ERS TO CELEBRATE TEN YEAR ANNIVERSARY

by Lois Easton, Director of Professional Development

Grab your calendar! Circle this date: September 12, 2003. Write in big letters using a magic marker: Eagle Rock’s Tenth Anniversary Celebration!

Yes, Eagle Rock turns ten September 12, 2003. It was ten years ago -- September 12, 1993 -- that the first group of students came to Eagle Rock: ER 1. As of today’s date, we have reached ER 28, and in September 2003, we’ll have reached ER 30!

The day will begin at 10:00 AM on the Eagle Rock campus with a variety of activities. At 11:00, an official (but very lively, in the Eagle Rock way) ceremony will occur, followed by a fabulous lunch from the Eagle Rock kitchen.

Activities in the afternoon will include music, drama, art, and various demonstrations of learning around the campus -- from computers to the climbing wall.

More information will be forthcoming, but call Lois Easton at 970-586-7109 if you want to be sure your name is on the mailing list.

NEW BROCHURE, WEBSITE, AND VIDEO ABOUT EAGLE ROCK MAKE THEIR DEBUTS

by Lois Easton, Director of Professional Development

As Eagle Rock approaches its tenth anniversary, it seemed appropriate to update all the ways Eagle Rock shares its story. So, there’s a new brochure, full color, 16 glossy pages, covering the following topics: bare facts, $8 + 5 = 10, the campus, the students, a day at Eagle Rock, learning at Eagle Rock, new students, personal growth, student houses, admissions, the Professional Development Center, Eagle Rock graduates, and contact information. If you would like a copy of the new brochure, please call Lisa Spring at 970-586-0600.

The brochure was designed with the help of Omar Rodriguez of Elite Graphics in Denver.

There’s also a new website, incorporating the theme of the brochure and many of the pictures and text. You can access the website by going to www.eagle rockschool.org. It was completed with the help of Lee Lasson of On-Line Colorado.

Finally, there are two new videotapes about Eagle Rock. The longer one at 28 minutes features lots of student interviews and pictures of students and staff in action. The shorter one is about 15 minutes long and features basic information about Eagle Rock. The videotapes (which will soon be available as CDs and DVDs) can be requested from Lois Easton at 970-586-4805.
PERSONAL BREAKTHROUGHS MAKE GLOBAL DIFFERENCE

by Jennifer Nauck
(Reprinted with permission from the Friday, November 2
Trail-Gazette, p. A6)

They caught chickens, made food for monks, made bowls of coconuts and wove mats. They built outhouses for a community with no electricity, and they taught eager Thai children their ABCs. They felt the warmest hospitality in small villages and anger toward foreigners in large cities.

Those who travel abroad as young people break through more barriers than those of typical American adolescence. When they return, those who have done it agree that they grew the most when they were yanked out of their comfort zones and forced to cope with new languages, new food and new ways of life.

For nearly three years, Breakthroughs Abroad has been sending high school age students all over the world on service projects in third world countries. Garth Lewis, formerly of Eagle Rock School, and Doug Frisbee started the non-profit, which sends groups of students on several trips each year. Far from a vacation, students are expected to be committed to their service project and to immerse themselves in the culture of their host country.

This year, seven Eagle Rock students competed for spots on two different trips. The two spots were partially financed by a donation from a generous Estes Park resident. When the whirlwind selection process was finished, Naheem Edmeade, 19, was preparing for three and a half weeks on the small Fijian island of Cicia, and Gennesaret Berrigan, 20, was packing for the village of Ban Mi in Thailand. Edmeade had never been out of the country, Berrigan only when she was a baby.

Eagle Rock had instilled the service ethic in the students, and it was the idea of service that made them go, not merely their sense of adventure and love of travel. On Cicia, Edmeade and his group would help the village’s men build outhouses. Berrigan’s group did some remodeling in a Ban Mi school. Part of the trip’s tuition helped purchase materials that were needed for the projects. When they weren’t working on their respective construction projects both students were involved with teaching and tutoring children in their villages.

“It was unbelievable,” said Berrigan. “Until I was on the plane, it didn’t hit me that I was going to Thailand.”

“I think I’m still waiting for it to hit me,” said Edmeade.

When they arrived in their respective countries, Berrigan and Edmeade spent the first few days in orientation with an instructor and their fellow students, learning about their projects, getting to know each other, discussing what they wanted to get out of the experience, setting goals and learning what was expected of them. Not accomplishing their goal was not an option, said Edmeade.

“They formulated their first impressions of the other students during orientation, and they both said that it was obvious that their motivations were quite different from many of the other students on the trip.

“I wanted to learn about a different culture, and to help out a small community,” said Edmeade. Berrigan agreed, saying that unlike some of her peers, she wanted to completely immerse herself in the culture, to learn the language, and to make a connection with her host family. Others, she said, were more interested in shopping or partying. “I loved being immersed, being content with the Thai people,” she said. “I would go out and help any (host) mom with the meals or the laundry. We didn’t really talk, but we’d just be there.”

Berrigan said that breaking through the language barrier was not as hard as one might think. As she was learning Thai, she and her family and others in the village communicated through charades.

English is widely spoken in Fiji, explained Edmeade, so the language barrier did not pose so much of a problem. Yet he was still eager to learn words in Fijian, which he often did through identification games.

See “Breakthroughs” - Cont. on Pg. 7
TWO MORE STUDENTS WROTE ESSAYS FOR NATIONAL EDUCATIONAL JOURNAL

In the last issue of “Eagle Eyes,” we printed essays that two students -- Luke Sledge and Hayla Delano-Nuttall -- wrote for the leading national educational journal, Educational Leadership. The Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) printed the essays in the September 2002 issue. Here are essays from Alicia (Ally) Alexander and Patrick O’Friel. Although Ally’s essay was not printed in the journal because “it was too hard to cut,” according to an editor, Patrick’s essay was among the four that were printed.

FROM SEEDLINGS TO A FOREST

by Alicia Alexander, Student

My full name is Alicia Alexander, but everyone calls me Ally. I am nineteen and I originate from Chicago, IL but now reside in Orinda, CA. I am also multiracial. My grade schools and high schools were public although my grade school was a magnet school.

My attitudes about education today are very much based on the past. I feel that there is a place for traditional teaching methods, but I feel they are out-dated and ill-used. I feel that education is about the student not the teacher. The teacher has always been a tool in my eyes. But that tool has been put on too high a shelf and given supernatural powers for some odd reason and then made the focus of the classroom. The focus of the classroom should always be on the students.

Public and private schools have been entrusted with seedlings. In order to make each seedling grow, educators need four things. One is passion, the second is training, third money and fourth tools. Without passion, educators won’t have a burning desire to help the seedlings grow into saplings, then trees. Without training, they won’t have knowledge about how to help the seedlings grow. Without money they can’t afford the gardening tools they need. Without tools they have no means to create the environment needed for students’ minds to grow.

I want students’ brains to grow like the leaves on a tree, new brain cells unfurling with each new experience and exciting thought. The roots of my students’ trees would be the basics, extending from there to the more advanced concepts. My trees can grow without standardized tests. I’ll know how to test the richness of the soil of their experiences and concepts retained. I’ll know which minerals is more important to the whole tree. My gardening tools will turn the soil and add nutrients needed to have the saplings grow stronger bark and have better fruit later in life after they mature. My hoe will get rid of the weeds in my classroom such as teasing and laughing when someone gets the wrong answer and the teachers’ need to be condescending to the student who doesn’t understand. My saplings will have a strong trunk of integrity because teachers leading by example show and reinforce such noble concepts. My trees won’t lose leaves in the face of frost from setbacks; they have learned problem-solving skills.

The owners of the tools have banded together as community and have built a large greenhouse around the trees to keep them warm. And when a tree disease comes along and attempts to kill my trees, they will have grown into a forest. The dignity and quality of their education will wrap them tightly, keep them from harm, enable them to get a job they never want to give up. The wind of the workforce will sigh with a gentle laugh because we finally got our recipe right for an education.
CARING ABOUT LEARNING

by Patrick O’Friel, Student

You ask if students care about learning. Let’s focus that a little differently. Do students care about school? It is my belief that every person loves learning in one way or another -- whether their love of learning matches society’s expectation of education is another question altogether.

My experience with learning was a bit different. I grew up in a family of seven. After my father’s murder when I was 8 years old, my mother was forced to work 12-hour days, leaving 7 children to do as they pleased. My elder brothers didn’t like school, so I adopted their attitudes. Even as a kindergartner, I was removed from class because I didn’t want to be there because it was “stupid.” My attendance record for my 9th grade class for a period of 6 weeks was 15 days in school. I already knew pre-algebra, but my teachers persisted in teaching me something that I already knew. One problem seemed to be the pace at which each of us learns.

The system seemed to focus on me and others as numbers, deciding how intelligent we were on the basis of attendance, grades, and GPA. I have always had a feeling this system does not work, because I doubt I was a complete idiot, but the numbers made it seem that way to my teachers and others. Watching this system made me grow very angry, because people who didn’t even know me were judging my intellect.

I did struggle a bit with outside influences. My friends didn’t like school, but they didn’t know why they didn’t like it. They were consumed in social status. I figured I could kill two birds with one stone, learn more at home, and avoid having to deal with a social status. Strangely, my truancy and attitude made me “popular” with others; whether it was a “good” popular or a “bad popular,” I wouldn’t know.

Unfortunately, my school did not motivate me in any way. I despised everything about school. The major factor that demotivated me and others, were teachers who taught, “by the book.” It seemed at times that they didn’t understand what they were reading aloud to us. However, I had two teachers who really inspired me to do well. My science teacher Mr. Wong helped me as much as possible. He didn’t yell at me and give me grief about missing class; he compromised and gave me different work. Mr. Kruger taught me architectural design and mechanical drawing; I fell in love with architectural design because of the attitude he had with me. When I showed up to class after being gone for three days, he would politely greet me and show me what I missed, and I excelled in his class. Mr.

Kruger taught according to the attitude of the whole class; some days he would teach at the board; some days he would let us work away on our projects.

One of the reasons I think Eagle Rock is working for me is because of the individuality. I am not judged on my GPA. I am not judged on my test scores or grades because we have few tests and no grades. I am a learner, a person, not a number.

Having small classes is a must for learning. In our classes we find out how much each of us already knows about the subject. Then if I or another knows more than the rest of the students, we teach the rest of the class, until we are to a point that the teacher can open our eyes to the world of what we don’t know. You learn 95% of what you teach, so teaching one another is essential.

Hierarchy was a serious issue with me in my other schools. At Eagle Rock the tables are round to eliminate any front or back of the classroom. Our tables are round so as to make us all equal. Teachers at Eagle Rock are more or less a tool rather than an authority. They are not worried if we doodle or lean back in our chairs; they are worried about our learning, whether or not we are understanding. Our history teacher invites us to attack his lectures. He creates board games such as Concentration so that we can remember Latin vocabulary and Risk so we can remember American history.

No system will ever be perfect, but every system should give learners the tools to learn. That’s education. It is our responsibility to use these tools.
SURVIVING IN THE WILD: ARE STUDENTS AWARE OF THE LIFESKILLS NEEDED AFTER EAGLE ROCK?

by Sandy Rivera, Student

(This article appeared in the November 14, 2002, issue of “From Under the Rock,” the student newspaper, and is used with permission.)

Imagine yourself as an Eagle Rock graduate and on your own; out there in the cold cruel world ready to take on any challenge. You feel just like Frodo from Lord of the Rings, ready to travel to Mt. Doom and take on any adventure and obstacle in your way. With the cold cutting wind in your face, you take those hard steps in the snow that goes up to your knees. You try to keep warm and stay alive another day. Suddenly you hear a noise. You look down and it’s your cell phone ringing in that high-pitched ring. You answer and it’s the car salesman telling you that your payments are past due.

Many of us do not realize the load of other responsibilities after Eagle Rock. We have taxes to pay (and deductions are not good), credit to establish, then credit card bills to pay, cell phone bills, and car payments. We need gas for the car, insurance to buy, insurance to pay. Start a checking or savings account to deposit money in the account. Get a job to give you the money to put in the account. Groceries and clothes to buy. Then be able to pay off all these bills and still have enough money to feed yourself and look good on the weekends! Geez!!! The list goes on. That’s a lot of responsibility, isn’t it? So, how is Eagle Rock helping me prepare for this Mt. Doom of credit, banks, paychecks, housing, transportation, insurance, taxes, bills and budgets?

I am sure many of us remember when Lan To, the Life After Eagle Rock Counselor, stood up on Wednesday morning’s Gathering and held up $5.00. I bet lots of students were thinking how they really needed $5.00 or they would love to have $5.00. Yet, no one took the initiative to grab it, except Gabriel Ferdinand. When I asked Laronda Moore why she thinks that students don’t use these resources (Life After Eagle Rock office), she responded, “Some people don’t think it’s important.” Angelique Williams, said, “People think that [academic] credit is more important and they don’t feel as though the skills are important and when it’s their time to graduate, it becomes a shock to them [then] or even after they graduate. They see how they need these skills.”

We have all these resources around us and hardly any of us really utilize them or commit when some help is offered. Lan has had several classes, seminars and even Specials to assist us in these life skills. Classes that have been offered by Lan are these: Economics and Ethics, Real Life Basic Math, Learners’ Guild, College Prep, and others relating to the SAT tests, college and scholarship applications, and life skills needed after Eagle Rock. For us older students, when are we gonna jump on those $5.00 bills? We know we have many answers around us, we see the resources every day, so why is it that many graduates feel as if they did not learn these skills? Why do prospective graduate students save the hassle until their graduating trimester?

To succeed, most of these qualities are essential in the outside world, whether you go to college or not. Are we so comfortable in the thought that these skills are not yet important to us that we do not take the time to ask one of the adults how to balance a checkbook, purchase a car, or open a bank account? We want to be treated as adults and part of being adult is taking these other responsibilities into consideration. To some it’s hard to practice these skills when we don’t use these skills at Eagle Rock. Yet we have a strong voice here at Eagle Rock and we can request integrated classes with hands-on learning about these life skills or any other way to put the skills into practice. Life After Eagle Rock is as important as the other requirements on your ILP (Individualized Learning Plan), and it will be even more important after you leave The Rock; it should be taken more seriously by students before their last trimester.

Imagine yourself as Frodo again. This time you don’t need to worry about the responsibilities that need to be taken care of. You have these skills and know how to handle your business. Now doing the dew in the outside world is easier and you can continue your adventure with less on your mind.
EXPLORE WEEK EXPLODED! ————

by Shandra Dillon, Student

(This article appeared in the October 25, 2002, issue of "From Under the Rock," the student newspaper, and is used with permission.)

Who was ready to get the hell out of Dodge? Who was ready to get out of the repetitive class schedule? Well I, for one, was getting pretty sick of this routine. I was ready for a change of scenery. I was ready for something new on my plate.

Explore Week was designed to give students an opportunity to explore something new, or take classes that they wouldn't normally take. It gives students an idea about future careers. It is also phenomenal to have a break from the intense build-up of mid-trimester work and drama (what other school offers this?). It's a change of pace for students and staff. Like my grandpa always said, "A change of jobs is as good as a break."

There was a full buffet before me. I had to decide: Do I take the usual salad with Italian or Ranch dressing (AIDS Awareness or Major Research), or do I start with the vegetarian dish (like Homeopathy or Sacred Drumming), or do I delve right into the filet mignon or tenderloin (Glass Blowing, Silversmithing, or College Tour)? The choices were truly astounding.

Chris Mason, Health and Wellness Counselor, tackled AIDS Awareness with help from David Young and Rick Roberts. This is a requirement for graduation because 1) It is a required course for all high schools in the state of Colorado, and 2) It is important for students to learn the dire effects of AIDS.

Major Research is for the students who need the extra time to work on their major research projects. Diane Burkhardt, Alison Trattner, and Kathy Colville determine which students would be in the class based on this order: First, students graduating this trimester; second, students graduating next trimester; then anyone else interested in taking this course. These ladies also headed up this class.

This year Erin Delano imparted her knowledge of homeopathy to students who wished to learn an alternative method of healing and medicine. Her hope was that if many people further their knowledge base about homeopathy, it will become more like a second nature and people will use it instead of running to the nurse for minor injuries and illnesses.

Garth Mudge and Jerry Patterson were willing to put up with a bunch of "punk" teens running around their shop. Glass blowing was for students to learn the art of shaping molten glass. Some helpful advice to students who take this class in the future: Bring a journal, drawing pad, or some kind of busy work because you will have a lot of time in between play time with semi-liquid glass.

Robin Sukadia taught Sacred Drumming. This class concentrated on drumming, meditation, rhythms, and the works of Mahatma Gandhi. The culture, spirituality, and current events of South Asia were also a focus. Students watched videos of tabla masters, listened to music, and learned how to improvise to modern electronic and hip-hop music.

Student Vanessa Harvey's aunt, Amelia Joe-Chandler, taught Silversmithing and Jewelry Making again. This was a beginning class to learn about the tools, metals, and safety involved in making fine jewelry. Students created a ring, a pendant, and other jewelry. They also learned the history of Navajo jewel making and culture.

Lan To, Life After Eagle Rock Specialist, and Mary Vieira, Fellow, worked with students to acquaint them with college options. The College Tour group left Sunday after brunch and went to New Mexico. The first stop was Albuquerque to visit the University of New Mexico. Then it was off to St. John's in Santa Fe, then to the Air Force Academy on Tuesday. On Wednesday, they were back in Colorado to visit Metro State and other Colorado colleges.

At the end of the week, students did Presentations of Learning (POLs) in groups according to the classes they elected.

Students would like to see the following classes offered in the future: Governmental Laws, Discovering Yourself as a Citizen, Photography, Break Dancing, Skateboarding, Spray Painting/Graffiti, and Capoeira (a Brazilian dance and martial art).

Elizabeth Burkhardt designs and arranges for each Explore Week.

Now it's back to regular classes.
with his family and with children in the village. Edmeade said that he found he could break through the language barrier with children by using a camera. "The youngest kids don’t speak English," he said. But as soon as the camera came out, "all of a sudden they knew how to speak (English) perfectly with the camera."

When they weren’t working on their projects, the students worked with the village’s children. Berrigan worked with six and seven-year-old children, helping them with English.

"I love teaching Thai children," she said. "American children are more involved with TV. Thai children are all about someone new -- and a new style." She explained that the children had been learning through drills. She and her teaching partner worked with the children in a way they had never known, being spontaneous and teaching through games. "We did the same thing for three weeks," she said. And by the time they were finished, the children really knew what they had taught them.

Edmeade said that at night, after they were finished working, they went to help the village’s students study. He explained that each student has to pass a test in order to go to high school, which was on the main island of Fiji. They helped the students with their English and math, and they also helped with grading.

Both Edmeade and Berrigan said that they were surprised when they went to work on their projects. They were there to do the projects, but their hosts were so generous and so thrilled by their visitors, that they did most of the work themselves.

"Building the outhouses was fun," said Edmeade. "The men had a good sense of humor, and they spoke (English) well." But, he said, "They treated us like guests, not like workers. One thing that surprised me was how much work they put in -- we were learning from them. They did all the plumbing and the digging." Edmeade said as well that the quality of their craftsmanship was amazing. They had built other outhouses on the island, but without the help of the group and their donation of materials, the outhouses could never have been built.

Berrigan agreed, saying she felt like she could have done a lot more. The students, she said, did a lot of hammering and painting, but the village men did the planning and major construction. Both felt that they came home with more than they gave.

Lewis explained that this is often an issue on the trips. "It’s a paradigm that’s hard to break," he said. "(The students) are paying tuition to work." With upcoming trips, he hopes "people will understand and start throwing us some work."

Edmeade and Berrigan agreed that this was a reflection of the people’s culture, one of complete hospitality and generosity, something they hoped they had brought home with them.

"I brought back stories, memories and a whole concept of living life," said Edmeade. "Everyone (in the village) made sure (everyone else) had everything they needed -- they took care of one another. How giving they were taught me not to be so concerned with the things I had." And although Edmeade said he thinks Americans have a difficult time reaching that level of trust with one another, "I try to be giving with what I have."

Berrigan agreed, saying she thought generosity was a concept a lot of Americans think about but don’t act on. Since she returned to America, she said, "I see how fortunate I am in so many things, and I see people take everything for granted. Until you see it and believe it and live it, it’s not going to get into your brain. Every little instance reminds me of something from there," she said. "I’m definitely trying to live like I was there -- just living."

Edmeade and Berrigan feel different from their peers now that they have returned from abroad. They said they miss their friends, the food, and the way of life. Their only regrets are the things they did not get a chance to do during their short stay. They wish they could have delved even further into the cultures of their villages, their religion and their attitudes.

"I learned that anything is possible," said Berrigan. "I would have never guessed a year ago that I’d go to Thailand. Once you get to reflect on it, it’s like, ‘Wow.’"

Edmeade agreed, "It’s something I’ll never forget."
GRADUATE HIGHER EDUCATION FUND NEEDS YOUR HELP

Head of School, Robert Burkhardt, sent a letter recently to friends of Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center. It explained the need we feel to help our graduates continue their education. Here are excerpts from that letter.

Three out of every four college students are having to work an average of 26 hours per week to cover costs of tuition, books and living expenses. Further, one out of every five has to work full time. It’s getting worse. Studies show that at 15 to 20 hours, energy suffers. Grades suffer. Life balance suffers. (Wall Street Journal, 11/05/02) Eagle Rock graduates are in this group.

Our graduates are kids who were not supposed to graduate from high school. Most come from economic environments that will not allow for college at all except for financial aid, and that aid needs supplementing by student work. Seventy percent of our graduates are in college now. Two are in graduate school. The rest are working and saving to go to college. The financial landscape facing them as they enter college is bleak.

We send $1,500 to the college of each Eagle Rock graduate to help defray costs for only their freshman year. We also send $1,000 each year for those who are in graduate school. We need to be able to send $1,500 each year (not just their freshman year). $1,500 would cut their workweek by 5 hours, and it is clear that we’ll need to double this amount to ensure their success.

Historically, about 200 friends and families of Eagle Rock generously send $20,000 or so to the Eagle Rock Graduate Endowment over the holidays. In total, over the year, we raise about $50,000. Other efforts include the Estes Park Duckfest, Graduate Work Days and the Art Auction. To be able to help our graduates and help them now, this $50,000 really needs to be doubled.

Our graduates need your help. Please contact Dick Herb at Eagle Rock (P.O. Box 1770, Estes Park, CO 80517; 970-586-0600 X1020) if you can help.

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