



EAGLE EYES

Volume 19, Number 3

News From Fall 2011 Trimester

BURKHARDT ANNOUNCES RETIREMENT

Dear Colleagues and Friends,

The time has come: I will leave Eagle Rock at the end of August 2012.

It has been an honor to serve as founding Head of School at Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center. The opportunity to help create and shape this remarkable entity since 1991 has been a capstone experience for me, and I am deeply indebted to American Honda Motor Company; to the extraordinary Eagle Rock staff members present and past; and to the Eagle Rock students with whom I have had the good fortune to live, work, play and learn. Together we have made a dazzling dream come true. Thank you all.

Tom Dean and Makoto Itabashi forged a brilliant vision almost twenty-five years ago, and their inspired leadership during Eagle Rock's formative years sowed the seeds of greatness. Gary Kessler has been a wise partner and brilliant coach as chair of American Honda Education Corporation's Board of Directors during the past decade; I owe him a debt no words can repay.

Lizzie and I could not have asked for a finer environment to offer Eileen and Patrick in their early and adolescent years. Our family has thrived at Eagle Rock, and we will miss the close relationships we have shared with so many of you.

The Estes Park community has been a welcome source of support and strength, and it has been heartwarming to see Eagle Rock students gain

recognition throughout the Estes Valley for the many service projects we have undertaken.

It is humbling to witness the productive lives of Eagle Rock graduates, and to know that the school's dual curricular focus on academic and personal growth contributed to their moral, mental and social maturity. Similarly, the path-breaking work of the Professional Development Center has earned Eagle Rock an enviable national reputation as we have collaborated with partners across America.

I will miss teaching Shakespeare; playing soccer on the Field of Dreams; singing in choir and making music with the band; leading the gate run on winter mornings; raising

money for the **Graduate Fund**; performing at the outdoor amphitheater; morning Gathering; Sunday brunch; Presentations of Learning; Sunday Sweat; $8+5=10$; and all of you.

Lizzie and I look forward to celebrating the school's 20th anniversary with you in June 2013. We are also eager to see Eagle Rock flourish under dynamic new leadership as it moves into the second twenty years.

The laughter and good humor we have shared stays with me, and I will carry Eagle Rock in my heart as long as I live. Thank you all again for the gift you have given me. What a privilege it has been to live, work and learn with all of you!

Sincerely, Robert Burkhardt



Save the Date!
Eagle Rock's Twentieth Anniversary Celebration
Saturday, June 22nd, 2013
Mark your calendar. Details to follow.

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

Editor:

Dan Condon
2750 Notaiiah Road
Estes Park, CO
80517

Phone Number:

(970) 586-0600

Email:

info@eaglerockschool.org

Website:

www.EagleRockSchool.org

An initiative of the
American Honda
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Head of School

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Associate Director of
Professional Development

LETTER FROM ERS BOARD CHAIR

Dear Friends and Family of Eagle Rock School &
Professional Development Center:

It is with both a deep sense of regret, and an eternal sense of appreciation for the man and for his work, that I inform you that Dr. Robert Burkhardt will retire from the position of Head of School at Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center, effective August 31, 2012.

I am immensely grateful to Robert for his unending and passionate commitment to Eagle Rock and all that it has come to be for so many. His leadership, vision, integrity and example simply defy explanation. Due to Robert's relentless dedication, the Eagle Rock community has evolved from a raw concept to a fully accredited, respected, honored and valued institution that has served countless individuals and organizations in practical, profound and enduring ways.

His legacy is the foundation and bedrock of Eagle Rock's enduring philosophy, and he has been the captain and steward of its remarkable culture. The axioms Robert authored in the school's value system, "8+5=10", have served to shape and energize Eagle Rock since its formation more than 20 years ago, and will continue to do so going forward. All of us have been enriched by Robert's deep engagement and unique wit, grace and wisdom at morning gatherings, in the classroom, in the band, in dramatic performances, on the athletic field, as an administrator, or, perhaps most importantly, in a life-changing one-on-one conversation with a young person in need.

As we prepare for this change, I can inform you that an orderly and comprehensive search process is underway, with the understanding that Robert cannot be replaced; only succeeded. I anticipate that Robert's successor will be named in the months ahead. Rest assured that his successor will preserve, protect and honor the unique dimensions that define Eagle Rock and continue to lead our journey to an even higher level of excellence.

So while the occasion of this letter is somewhat sad, at the same time I can't help but be joyful for Robert and Elizabeth as they move on to the next chapter of their life, a richly deserved next chapter. Fortunately the book that he has written that has become the reality of Eagle Rock will remain in our minds and hearts forever, as will he.

Sincerely,

Gary Kessler

Board Chair, Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center
President, American Honda Education Corporation

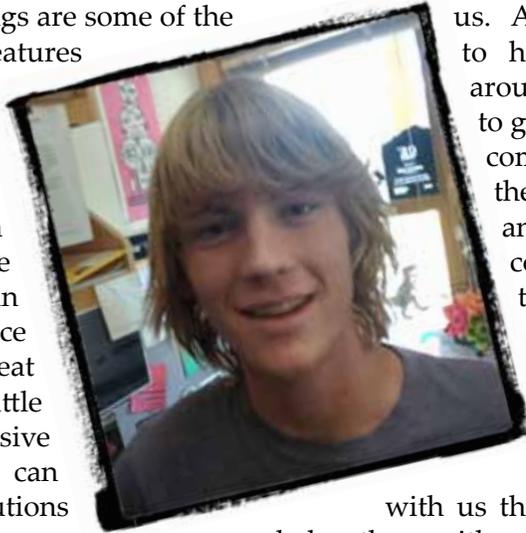
AN EAGLE ROCK STUDENT'S PHILOSOPHY OF SERVICE

Portions being reprinted with permission from the October 7, 2011 edition of the Estes Park Trail Gazette, written by Eagle Rock graduate Issac Baer

Human beings are some of the most capable creatures on planet earth. With opposite thumbs, we can perform even the most delicate tasks. With an upright stance we can trek great distances with little food. With massive brains we can improvise solutions to any problem we are faced with. But despite all this, we still fall short every once in a while. We experience disasters and tragedies that leave us unable to support ourselves. We are disabled frequently, so we have developed civilization. In this way, we can exchange help with ease and always be comfortable knowing that we have a community to lean on.

This security is a wonderful thing to live with, but it requires a particular devotion on the part of the participants. If we, as participants in the global population, are willing to give our time to those in need, we are perpetuating the environment in which we would like to live.

Eagle Rock was founded with the intention of improving the United States of America. We all have a degree of personal investment in this mission because we have been raised in this country and, for the most part, we plan on staying here. The service that we as a school provide is one of the most essential components of this mission because we are working firsthand to better the community around



us. As we continue to help the people around us, we begin to grow. We become comfortable with the idea of giving, and we take this comfort beyond the boundaries of Eagle Rock's campus when we move on to other parts of life. We carry

with us the willingness to help others without expecting anything in return, and those around us learn from this. By practicing service regularly at Eagle Rock, we prepare to set an example for the rest of the national community.

But service is not just for the benefit of everyone around us.

Much of the service that we as Eagle Rock students perform involves bettering our immediate surroundings. If we help create sculptures for the ice festival, we enjoy a more lively community event. If we pick up trash along the roadside, we are awarded more beautiful views of an area we love. In many cases, service is comparable to housekeeping. We are taking care of the world around us so that we can enjoy it better. In this way, service can really directly benefit us.

Along with more enjoyable surroundings, service provides us with important skills we can use throughout our lives. By helping to keep up trails near my home, I have learned basic maintenance skills and techniques that could help with everything from keeping my ranch

passable to finding employment once I leave Eagle Rock School. This simple service opportunity allows me to educate myself without remaining idle, and as education is something I value strongly, I strive to involve myself in service opportunities that allow for a fair amount of learning. For example, I plan to volunteer at one of a few zoological research centers in the Amazon rainforest once I graduate. I will do this both because I am a strong supporter of the scientific community and understand that research is what sustains advancement, and also because I am interested in entering the field and feel that this would provide me with both training I could use, and connections with people that could help me. This kind of service exemplifies the idea that helping others is rarely a matter of self-sacrifice.

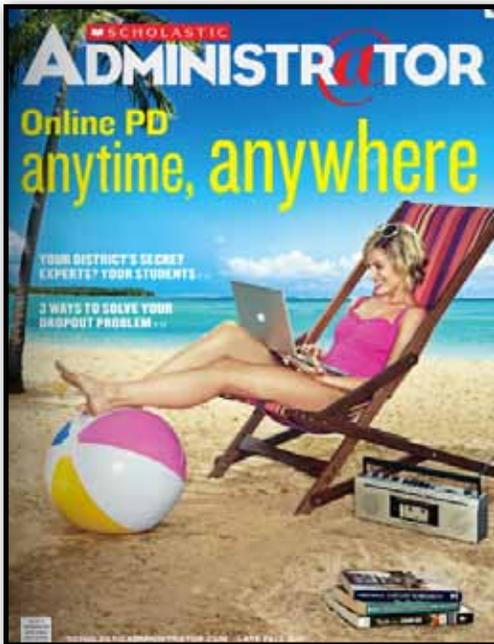
This idea escapes many teenage minds when they think of service. We are in the midst of a selfish period of our lives, when owning things is a measure of social status, and life seems a competition against all others to become the richest and most popular. We are focused on success in comparison to the people around us, and service becomes a setback in the race to the top.

As Eagle Rock students, we are exposed to a different type of service. The service here is not sentenced as restitution for petty crimes, but is understood to be voluntary. The service we do here is not closely monitored and meant to be difficult and time consuming. It is simply a matter of helping another person when they are in need, because you

See "Philosophy of Service" – Cont. on Pg. 4

EAGLE ROCK FEATURED IN SCHOL@STIC ADMINISTRATOR MAGAZINE

The text below appeared in the Late Fall 2011 edition of SCHOL@STIC ADMINISTRATOR in an article entitled "Meet Your New Boss – The Smartest Decision You Can Make is to Put Him In Charge" by Carolee Adams and is being reprinted with permission.



...Students at Eagle Rock School in Estes Park, Colorado, are included in staff meetings and help determine curriculum. "It's more than window dressing. They're the fabric of how the school operates," says Daniel Condon, associate director of professional development, who has been at the school since it opened 19 years ago as a philanthropic effort of Honda Motor Company to give a second chance to high schoolers who didn't have success at traditional schools.

Student representatives are elected from each of the school's six residential houses to attend staff meetings and bring up student issues. "They show up like anyone else and report back to the house. We want to be transparent," says Condon.

In his first year as a student at Eagle Rock, Taber Lathrop was a staff meeting

representative and said he liked the leadership experience. "I think I'm being well prepared for the real world," says Lathrop, 19, who entered his final year at Eagle Rock this fall.

Instead of teachers telling students what to think, students at Eagle Rock engage in discussions about ideas, which he says helps him create a deeper relationship with his teachers. "They are actually interested in what I have to say," says Lathrop, who says he's found teachers to confide in and that those connections motivate him to do well in the classroom and strengthen the respect he's developed for them...

To read the entire article visit:

<http://tinyurl.com/ER-SCHOLASTICADMINISTRATOR>

"Philosophy of Service" – Cont. from Pg. 3

have the means to do so. In this way, it is the purest form of philanthropy. It is the gift of time, effort, and empathy, not material goods, and it teaches us to look at service not as a sacrifice, but as a basic necessity. The service we do here at Eagle Rock is essential for a healthy education, and we address it in a way that allows teenagers to relate. We do, however, encounter setbacks in the quest to turn young minds onto this old idea. There will always be those in the crowd who have not yet invested themselves in the community around them. But for those who decide that service will be an important part of their life, we create a tight knit environment that allows people to support one another, we remain reliant on each other so that we understand the importance of helping the other man, and we keep community at the front of our minds, because we understand that this, above all, is the heart of service.

Susan D'Amico
Administrative Assistant

Mark Dougherty
Sous Chef

Denise Dunn
Business Administration
Specialist

Cynthia Elkins
Arts

Beth Ellis
Learning Resources
and Information

Anastacia Galloway
Registrar

John Guffey
Service Learning

Berta Guillen
Society and Cultures

Josh Henderson
Head Cook

Karen Ikegami
Mathematics

Janet Johnson
Science

Issac Leslie
Music and Performance

Jeff Liddle
Director of Curriculum

Denise Lord
Life After Eagle Rock

Susan Luna
Director of Operations

Dan Madsen
Technology

TBA
Literacy & Literature

Mark Palmer
Public Allies

L'Tanya Perkins
Admissions Associate

Tim Phelps
Chef Instructor

Scott Rashid
Second Chef

Kirstin Sizemore
Human Performance

Philbert Smith
Director of Students

Michael Soguero
Director of
Professional Development

Terry Tierney
Assistant Facilities

Jesse Tovar
Health and Wellness
Counselor

EAGLE ROCK FEATURED IN *EVERYONE LEADS: BUILDING LEADERSHIP FROM THE COMMUNITY UP*

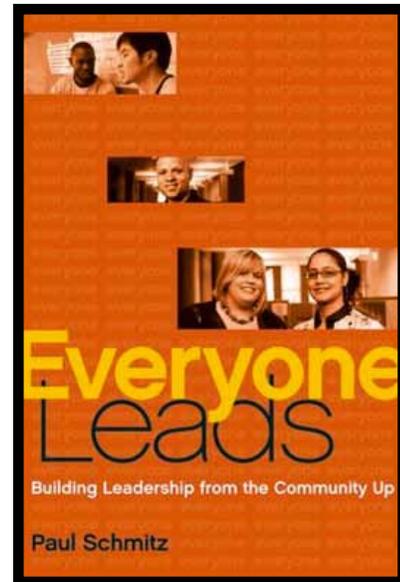
by Dan Condon, Associate Director in Professional Development

Where is the leadership we need to solve our most pressing community problems? It is all around us. **Everyone Leads: Building Leadership from the Community Up** inspires readers to see new leadership possibilities within themselves and their communities. It also offers a set of practices that will help leaders be more effective at bringing diverse people and groups together to solve problems. Many leadership books today focus on how to lead organizations; this book is about how to lead communities.

Paul Schmitz, CEO of Public Allies, shares the experience and lessons his organization has learned from two decades of finding and developing thousands of young leaders across the country. The book is organized around a new definition of leadership: (1) It is an action everyone can take, not a position few hold; (2) It is about taking personal and social responsibility to work with others on common goals, (3) It is about practicing values that engage diverse individuals and groups in collaboration. Not everyone can lead in every context, but everyone has the capacity to step up, take responsibility and work with others on shared goals.

The author uses inspiring stories and practical examples to demonstrate what it means to lead today. He describes the emergence of Public Allies' leadership model (and the important role played by Michelle Obama, who left a prestigious legal career to found Public Allies Chicago) and demonstrates its impact through the experiences of young leaders it has nurtured – such as the deli owner who now runs a mental-health rights and services organization, the single mom in community college who's now a White House attorney, and the former gang member who is now an honors student and leads a job training program. Schmitz also candidly shares his own story as a juvenile delinquent who was kicked out of grade school, treated for drug addiction, barely made it out of high school and yet rose to become a major non-profit leader, social entrepreneur, and Presidential advisor.

The book surveys America's democratic and civil rights history, current events, and leadership theory to demonstrate how collaboration among citizens has always been core to social change. It outlines five leadership values that are essential today: diversity and inclusion; teamwork and collaboration; recognizing and mobilizing assets; continuous learning; and



integrity. The book offers a hopeful path for citizens, policy makers, and nonprofit organizations who want to build and engage the diverse leadership our communities and our democracy badly need.

The author Paul Schmitz is the CEO of Public Allies, which advances new leadership to strengthen communities, nonprofits and civic participation across the country. He is recognized as one of America's most influential nonprofit leaders; writes and speaks frequently on social innovation, civic participation, diversity, and community building; served on President Barack Obama's transition team; and currently serves on The White House Council on Community Solutions.

Eagle Rock is featured in Chapter 8 on *Continuous Learning and Improvement* where the author writes, "The way one established the learning environment and the learning process speaks to the commitment to learning. No organization has influenced our approach to learning more than the Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center..."

On Tuesday, March 20th Eagle Rock School & Professional Development Center and the Stanley Hotel will host a reception, author appearance & signing in Estes Park where we are encouraging folks to sponsor a book for each of Eagle Rock's 96 students. Learn more about the event and how to sponsor a book at www.tinyurl.com/everyoneleads-eaglerock.

EAGLE ROCK STUDENT SPEAKS TO 400 AT “I HAVE A DREAM” FOUNDATION EVENT

The following remarks were delivered on October 6, 2011 by Eagle Rock graduate Leslie Hernandez to a group of 400 attendees at the 14th annual “I Have a Dream” luncheon in Boulder, CO

Two years ago I found myself lost in the hallways of my own body and spirit. I was trapped in a negative state of mind in which I could not have gotten out of if it wasn't for *I Have A Dream*. Two years ago I was ditching class almost every day to hangout with my so called “friends” because I thought that hanging out with them would benefit me more than getting my education. They provided me with unlimited supply of pot, which gave me an unlimited feeling of what I thought was happiness. They gave me the freedom that I did not receive in my home, but what these fake friends failed to give me was motivation, strength, and purpose.

My name is Leslie Hernandez. I was born in Dallas Texas, but raised in Lafayette. I have been a part of the Sanchez Dreamers since I was in second grade. I am now a senior at Eagle Rock School and will graduate this December. I would not have gotten to the place where I am if it wasn't for Elyana [Funk] who is my program director with *I Have A Dream*. Elyana was the main person who saw me struggling and she provided the support I needed. If she hadn't shown me other options and hadn't seen my potential, I would likely have dropped out of school. She has always believed in me and that helped me believe in myself. Even when I was difficult, had a bad attitude, or was even cruel, she never gave up on me. For this, I will always be grateful! Being a part of the program has inspired me to succeed.

I used to be afraid of stepping up as a leader in my community, but now I understand that I need to step up and become a leader regardless of where I am, because I now realize that this world needs leaders who

are ready to make a difference and I am one of them. I used to be the person who knew nothing about personal growth, but now personal growth is what I practice every-day, because I now have a better under-

standing of right from wrong. I used to be self-conscious about myself, but now I am aware that I am beautiful inside & out, and I have learned to never let anyone put me down, not even myself. I used to be afraid of speaking out, but now I speak out whenever I feel something isn't right or I disagree with it. I have learned that my voice isn't only words but actions. I used to be the person who would never let her feelings be seen by a big crowd, but now I stand before all of you, showing you who I am and how I feel. I want to thank everyone who has believed in me and stood by me – my *I Have A Dream* Class, my class sponsors, the AmeriCorps Members and all of the “I Have a Dream” staff. I hope that more young people get the opportunity to be Dreamers, because it doesn't only help kids like me succeed in school, it also helps us to become better people. Thank you!



The Eagle Rock learning community wishes you a



EAGLE ROCK'S IMPACT ON A PUBLIC ALLIES TEACHING FELLOW ALUMNI

by Stanley Richards, Education Programs Coach with Envision Schools

When I first came to Eagle Rock, I was barely 25 years old. If you have gone through that phase in your life, and have not taken the “direct from college to graduate/medical school, meet someone and settle down and have kids” route, you might understand that this phase is a rather unsettling era in the arc of one’s life. It is that strange purgatory where one feels that they should, being out of college for a couple of years, have a good grasp of what their life should be (quite possibly because of looking through the window of the perfect “med school kids” path that some friends might have taken), yet it is quite possible that the path has not appeared out of the ether. I was of the latter party; squinting through the mist of the future, while trying to pretend that I was confident of the path that I was embarking on, while in reality wondering whether the massive loans taken out for four (actually five, in my case) years of college were worth it.

Suffice it to say, I was a bit nervous when I pulled up to the gate of Eagle Rock School & Professional Development Center, weary from driving from North Carolina to Estes Park, Colorado. I drove up the 1½ mile driveway for the first time, not knowing that this would be the route that I would run dozens of times during my fellowship year, parked in front of the house that would hold myself and eleven other fellows, and started an experience that would not only shape my path out of the ether, but also radically change my own perceptions of the world around me.



I never imagined that I would become a teacher. In fact, I imagine that my former teachers would find it laughable at best (In actuality, they did find it humorous, especially when I went back to my former place of education and apologized to them.) In retrospect, I thought the prospect of being in a classroom responsible for the learning of 25-30 teenage students a bit terrifying. Eagle Rock was a departure, a step off a cliff into an unknown, as my own personal ideas of my future were hazy. The year spent working with the students and staff vividly brought my future into clarity. I would have to say, in retrospect, that the work that I did there shaped all of my formative ideas as an educator, and has developed my own work in innumerable ways. In the interest of brevity, I will try to summarize some of my most important learnings.

“Go for broke” – I still think about this quote by James Baldwin, in his speech to teachers. In consideration of what many students have gone through in their lives, it can be miraculous that they simply show up every day to school. In many ways, it might be the most stable thing in their lives. With the simple fact that they show up to be in class, the teacher must do everything in their power to support the student. I saw that in the tireless workings of each Eagle Rock staff member,

and was amazed at the amount of support, both in the class and in the community, that helped develop students as they went through school.

Community – At each school that I have worked to help develop, a sense of interconnectedness and support is paramount to the school. As a founding teacher of a small school in San Francisco, many things that I participated in at Eagle Rock (community meetings, advisory, interdisciplinary learning) were brought to the first year of that school, to help develop and foster the sense of community that I saw at Eagle Rock. It is, and will always be, what I compare school communities to.

Project Based Interdisciplinary Learning – Over the eight years that I have been teaching, one major aspect of my teaching has been key: developing engaging projects that have real world implications to engage students, rather than methodically churning through standards. I vividly remember the projects that Janet Johnson, Instructional Specialist in Science, brought to the table, and how they fully engaged students in the work, and I try to bring that to all the work that I do in the classroom.

If one were to ask me the significance of what Eagle Rock brought to my career, I would have to say that it made all the difference. From giving me direction in the work that I do, to allowing me the opportunity to accomplish the most important accomplishment of my career, starting a school, the Public Allies Teaching Fellowship Program at Eagle Rock was quite possibly the best decision I have made in my career.

MEET THE PUBLIC ALLIES TEACHING FELLOWS

by Mark Palmer, Director of the Public Allies Teaching Fellowship Program at Eagle Rock

One thing you often hear at Eagle Rock is “Leave this place better than the way you found it.” In our tenth year in partnership with Public Allies, Inc, our twelve Public Allies Teaching Fellows will improve our learning community during the year they serve with us and will leave a legacy that will last long after they depart in August of 2012.

Chris Anderson is the new Math Fellow and grew up in Indianapolis, Indiana and graduated with a B.A in Mathematics from DePauw University. While at DePauw, Chris was a Bonner Scholar and spent over 600 hours providing community service to his community. Chris has also been a Math Tutor and Assistant Football Coach in the Greencastle School District.

Stephanie Baker is service incarnate, which is a good thing that she is the new Service Learning Fellow. She has a B.A. from New York University as well as being a Harry S. Truman Scholar from Delaware. Stephanie has also been a volunteer manager for Publicolor in New York as well as been a field organizer for the Obama Campaign in Seattle area. Stephanie has also been an intern for Henry Street Settlement along with being a teacher’s assistant for America Reads. Stephanie is originally from Wilmington, Delaware.

The new World Languages Fellow, **Tyler Bevington**, has B.A. in Languages, Literature and Cultures in Spanish as well as a B.S. in Human Dimensions of Natural Resources. Tyler has been the B.I.K.E. Camp Director for the City of Fort Collins as well as an Event Coordinator for Rocky Mountain Events in Denver, Colorado.

The 2011-2012 Visual Arts Fellow is **Emily Colin**. Emily is originally from Santa Fe, New Mexico but received her degree from Colby College in Maine with a concentration in Painting and Chemistry. Emily has Co-Founded a non-profit organization called Pedal for Change, with a focus on fostering global collaborative environmental awareness and action. Emily has also been a competitive down hill skier for much of her life.

The second new member of the Human

Performance & Outdoor Education Department is **Grace Deputy**. Grace is the new Human Performance Center Fellow. Grace has a B.S. from University of Northern Colorado, in Sports and Exercise Science with an Emphasis in Physical Education K-12. Grace has worked with the Special Olympics as well as being an officer for the PE club at UNC. Grace grew up in the great state of Colorado.

Lan Dinh is the new Societies and Cultures Fellow for the 2011-12 Fellowship year. Lan has a degree in Health and Societies for the University of Pennsylvania. Lan’s previous work includes working for the Agatston

Urban Nutrition Initiative as well as Advocating for Academically Based Community Service at the University of Pennsylvania.

The 2011 - 2012 Science Fellow, **Brandon Knight**, has a B.A. in Biology from Keene State College in New Hampshire. Brandon has worked for the Urban League of Greater Hartford as a youth development specialist as well as a Project Ready program leader. Prior to coming to

ER, Brandon took the summer to ride a bike across the country. Yes this country and yes a bike that you peddle, not a bike that you put gas in. That’s a lot of peddling.

Zach Montez, the Life After Eagle Rock Fellow, comes to Eagle Rock after spending a year with the AmeriCorps program Admission Possible, based out of Milwaukee. Although Zach as spent the past few years in the Midwest while at school at Notre Dame, he returns to his roots in Colorado. Zach grew up in Denver and attended West High School.

Our second year ally, **Melissa Santosa**, is once again the Health, Wellness and Counseling Fellow for the 2011-12 school year. Prior coming to Eagle Rock, Melissa worked for Public Allies Delaware. During her year with PA Delaware Melissa worked at the West End Neighborhood House where she worked with youth in career readiness skills, and career exploration. Melissa has also worked with People’s Place in Dover



COALITION OF ESSENTIAL SCHOOLS NAMES EAGLE ROCK TO CONVENE AFFILIATE CENTERS

by Dan Condon, Associate Director of Professional Development

The Coalition of Essential Schools welcomed a new National Director, Elizabeth Jardine, and moved its offices to South Providence, Rhode Island from Oakland, California in preparation to gear up for its annual Fall Forum that was held in November. Founded 25 years ago by educator Theodore R.Sizer, the CES national network of schools and educators embraces the CES Common Principles as a guiding philosophy for excellence in education.

Jardine, previously with the Rhode Island Department of Education, will manage the network and oversee communications among CES schools, affiliates and the greater community. "It is a sign of the health of CES that we are able to attract a candidate of Elizabeth's stature to our position. She brings a great deal of experience to us in coordinating large programs with state and federal governments as well as a real passion for the work of CES," says George Wood, Chair of the CES Executive Board.

The new CES offices, at 325 Public Street in Providence, RI, will be co-located with Big Picture Learning at the Met School's Public Street campus in the South Providence neighborhood.

CES celebrated its new leadership and location at "A Conversation Among Friends," the annual CES Fall Forum, which convened at the Met School in Providence, RI, on November 10-12, 2011. Dynamic educators from across the nation recharged with new ideas and inspirations at Fall Forum. Dennis Littky, founder and co-director of Big Picture Learning and

the Met Center, gave the keynote presentation. The Professional Development Center at Eagle Rock facilitated an advisory meeting and presented deliveries entitled "Critical Friends Groups as Networks of Support" & "The Leadership Challenge"

In related news, the Executive Board of CES named the Professional Development Center at Eagle Rock as official conveners of the Coalition of Essential Schools' Affiliate Centers. Eagle Rock convened a meeting of the CES Affiliate Centers on November 10 in Providence in conjunction with Fall Forum.

CES affiliate centers provide technical assistance to schools that have embraced the Common Principles. Each CES center is an independent organization with the autonomy to create services appropriate for the schools it serves. Directors and staff from CES centers meet regularly to exchange ideas and share resources. CES centers intentionally describe themselves as affiliate centers rather than regional centers, reflecting the capacities that they have not only to focus within a region but also to provide technical support to schools and school systems elsewhere.

As a philanthropic initiative of the American Honda Education Corporation, Eagle Rock is providing this service at no cost to CES.

Michael Sogeuo, Director of Professional Development stated, "We look forward to convening the 20 regional centers twice a year to keep the original vision of CES alive through our collective work."

"Public Allies" – Continued from Pg. 8

Delaware as a therapist. Melissa has a B.A. in English from Delaware State University.

One thing you can often say about our Outdoor Education Fellows, they love to be outside. **Steve Sommer** joined the Human Performance & Outdoor Education Department after several years with Outward Bound in Moab, UT. Steve also has worked for Adrift Adventures in Moab and the Lewis and Clark Outdoor Program. Steve has a B.A. in Philosophy and Sociology/Psychology.

Originally from California, **Holly Takashima**, the new Literacy and Literature Fellow, joined ER after teaching for a few years at the Esperanza Charter School in New Orleans. Holly has her B.A. in English

from Williams College and her Master of Education from Harvard. Holly also taught at Monument High School in Boston, was a member of the Jett Program, teaching English in Japan, and worked on the Soil Born Farm Urban Agriculture Project in Sacramento, California.

Our new Professional Development Center Fellow comes to us from Joliet, Illinois. **Seth Wyncott** has a B.S. in Management and Leadership from Indiana Wesleyan University and a M.A. in International Conflict Resolution and Mediation from Tel Aviv University. Prior coming to Eagle Rock, Seth has worked as a technical advisor for The Buddhism and Society Development Association as well as being a Wildland Firefighter (Hot Shot) based out of Zortman, MT and Salt Lake City, UT.

STORYCORPS NATIONAL TEACHERS INITIATIVE PARTNERS WITH EAGLE ROCK

by Dan Condon, Associate Director of Professional Development

StoryCorps, the national oral history project, partnered with Eagle Rock School & Professional Development Center to record the stories of teachers and students on December 9-10 collecting eight hours of interviews with twenty-four participants. StoryCorps' National Teachers Initiative is part of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting's "American Graduate: Let's Make it Happen" project to help local communities across America address the dropout crisis.

The National Teachers Initiative celebrates the work of teachers across the country. By recording, sharing, and preserving their stories, StoryCorps hopes to call attention to the invaluable contributions teachers have made to this nation, celebrate and honor those who have embraced the profession as their calling, encourage teaching as a career choice, and unify the country behind its teachers—helping us all recognize that there is no more important or noble work than that of educating our nation's children.

Among the teachers and students that participated in the National Teachers Initiative were: Tom Dean, co-founder of Eagle Rock; Robert Burkhardt, founding Head of Eagle Rock; Davian Gagne, a graduate from the first class at Eagle Rock; Nyeema Lee a student from Harlem, NY; Sandra Natal, a student from the Bronx, NY; Vidal Carrillo, who graduated from Eagle Rock in December from Los Angeles, CA; Karen Ikegami, Math Instructor, along with 18 other teachers and students.

Steve Sommer who interviewed with student Trevion Smith reflected, "I am grateful for the opportunity, venue, and technological support to have a proper debrief with Trevion as our first trimester came to a close. During our StoryCorps interview we had time to reflect on how the skills learned during the twenty three day wilderness orientation course positively affected his life at Eagle Rock School."

Mark Palmer, Director of the Public Allies Teaching Fellowship explained, "StoryCorps gave me an opportunity to remember, reflect and to establish stronger connections to my time with Public Allies, Eagle Rock and my friendship with Margrette Castro, former Director of the Public Allies Teaching Fellowship."

Jon Anderson, Human Performance and Outdoor Education Instructional Specialist, said, "The experience was a powerful one for me, and although I know I will continue to have a relationship with Vidal; in a sense it perfectly wrapped up our Eagle Rock time together."

During the 2011-2012 school year StoryCorps will partner with individuals, institutions, community organizations, and school districts across the country



to record a minimum of 625 interviews with teachers and their interview partners. The National Teachers Initiative places special attention on the work of teachers in urban and rural public school districts who are striving to increase the number of students who graduate prepared for college and careers. These stories will be archived at the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress.

StoryCorps has collected over 40,000 interviews since it was founded in 2003, making it one of the largest collections of American voices ever created. The National Teachers Initiative is part of "American Graduate: Let's Make it Happen," a public media initiative supported by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting to help local communities across America address the dropout crisis. Major funding for the National Teachers Initiative is provided by the Corporation for Public Broadcasting and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, with additional funding from the Joyce Foundation.

Gaspar Caro, StoryCorps facilitator stated, "We couldn't peel ourselves away from [Eagle Rock's] staff, students, and community despite mountain fatigue and jetlag! It was truly a unique set of recording days for us, and Mariel [Gruszko] and I are happy to see that you're already so quickly using your interview content. The recordings were seamless and all the participants were so well prepared. That really helped us do our job properly and make sure you got the best recordings."

Only 1% of the interviews facilitated make it to air on National Public Radio's *Morning Edition*. We are hopeful Eagle Rock's stories will be heard by that larger NPR audience, however, over the coming months we'll be posting clips of the 8 hours captured at www.tinyurl.com/ERstorycorps.

WHY GIFTED STUDENTS CAN BE SO CHALLENGING

This appeared in the December 2, 2011 Washington Post Blog and was written by Mark Phillips, professor emeritus of secondary education at San Francisco State University and author of a monthly column on education for the Marin Independent Journal and is being reprinted with permission.

What do Woody Allen and Steve Jobs have in common? Among other things (including brilliant, creative minds), they both hated school and were discipline problems.

Allen once said, "I loathed every day and regret every moment I spent in school."

Jobs noted, "I was pretty bored at school and turned into a little tyrant."

Who are their counterparts today? How are schools dealing today with bright, creative students who are bored out of their minds in class?

A few years ago I spent time at Eagle Rock School, a great school in Colorado for at-risk kids from all over the country that is quietly and substantially funded by the American Honda Education Corporation. I noticed that many of the best students at this very effective school were highly gifted kids with extraordinary leadership, presentation, and communication skills.

Exploring further, I discovered that many of these same students had been in and out of two or three high schools prior to coming to Eagle Rock, in some cases voluntarily, in some cases not.

While talking with these students I realized that each of them could be described as creative dissident intellectuals, students with high intellectual and creative abilities who were difficult for teachers to handle.

The trouble they caused was not criminal but disruptive. This usually took one of two forms. One was active, such as sabotaging a class with sarcastic comments, or talking back continually to the teacher. Some, however, did it through relatively passive means, via sullen non-participation and/or other forms of quiet defiance. Not infrequently these students also were a challenge to their parents.

I am not talking about kids who had psychological problems. I experienced most of these students as delightful, highly perceptive, articulate, self-aware, and positively provocative in their thoughts and feelings about our society.

If they had lacked anything it was: (a) a supportive environment that engaged, encouraged and rewarded their spirits and their minds and (b) the skills to know how to effectively assert themselves. In schools and/

or homes that they found discouraging, they didn't know how to respond in an effective way to improve their situation.

Our schools are relatively effective at identifying gifted children but still fall short in understanding, reaching, and strengthening some of our most gifted kids, and none more so than those we experience as defiant and/or unreachable.

Importantly too, in failing these kids we greatly short-change ourselves as a society. Many of these students are leaders at Eagle Rock, with the potential to play a similar role as adults. In their former environments they were often lost and angry.

At Eagle Rock and similar schools, the answer is a curriculum that challenges the kids to think and create, and gives them lots of room to do this. It about teaching them to effectively channel their frustration with the world (or at least "their" world) into effective ways of changing it. And it's also tough love, an environment that is high on support but sets very strict limits. At Eagle Rock it's "break one rule and you're out of here." But importantly, there is patience and genuine compassion for them even when they are angry or withdrawn.

I think of the ancient stories of dragons that turn into princesses when met with courage and care. And I think too of the comment of Robert Burkhardt, the Head of School at Eagle Rock:

"Patience and understanding are always useful. I frequently think about the egg in gestation. We look at its hard, indecipherable exterior and are sometimes beguiled into thinking nothing is going on. Under the right conditions, in which we as parents and teachers have a big say, one day, as we near the edge of our patience, a beak will poke through, and we'll realize that much was going on behind that blank white wall, even if we couldn't see it."



EIGHT MORE GRADUATES TAKE FLIGHT

by Seth Wyncott, Public Allies Fellow in Professional Development



Isaac Baer grew up on a ranch about 40 miles north of Santa Barbara; a defining experience as he considers it. "I'm pretty interested in the outdoors. At home I have all this space where I can go and I don't have to worry about being on someone else's land." Certainly this theme of adventuring would continue on throughout his life, perhaps even having some affect on his stay at Eagle Rock.

After leaving Midland Prep, a family legacy as he describes it, Isaac spent one year in transition before arriving at Eagle Rock. It was on a trip to Bolivia that "I started being unhappy with how things were." Though he has his wits about him now, Isaac readily admits to experiencing a tough transition into this Estes Park community. "Yeah, I don't think I'm really going to stay" were the first words out of his mouth to Beth Ellis, Aspen house parent and Eagle Rock Instructional Specialist. Yet after finishing wilderness he realized how hard he had worked and decided, "why not keep going?" The pattern would continue. As of now, Isaac is interested in joining the California Conservation Corps, working a year, and then maybe traveling to the Amazon. After developing a sense of wanderlust at a young age, it appears that such passion will continue to drive his dreams. He says that college will eventually happen though he admits to not being ready for

it just yet, but when it does happen, he would like to study entomology, biology, or linguistics. His advice for current students: "Not everyone is working against you," he said and laughed. "So much conflict here gets started by someone hearing something and automatically assuming that there is malicious intent behind it." As for studying and working at Eagle Rock, "just try" Isaac says. He explains that people are going to be continually fed here. It's not going to end. You will find something you like and you will find avenues to participate; "take advantage of every opportunity."

Vidal Carrillo grew up all over L.A., primarily in North Hollywood and the San Fernando Valley. Though in Texas for a brief stint at the age of seven, Vidal returned to the San Fernando Valley and would remain there through his early teenage years. Vidal proudly points to his ethnic Mexican upbringing as a badge of pride. Family holds strong meaning for him and has had a profound effect on his values. As he describes it, his upbringing gave him drive. This meant that even though he was without financial resources, success would not remain elusive. "Because of the love my mother gave me I would try to excel in school," Vidal explains. And because of experiences in his family with drugs, alcohol, and violence (specifically gang violence), Vidal pursued something different.

Originally, it was Vidal's brothers that first came to Eagle Rock. "My brother and nephew were the ones who needed this place the most. But as my family felt that they couldn't make it themselves, they thought it would be best if I came with them to look after them, keep them motivated, and push them through this new environment." Interestingly enough, this mission of looking after his family eventually would transition as Vidal became a student at Eagle Rock and took steps to transform his own life. From the beginning, life at Eagle Rock wasn't exactly comfortable but overall, Vidal enjoyed life in the mountains and has even expressed a desire to remain up among these peaks. Many of the activities he has participated in have prepared him for this; from service trips on the weekend, to a National Outdoor Leadership School course, to an internship with Rocky Mountain National Park. Vidal is excited about graduating but admits that "it goes both ways. I'm hopeful and excited, happy, but then the opposite emotions also come into play. I'm going to lose this place. At the same time, I'm ready." Vidal has taken much from this place and gives much credit to

➤ See "Graduates" – Cont. on Pg. 13

“Graduates” – Cont. from Pg. 12

all of his role models on campus. As for the next step after Eagle Rock, it appears that Vidal has been shaping his plans for some time now. His dream is to become a doctor, specifically a genetic engineer or general practitioner, after which he will own his own hospital and firm in medicine where he can then work on cures and provide low cost healthcare. Oh, and long term, he is going to run for president. Watch for him at the polls.

Julien Durand spent his early years in Santa Monica, California. Facing tumultuous family situations from a young age, Julien readily admits to the pressures of his pre-teen and teenage years. “Being in the middle of my parents’ issues led me to want to get away and led me to greed. Now I realize it’s not that way at all; I was pretty confused.” Strangely enough, it was a random bicycle accident that eventually brought him to the care of a doctor who knew of Eagle Rock. Julien was resistant to the idea at first but when faced with the alternative of boot camp, the community environment at Eagle Rock seemed the better option. From here on out, it wasn’t always an easy ride. Julien was asked to leave after his first wilderness trip, but since then he has come a long way. At this point, “there is nothing that can stop me,” he says. “Bite my tongue and accept whatever happens.” Though graduation was the goal for him, Julien now understands that there is a time for everything, especially time to focus on the present day. “Yeah, I want to walk on that graduation stage,” he explains, describing the occasional thought process of a new student. “But there are two years ahead before that.” There is a time to be in wilderness and a time to be in class.

With Eagle Rock’s strong focus on the student, all of the classes relate to life. A favorite of Julien’s was *Rock Climbing*. It’s easy to assume what the primary experience of this class was all about, but what is more enlightening is the interpersonal resolve that Julien walked away with: a certain thoughtfulness in every move he makes and vision for what exists at his peripheral, at the edges of his vision. “We read a book called *The Way of the Rock Warrior* and basically I learned that you can relate rock climbing to life. When you’re hanging off the side of a rock you have to trust every move you make. It built my character in that I learned to use my peripheral for all of life.”

On the subject of classes, Julien’s advice for new students is to “take advantage of all the classes that are offered. The classes that are most out of your comfort zone are the ones you’re going to need the most.” He also recommends staying in touch with those who express care. “Keep in contact with the people who check up on you,” he says. “The ones who offer to help

you after class. They are expressing care for you and you might not always get that.” After spending some time in between trimesters working in D.C., and taking advantage of what Eagle Rock has to offer, Julien is ready to make the next step and enter the Navy. As he explains it, “I am capable of becoming a soldier and eventually I will be able to get a higher education. I feel like that would set me up for a professional career after my service.” Julien expects to go far in life, and he will do so with one of his biggest lessons from Eagle Rock in tow: “I need to be selfless; conscious behavior and selflessness. I have grown to be selfless. These characteristics can take me really far in life.”

Scott Forrester was born and raised in Colorado. He spent the first ten years of his life in Denver and has spent the other half of his life between here and Park, Colorado. Self-proclaimed “never very good at school,” Scottie fought to find purpose in what he was doing then. At the time, education was more of a forceful obligation than a job. “When I heard the reasons for it—it’ll get you a better job, help you later on in life—it never really seemed a big thing to me,” he said. Having established this mindset early on, Scottie was at the foot of an uphill battle that would culminate in a prospective visit to Eagle Rock. Leaving behind a troublesome stage of his youth, Scottie made the choice to be at Eagle Rock and after a long career is ready to give his farewells. When asked how he feels about graduation, he casually responded with, “I feel a hundred. People will usually ask me the question of ‘are you ready to graduate’ and my usual response is ‘I’m trying not think about it.’ I tend to disengage. The entirety of the situation comes down to being fully present.” So are you ready, Scottie? “Oh yeah. I’ve learned so much from this place, how to appreciate myself and the work of others.” Good to hear. Another confident Eagle Rocker prepares to leave our haven in the mountains.

When asked about the greatest challenge he has faced at Eagle Rock, Scottie speaks to the great need for effective communication and his own trials with articulation: “an issue because I’m really influenced by writing.” But as a result of this Scottie states that he “would really like to become a journalist someday.” In order to overcome the challenges of communication, he has hit the books. “I have started to read a lot more. I used to read a lot of comic books which can be great pieces of culture, but not always provide enough depth.” Importantly, at Eagle Rock, Scottie has become conscious of his need. Along with his hope of becoming a journalist, he would love to become an environmental scientist or a botanist working in environmental education. Scottie admits to experiencing

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“*Graduates*” – Cont. from Pg. 13

some sadness about leaving Eagle Rock; the sadness of transitions. “They are a bit sad,” he admits. Though with this thought he then adds a touch of hope and ambition: “I’d really like to be one of those people someday; a mentor, a writer, someone who inspires someone to seek their own adventure. No matter how you get there it’s always about the journey along the way.”

Leslie Hernandez was born and raised in Dallas, Texas until the beginning of 2nd grade, when her family packed up and moved to Colorado. This placed her in the unfortunate position of starting 2nd grade all over again and doing so in unfamiliar territory. Though the transition was not easy, with a stroke of good fortune the *I Have a Dream Foundation* adopted her class in Colorado from the outset. Through an unfortunate chain of events, even though the tangible support system of *I Have a Dream* was helpful, Leslie dropped out of school after pushing through the traditional system for a number of years. She was ready for a different way of learning. When asked about this experience, she answered gently. “I can’t really say that I was mad. I believe everything happens for a reason. That is what brought me to Eagle Rock.”

The challenges of education and community would continue throughout her career at Eagle Rock, but Leslie opens up about these quite easily. “One of the biggest challenges for me has been having no personal time,” she says. “I’ve come to realize that I can’t get away at all, but there are little things I can do to get away in the moment.” For Leslie, this meant writing poetry, taking a trip off campus, or even Kitchen Patrol (KP), believe it or not. Her explanation for the KP fascination: “Doing dishes is not a thing you have to think about. You just get in there and do it.”

When offered the chance to give some advice to current students, Leslie pondered the opportunity and then underscored the importance of being true to oneself and paying attention to one’s moral and ethical code. “You are who you are,” Leslie says. “Change doesn’t mean change your whole person, it means change whatever is bothering you and bothering others.” She encouraged others to focus on growing as an individual as a member of a larger community. At this point in her life at Eagle Rock, Leslie is no stranger to making plans and setting goals. Her next step is to attend to the University of Colorado and study biology, an aspiration gained by learning more about the body through CrossFit, a class taught by Jeff Liddle. “Jeff really pushed my buttons and helped me to do what I hadn’t done before.” She is no stranger to challenge, and while this developing theme of facing

adversity continues to play out in Leslie’s life, with steady resolve, she will overcome. In her own words, “Failure is not fatal, but failure to change might be.”

Melvina Moore is one of two graduates with a Chicago hometown label beside her name. She spent the first twelve years of her life in the Cabrini Green projects before eventually transitioning to Estes Park at 14 years old. Today, Estes is her home. After making her first start at Eagle Rock when she was 15, Melvina made it through a week of wilderness and then decided that she wasn’t ready yet. She would return in ER-42. When asked what drew her to Eagle Rock, she mentioned the sense of diversity and community. “I wanted to be around people of color. I wanted to have a sense of family.” Life had been hard on Melvina. For most of her life she was raised by her sister. Eagle Rock was a second chance; a chance to start over. Melvina admits to struggles with issues of self-esteem and relationships but in spite of this admittance she has made strides in improving her relationship with herself and with others.

As she learns to love herself she learns how to move forward. Melvina speaks of Medea and Mo’Nique Hicks being heroes of hers as they have each helped her build a sense of self-worth. On the subject of favorite classes, *Integrated Performance*, was Melvina’s favorite. “I loved it,” she says. When the class ran in ER-43, “We had a performance in the lodge, ticket sales were up, and I felt like I could really sing and dance and act. It felt like I was on top of the world when I was doing those things.” As for her future strivings, Melvina hopes to attend college and get her degree to become a pharmacy technician. She realizes that graduation is just the beginning but she is ready to make the change. Wish her luck!

Chelsey Moris was born in Colorado and raised with a strong family dynamic, typical family pressure included. Chelsey explains, “My family is amazing. There was a point in time when I didn’t appreciate them like I do now. They love each other and love me and my sister.” Growing up in a Christian home, Chelsey described feeling pretty sheltered; a feeling which contributed to a break from the norms her parents had set for her. As she tells it, “I got a little crazy.” High School turned into a rough experience and after being kicked out of school and out of her home, she came to a realization. “I was doing nothing with my life and I couldn’t fend for myself without an education.” Eagle Rock was her last chance.

Since being at Eagle Rock, Chelsey has changed and grown, though not without facing a few bumps in the road. “I was really impulsive when I first came

✍ See “*Graduates*” – Cont. on Pg. 15

“Graduates” – Cont. from Pg. 14

here,” she says. Surprisingly, she also felt homesick and began to appreciate her family more than ever before. Wilderness played an especially pertinent role in this. “Wilderness was the first big step in changing myself,” Chelsey said. Not giving up when things get rough, commitment, setting one’s mind on the task, all of these ideas apply. Looking to the future, Chelsey is a bit anxious. For a long time she was in a big rush but now that graduation is just around the corner reality is sinking in. “I’m leaving the nest,” she says. Still this isn’t stopping her. When asked about her plans, Chelsey responded without qualm. With plans to attend Front Range Community College in the fall, she will now take the time sitting before her to hang out with family and save money for her upcoming collegiate career. When asked for some final words, both of advice and of love, Chelsey responded eloquently: “Appreciate this place, take everything you can, use opportunities to their full advantage, laugh as often as possible, P-Rose love forever. Go Broncos!”

Joshua Timberlake was born in Dolton, a suburb of Chicago, Illinois, far away from the mountains and elk of Estes Park. Reflecting on his early years, a few oft-repeated words came to mind: “Josh, just do good,” his mom would tell him. For Josh, these words have stuck to this very day; he remembers their effect and reflects on them even now. After moving from public, to online, to alternative school, Josh’s mom began to look at boarding schools. Josh, eager to tip ownership

in his direction as much as possible, began his own search and discovered Eagle Rock.

Not too dissimilar from the perspective of other graduates, Eagle Rock for Josh was full of challenge but wholly worth the effort. Talking to people outside of his ethnic group, or being the minority in majority-Spanish-speaking wing, were just two of the challenges he mentioned. But eventually, as he explained it, “people started talking.” They had to in order to get by; in order to find success for themselves and for each other. He had to expand his common interests and is happy for doing so. Even in the midst of a hectic Eagle Rock trimester, everyone needs some form of escape or artistic expression; this is part of the battle. When asked how Josh found this expression at Eagle Rock, making music and CrossFit were both mentioned as options; places to which he could escape. Offered the chance to ponder and give a couple pieces of advice for current students, Josh was eager to share, “don’t break into house parent houses because you will sleep outside in the snow” and “keep an open mind.” As for the next step, Josh plans to attend at Clark Atlanta University in Georgia to study music and pre-law. Josh is pumped about moving on to another chapter in life and his mom, who has been anticipating the day of graduation, will be right there at his side. “She is the only person who can stick by while somebody mess up for 20 years and still have hope,” Josh says. She is his hero, ready to usher him into the next step. Congratulations Josh.

ALUMNI PROFILE – WHERE IS HE NOW?

by *Seth Wyncott*, Public Allies Fellow in Professional Development

Danny Thwaites: ER-7 (January, 1996)
Graduated: ER-11 (April, 1997)
Geography: Dover, DE

Danny Thwaites is no stranger to beginnings; he is aware of how short they can be and yet how long time might seem in their midst. In reality, time flies. Danny made this point several times during our conversation. This message is conceived as part warning and part incentive: warning to not take moments for granted, yet incentive to work hard and seek fulfillment. Danny seems to have both parts in perspective. With a deliberate and eager voice, he spoke with me from Dover, Delaware, his hometown; the spot where everything began and where life has brought him full-circle.

In high school, Danny made a run through most of high school until he began having problems during his junior year and ended up getting expelled. “Basically

just for skipping school,” he says. Unable to lie around and take it easy with the watchful eyes of his parents looking on, he began working for a painter and happened to find other low-level labor jobs, nothing that would sustain him for a long time. It was during this interim period that his mom found out about Eagle Rock through the newspaper and eventually it was decided that he would take a shot as a student. Danny made his first entrance to Eagle Rock at the age of 17.

Asked to describe his first days in the mountains of Estes, Danny’s voice seemed to indicate a shrug. “I was an athlete,” he said. “I was comfortable with

➤ See “Alumni Profile” – Cont. on Pg. 16

“Alumni Profile” – Cont. fromn Pg. 15

going away from home. I wasn't sure if it was going to be a boot camp or what.” As he would soon find out, Eagle Rock was not a boot camp yet being a student in such a unique community did come with its own pressures. Within a few short weeks of arriving, Danny was kicked out for sneaking off campus to meet up with some local kids. Though an unfortunate way to exit, it was this second trip out of school in the middle of a short high school career that drove the point into a serious realm. Going back to work for the painter wasn't a fulfillment of any dream, it was reminder that life should be different and could be different with an education. “I really decided then that I needed to finish things off,” Danny explained. “From then on, I put my head down and finished everything.” At the age of 18, Danny returned to Eagle Rock, and this time he would stick around.

Danny loved the wilderness trip. “It was cool,” he says. “I liked the wilderness thing. I was a boy scout. I had been camping since I was a little kid, but 25 days, that was the longest campout.” Though the appreciation for wilderness was not the same for everyone—“some kids showed up from the city and hadn't even seen a pine cone,” he exclaims—but Eagle Rock proved to work well with diversity. “Eagle Rock is a safe place for kids who weren't getting along with normal school. They definitely have something going on there. Not everyone learns the same way. For younger kids, I can see Eagle Rock being a much more stable place to be than home. It takes all the distractions of a crazy household away.” The special bond created by house parents and instructional specialists adds value to the experience. “You felt more comfortable as a teenager

talking to them,” Danny says, later referencing his relationship with Michael Soguero. “He was a really good teacher. Michael would let you think your answer through; give you the time. At a public school they wouldn't give you the attention. Michael focused.”

Danny graduated with two others in ER-11, after which he went home and started working 60 hours a week on a construction job. As his older brother was an operator and Danny had past experience with labor-intensive work, he was a shoe-in. Danny made his next move during the autumn after graduation by taking advantage of an opportunity to attend college. He was accepted into Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) to study architecture but left after a year in a search for his niche.

“Architecture just wasn't the right thing for me.” After leaving RPI, he stuck with the private construction business for a while and enjoyed the work installing underground fuel systems at Dover Air Force Base. But when a hockey accident laid him off, the option of buying his dad's pest control business surfaced; this had been a family conversation before. Seeing it as a good opportunity, Danny jumped in. “I was raised doing pest control since I was a little kid. It was always in the back of my mind.” Danny eventually took over the operation and has been running it since.

Today the business thrives and Danny is enjoying life. “I work between 9 and 10 months a year,” he says, “then take two months and travel. I have a house in Puerto Rico on the Caribbean and I've spent the last 7 or 8 winters fixing it up.” Having grown up near the

water, Danny is an eager fisherman and surfer, and Puerto Rico sets the perfect escape for the winter doldrums. When not surfing and reeling in the next big catch, Danny commits his time to rescuing dogs. “Puerto Rico has a problem with feral, loose dogs. There are loose dogs running all over the place. Between me and my brothers, we've rescued and brought 20 Puerto Rican mutts back to the States over the past nine years.” He



is proud of this accomplishment and plans to keep up the work.

Asked for a final reflection on Eagle Rock, Danny speaks positively of his time there, even though he was in a rush to get out. “When you're that age, you feel like a year or two years out is so far away. It's really just a very little short slip of your life. You're very short sighted when you're a teenager; I was the same way. If Eagle Rock is what you need to get to the next step, then that's what you need to do. If you can get your high school diploma and just grind it out, you'll be glad. To me now, the way I look back at it, it's like a long summer camp.” For Danny, his hard work at Eagle Rock, though a ways behind him now, has enabled him to follow his passions for business, the entrepreneurial spirit, warm sea breezes, good surf, and furry friends. He wishes Eagle Rock the best.