected to the new facility, Mr. Groskleg explained.

He is working on a budget that will be submitted to the Ministry of Children and Youth Services for consideration.
Three students had an exciting opportunity to internship with Rocky Mountain National Park this past trimester as part of their course work. Saul Flores, Ana (Gigi) Rivera and Katie Wiseman proved to be motivated, independent, responsible, and hard working students who worked in the park for several days a week. Not only did this internship turn into a paycheck for students over their trimester break, but also it opened up all kinds of career opportunities for them in the park service. This all day block class occurred during the second five-weeks of this past trimester. These three students who were selected for the class also participated in an Explore Week trip that included visiting National Parks both in and out of the state.

Jon Anderson, Human Performance Instructor, explained, “This experience has been a complete success this summer. Everyone involved has been extremely happy about how it has turned out, from the students, to their supervisors, to folks they work with in their respective divisions. I have heard time and time again that our students have been great to work with, are dependable, hardworking, and liked by the other park staff.”

Saul, who interned as a Visitor Use Assistant in the Fee Program, said, “I liked working and interacting with the visitors. I really liked learning where they were from and answering questions.” He was responsible for knowing the trail system in Bear Lake and was expected to answer a variety of questions from the public regarding this trail. He also worked out of the Bear Lake visitor booth and sold items such as trail maps and nature books. His duties also included learning how to work the National Park’s radios so that he could communicate with folks at the bus shuttle station when the Bear Lake parking lot was full. Along with doing that he was also in charge of making sure traffic kept moving through the parking lot and was responsible for letting his coworkers know, by radio, when parking spaces became available so that this information could made known to the public.

Gigi, who interned as a Student Restoration Assistant in the Resource Stewardship Division, explained, “she loved being outdoors and has learned the importance of our national parks.” She was responsible for dividing plants, fertilizing, watering, weeding, mulching, inventorizing, potting, data entry, and seed cleaning in Rocky Mountain National Park’s greenhouse and nursery. She also worked on the revegetation crew in Rocky Mountain National Park and was responsible for outplanting (transferring plants to wild areas in the park) the plants grown or stored in greenhouse. Additionally she worked on implementing the Invasive Exotic Plant Management Plan and did this by physically removing invasive weeds.

Katie, who interned as an interpretive education assistant in the Heart of the Rockies, developed curriculum and led natural history hikes for children in grades K-5 on the ecology and geology of Rocky Mountain Park. Part of her course work included creation of a math portfolio focusing on the exponential growth of the elk population, written reflection on how working in the park is addressing “nature deficit disorder” in children and interviewed rangers, both in Glacier and Rocky Mountain National Parks, about the values held by park rangers and the personal traits that make up park rangers.

Jon went onto state, “A couple of the ultimate goals of this partnership has been for our students to be offered jobs following the internship (this happened for all three of them) and for this program to be so successful this year that it happens again next year. Saul’s supervisor said something to the effect that he was a little hesitant when he heard about this and after working with Saul he hopes that the program continues for years to come! Again, folks have been really impressed.”

Jeff Liddle, Director of Curriculum, explains, “Over the years we’ve done things in Rocky Mountain National Park with our curriculum. We envision a number of expanded opportunities with the park. This summer we’ve done a variety of things (courses including For the Birds and River Watch) and the Internship Program with Saul, Gigi and Katie. This year has gone very well and we anticipate an expanded, and more strategic symbiotic programs for years to come. We are very grateful to the park for their support of Eagle Rock School and the learning of our students.”
Life within the friendly confines of Eagle Rock School is constantly changing. Every four months we graduate students and embrace new students into our family. Each year we say goodbye to beloved staff and hello to new staff who bring enthusiasm and new ideas. We are also fortunate to have a group of a dozen individuals who join us for a year of learning, living and loving within the Public Allies Teaching Fellowship Program through Eagle Rock’s Professional Development Center. Even with these folks there is change. We welcome them with open arms each August and say our sad goodbye a mere twelve months later, and once again, it’s about that time.

This year we said our fond farewells to hard working individuals who graduated on August 8th from their Public Allies Fellowship Program and move forward to use what they have learned this year through the Professional Development Center at Eagle Rock School. We wish them well in their future endeavors and although we will miss them, we celebrate what their futures hold.

Prior to arriving at Eagle Rock, Laura Kaplan, Societies and Culture Fellow, worked as a counselor in a dropout prevention program in a public high school in Queens, New York. You can take the fellow out of the city but can’t take the city out of the fellow. After leaving ERS, Laura will be returning as a counselor with a whole new bag of tricks. While she does that, she’ll be re-establishing herself in the city, exploring graduate programs, and applying for fall ’09 admission.

Melissa Page, World Languages Fellow, will be trading in the snow of Colorado for the snow of Maine. Melissa has accepted a job teaching Spanish for the Kent Hills School in Kent Hills, Maine. Along with her teaching adventure, Melissa will be coaching basketball and cross country as well as being a dorm parent in the women’s dorm.

Heather Dickerson, Curriculum Fellow, has taken a position with Naturalist at Large, starting in Southern California. This combines many of Heather’s passions including the outdoors and teaching. We all love and will sorely miss another of Heather’s passions: baking pies and cookies.

Katie Miller, Professional Development Center Fellow, took the long trip up the mountain from Denver last August and with a desire to be closer to her family and skiing, will be moving back to Denver. Ideally, Katie would like to work for a non-profit that focuses on community, a priority that was furthered at ERS.

One of our many goals here at ERS is to grow professionally as well as personally. Libby Widlic, Literacy and Literature Fellow, will be pursuing both of these goals as she leaves. Libby will be moving just down the road to Estes Park, to explore small town mountain life. She will begin her job at Kind Coffee (an ERS favorite) as well as pursuing a position as a home school teacher.

Rob Fraiser, Outdoor Education Fellow, will begin the greatest adventure of them all. No, not climbing Longs Peak. Beginning in December Rob begins the adventure of fatherhood. Rob also plans on continuing his work with youth in communities around ERS until he returns to school for a more advanced degree.

Hannah Richardson, Service Learning Fellow, has not gotten enough of the mountain life as well. Hannah will be staying in the Estes Park area to do some more exploring in the Rockies. Don’t be surprised to see Hannah climbing, hiking or even giving a lost tourist some directions.

One thing you can say about Brian Counselman, Science Fellow, is that Wisconsin is never far from his heart and soon his heart and his whole self will be back home. After Eagle Rock he will be moving back to Madison, WI in hopes of pursuing a teaching job there. He’s applied to the Madison School District and would ideally love to teach in an alternative program within the district.

Michael Rose put his business degree to good use while serving as the Math Fellow for this past year. He has accepted a teaching position as the math instructor as well as soccer coach for the St. Thomas Choir School in Manhattan. The St. Thomas Choir School is the only boarding school in NYC, which is comprised of 36 boys who are the soprano voices in the world-renowned St. Thomas Episcopal Church Choir.
“Collaboration” - Continued from Page 1

of collaboration and commitment to teaching in new ways inspires the Colorado Math Innovators’ Forum (MIF).

The MIF was originally started to provide “curricular, assessment, and philosophical support” to math educators in innovative or alternative high schools in Colorado. The group, initiated by Jimmy Frickey and Jason Cushner (both former Eagle Rock Math Instructional Specialists), is now organized and run by the teacher members themselves, and makes use of a hybrid between the Japanese Lesson Study model and the Tuning Protocol process developed by the Coalition of Essential Schools. The MIF provides opportunities for teachers to come together and present lessons, assessments, or other activities they have used, along with examples of student work. After the work is critiqued and reflected upon by peers, the presenting teacher or teachers agree to revise the lesson based on the feedback from the group. The hope is that slowly but surely the revised lessons, assessments, and activities will grow into a useful resource for schools and educators. After participating in my first session with the group, I quickly realized that the process of professional collaboration happening was at least as important as the resources being created.

My participation in the MIF has been an invaluable part of my first two years of teaching math. I was fortunate enough to participate in the MIF as a presenter, participant, and facilitator, and I gained something new in each role. While presenting my own work in a forum was somewhat intimidating at first, the positive participation of other members and the insights I gained from thinking critically about my own work quickly outweighed these fears. As one member of the MIF said, “The group holds me accountable to being a ‘math innovator.’ Sometimes we call ourselves innovators but then look at our classroom practices and they don’t really look that innovative. This group has helped me try to do a better job at putting into practice what I believe about math education.”

As a participant giving feedback at subsequent sessions, I have learned how other teachers have taught and assessed student work in a variety of contexts and classes. The work we looked at has ranged from activities to discover the Pythagorean Theorem to 3-D geometry performance tasks to projects evaluating cell phone plans and finding jobs – all while emphasizing critical thinking, problem-solving and important mathematical concepts. I always left each session not only with concrete ideas and materials from some truly innovative educators, but also with a renewed energy for teaching and innovating in my own classroom.

The most recent session of the MIF took place early in July at Eagle Rock. The session focused on the mathematics portfolios used at Eagle Rock and how teachers can most effectively identify “big ideas” in mathematics and then find ways to support students in not only understanding those ideas but also documenting their learning and understanding. It provided participants the opportunity to reflect on and discuss what’s most important to include in a mathematics curriculum and to examine how we assess and support student understanding of mathematics. Michael Soguero, a former math teacher and now the Director of Professional Development at Eagle Rock, has participated in multiple MIF sessions. He explains, “Sharing and reflecting on student work is a key to continuous improvement. The Math Innovators meetings support me in thinking through what’s most important in supporting student learning. The diverse perspectives that come to the table enrich my own thinking.”

I believe the MIF provides a great example of how a commitment to professional collaboration and continuous learning, for new and experienced teachers, can both support educators and improve the educational practices at small schools. In the future, I hope we can continue to share and build off the resources and energies of groups like the MIF with a wider community of educators.

For more information about the MIF reach info@eaglerockschool.org

“Fellows” - Continued from Page 10

Andy Runyan, Human Performance Fellow, has accepted a position as a wellness teacher with the Hsinchu International School in Taiwan. We have all the confidence that Andy will be a great member of his new school as he was with ERS.

Eva Rupert, Visual Arts Fellow, will be packing up her stuff and moving to Estes Park. She will begin working with the Estes Park Alternative High School’s Art Department as well as working at the Rock Inn.

Change is what makes ERS thrive. We know the Public Allies fellows class of 07-08 will take what they have learned and make their part of the world a better place. We welcome our newest class of Public Allies Teaching Fellows to campus on August 30.
interested in hemp when the Language and Literature instructor at Eagle Rock recommended that she read “The Emperor Wears No Clothes” by Jack Herer. From there, her interest grew rapidly and even became the theme of her major research paper, which focuses on the benefits of being eco-friendly and using hemp products, particularly hemp paper.

In terms of goals, Haleigh plans to keep going strong as she starts college just two weeks after graduation. As she furthers her education at Front Range Community College in Fort Collins, she hopes to continue her strong work ethic, sense of self, and awareness of others. She wants to study business and become an entrepreneur one day.

Even though Haleigh is excited to be moving on, she will miss the staff members and students who support other students in the Eagle Rock community. One of her favorite memories is her white water rafting trip in Canyon City, CO last summer. The group camped for six days along the river and rafted for four of those days. Throughout the trip, the group (staff and students) all supported each other and worked together to make it to their final destination.

Haleigh’s fellow graduate, Peter Herlihy, is also excited to be moving on. Originally from Arroyo Grande, CA, Peter wasn’t very happy with his current situation: he didn’t feel challenged and was simply bored academically.

Since arriving in ER-33 (May, 2004), Peter has explored his passion in the applied arts, like woodworking, metalworking and whatever else catches his interest. He particularly loves projects where something is not working correctly and he gets to employ his problem solving skills to fix it. For example, when a few staff members needed a large billboard holder to house the school’s 10th anniversary billboard posters, Peter took on the challenge and created a beautiful wooden rack as one of his many legacies to Eagle Rock.

Another great memory Peter takes from Eagle Rock is his trip to Guatemala last summer. A wood enthusiast himself, he was particularly taken with the villagers’ use of raw materials: “I saw how people lived off of raw materials and made things from scratch. In the U.S., we take everything for granted. If you want to build something, you go buy supplies at Home Depot or order the wood. In Guatemala, when the villagers wanted to make a bungalow, they used basic trees that they had cut down themselves. They used palm leaves from those trees and other materials that were around them.”

On a personal level, Peter also takes away knowledge about his own personal boundaries: how not to overwork one’s self and remaining competent with however much time you have to complete that task. He feels more mature and confident in handling these difficult situations more appropriately. With these new and improved skills, Peter’s next step after graduation is to join the California Conservation Corps and work in the backcountry forest in northern California. In the future, he’d also like to be a high school art teacher and similar to his alma mater, he would also like to work in alternative education.

While the Eagle Rock community is saddened to see two of its beloved students go, there is an air of excitement as Peter and Haleigh move on and shift their amazing talent and potential to positively impact future communities around the country. Good luck, grads!

“Graduates” - Continued from Page 3