ERS CELEBRATES TEN YEARS

September 1993. Two and a half buildings. A few staff members including Robert Burkhardt, John Oubre, Judy Gilbert, Sally Duncan, Burt Bowles, Tim Phelps, Michael Soguero, Garth Lewis, Deb Eads. Sixteen young people. A culture, a program and a curriculum to be refined by experience. A Professional Development Center yet to be designed.

September 2003. Sixteen buildings plus five faculty houses. Twenty-eight full-time Honda staff, including 12 who are mostly instructors. A fellowship program providing professional development to 12 fellows in conjunction with Public Allies. Part-time staff including an activities director and a computer whiz. Nearly 96 students. Eighty-six graduates. Five students who have not only graduated from ERS but from college. Two in graduate school. Countless more who are earning a living, involved in service, raising a family or serving in the military. A professional development center that hosts as many as 2000 visitors a year. A book and many articles published and conference presentations made (usually with students). Alliances with other reform groups.

Although the changes are profound, some things stay the same. The culture of Eagle Rock is still based on a set of principles known as $8 + 5 = 10$. The culture is that of a learning community. Students still do a lot of service – over 500 hours per student per year. The curriculum is still experiential and interdisciplinary. POLs (Presentations of Learning) occur three times a year.

On September 12, 2003, current and former Eagle Rock staff and students and friends of the school celebrated the enduring as well as changing aspects of Eagle Rock. A formal ceremony at 11:00 that day helped over 300 celebrants focus on the original purpose of Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center, remember those no longer with us, and hear the stories of a current student, graduate, and a parent. Mr. Koichi Amemiya, President of Honda Motors, delivered a keynote address.

Former students and staff marched into the ceremony to the music of the Estes Park Village Band. An “E-rade” (Eagle Rock + parade = E-rade) threaded the first group of students and staff (ER1) through a double-line of later ER groups into seats on the Field of Dreams. Students and staff from ER 2 through ER 30 continued to thread their way through later groups until the last group, ER 31, was seated.

Lunch on the Field of Dreams, under white tents, featured Colorado foods, mostly from local, small farms and dairies, as well as a birthday cake and an ice sculpture.

Rock Alive in the afternoon brought Eagle Rock alive for former staff and students and visitors. Guided by expert student guides, small groups touring the campus witnessed Eagle Rock in action. In the Human Performance Center, they watched current students and staff using the climbing wall and exercise machines. At the outdoor amphitheater they observed students rehearsing musicals. Groups watched students creating art, doing science, learning history, speaking another language, and doing mathematics – the Eagle Rock way. It was one big Presentation of Learning.

Commemorative items included mugs with ERS medals on them, water bottles, carabiners, pens, postcards and other memorabilia.

September 12 was just the first day of celebration. The third Eagle Rock reunion of students and staff continued over the weekend.
FOUR SUMMER GRADS BRING TOTAL TO 86 ———

Laronda Moore of Chicago and Naheem Edmeade, Adam Megginsion.

Graduate Luke Sledge also wants to teach, but his preference is an inner city middle school. He wrote in his POL packet, “Eagle Rock School is proving to be a challenge all the way up to graduation . . . I am finding that even with 99.9% of the work done, I am struggling most with the last one percent. I attribute this to the inherent fear that comes with any change and, with completion, inevitably comes change.” Luke starts work on his degree in education at SUNY Stony Brook in September. The Graduate Wilderness Trip he took this trimester was particularly significant “because exactly three years ago this trimester I participated in almost the same course as a new student. Not only was I going back to the same place, but I was going back with one of my same patrol members.”

Naheem described his experiences before Eagle Rock: “I was part of the not-so-great New York City public school system. Classrooms were always packed, and we often didn’t have all the materials needed to learn what was being taught. One time I took a typewriting class with no typewriters. Because there were so many students in the classrooms, I never got the attention I needed, and my parents didn’t understand what was going on. They thought I was just being lazy or acting up in school. Partly they were right. It was hard to want to focus and learn when I didn’t understand what was being taught. It seemed like all my friends weren’t behaving in school, so why should I?”

Naheem’s future includes opening his own cultural art center in New York City for underprivileged kids “in order to open their eyes to the world of music and performing arts.” Adam Megginsion’s goal is to earn an MBA. He wrote in his POL packet about being “someone who did not focus on work.” He described his new self as someone who has “found a bit of passion in getting work done . . . The passion for my work (which I can’t
...Gras - Continued

believe I’m saying) is when a
task is complete. It is the best
feeling to just cross out your
list. ...and I'm proud of myself
to see how far I have grown to
get where I am now.”

Adam reflected on his
moral and ethical code: “During
my two and a half years
here I have come up with a new moral and
ethical code every trimester to add to my
set of values. But the one
I came up with this trimester has been a struggle for
me. My code is now: The
God in me recognizes the
God in you. This has been a
struggle for me because I
believe that society makes
us bring out the ego that we
pick up from what we see in
the street, and that’s what we live rather than
living what’s true to yourself on the inside.”

THEY LOVED THE
NIGHT: ERS’S
MIDSUMMER
MUSICAL
FOCUSED ON
SONDHEIM

Some pieces were more
recognizable than others.
Most audiences recognized
music from West Side Story
(for which Sondheim wrote
the lyrics and Leonard Bern-
stein the music), Gypsy and
A Funny Thing Happened on
the Way to the Forum. But
few knew of The
Frogs
(based
on a
play by
Aristo-
phanes)
which
was
first performed in the swim-
mong pool at Yale, Into the
Woods, Saturday Night,
the Mad Show, Company, A
Little Night Music, Sunday
matter and whose name
evokes, for some, dissonant
chords, words that speed by
too fast, and tunes you just
cannot hum.” From audi-
ence reaction, she and the
cast and crew succeeded in
conveying things “familiar.
peculiar. . .and completely
different.”

Director Trattner shared
responsibilities with Cynthia
Elkins (Art Instructional
Specialist) who focused on
the set; Karolee McLaughlin
(Music Instructional
Specialist) who focused
on vocals, conducting the
orchestra and running the
soundboard; Leah Engelbart
(music intern) who served as
assistant director; Rick
Roberts (University of San
Francisco) who worked as
vocal coach; and Suzanne
Garramone (musical director
and musician in Those Darn

Afternoon in the Park With
George, or Follies.

Trattner hoped that
Eagle Rock audiences would
relish the “witty, poignant
works of...Stephen Sond-
heim, whose musicals often
seize upon unlikely subject

Eagle Eyes

Jacques Fournet
Wilderness & Outdoors
Education

Mike Glowacki
Head Cook

Richard Gordon
Learning Resources
and Information

Linda Sand Guest
Director of Curriculum

John Goffy
Service

Dick Herb
Director of Operations

Sheri Jackson
Business Administration
Specialist

Janet Johnson
Science

Janice Lee
Registrar

Jeff Lemon
Sous Chef

Jeff Liddle
Wilderness &
Outdoors Education

Chris Mason
Health and Wellness
Counselor

Karolee McLaughlin
Music and Performance

Jen Morine
Human Performance

L’Tanya Perkins
Admissions Associate

Tim Phelps
Chef Instructor

Scott Rashid
Cook

James Sherman
Society and
Social Studies

Philbert Smith
Director of Students

Lisa Spring
Administrative Assistant

Terry Tierney
Assistant Facilities

Lan To
Life After Eagle Rock

Alison Trattner
Language and Literature
GRADUATE TAMMY THOMAS REFLECTS ON EAGLE ROCK

Editor's note: This is an email sent to Robert Burkhartd, head of school, from Tammy Thomas, graduate. The email contained only two spelling errors.

Although I know it has been a long time, I was recently inspired to take some time from the everyday goings-on of life to say hi! I am not sure if you recall what you said to me at my last POL, but I do, which is why I am writing. When I left ERS I had my mind set on going into law, but throughout my four years in college I have realized that my passion is in education.

I have been working for the Office of Admissions at CU Boulder which has allowed me to see the need for change in education which gave birth to Eagle Rock. At times my job and my interactions with potential students have made me mad, sad, depressed and, at times, feeling hopeless. It is hard to understand why so many bright students are written off so easily by a system whose job is to help create a path of success for them. But even more disturbing is the overwhelming gap in the preparation to complete higher education between schools whose student body is predominantly working and lower class students of color vs. those who came from middle to upper class predominantly white schools. It is truly heartbreaking to sit in an admissions meeting with a student whose face is full of desire and hope to be admitted but whose GPA and/or test scores are not enough. I can map out a senior year class schedule that may help but I still see many lights go out when [the admissions candidates] see that the average GPA of our entering freshmen is far from what they have so proudly achieved at a school that has left them to fend for themselves.

So I find myself at a crossroads. Do I follow my safe, well mapped-out plan and enter law school or do I venture into the unfamiliar and unpredictable terrain of education? This is not an easy choice, but I keep hearing a voice in my head saying “Find a need and fill it, Tammy.” So I am applying to get my Master’s in Secondary Education from the School of Education at the University of Colorado in Boulder! Wow, that’s a little strange for me to write, seeing as how I never questioned my passion for law. Please don’t misunderstand, I will go to law school but, for now, I want to be proactive in my pursuit to help disadvantaged youth, and I think education is the way to do so.

While I know I have worked hard in the past four years, I will never deny that my willingness to take the “road less traveled” is not taken without fear or doubt, but with passion and hope that came from Eagle Rock. While the faces change, the spirit remains the same. Nobody comes to Eagle Rock with the same story, but we all leave (regardless of how) infused with the same undeniable spirit, drive, skills, and ability to make wherever we end up an extended part of the Eagle Rock family. I am so grateful to all those who inspired, challenged, helped and loved me throughout my time at ERS. I know I have been a stranger for quite some time, but please know that the community has always been part of every aspect of my life. I take great pride in saying I am an Eagle Rock alum. I will always use what I have gained from you all as a start in this new phase of my life.

I know I should have said this a long time ago, but I am saying it now: Thank you. It is only through the eyes of the ERS community that I was able to see who I truly was and change that into who I am. I look forward to seeing everyone in September (at the Tenth Anniversary Celebration, September 12).

With Love, Always, Tammy Thomas, ER 6

PS. Sorry if anything is spelled wrong (no time to edit). My son (a subject for another email) is in need of his mommy!
ARTSOURCE LANDSCAPES EAGLE ROCK WITH ART INSTALLATIONS

For the past four years, groups of Colorado art educators have come to Eagle Rock to learn together how to implement the Colorado State Model Content Standards in art in creative and collegial ways. ArtSource is the organization that sponsors their learning. Their week-long June workshops have often involved Eagle Rock students and provided Eagle Rock with outstanding works of art, such as these environmental installations.

2003 ArtSource Participants
FORMER INTERN
CLAUDINE SOLIN
REFLECTIONS ON
HER YEAR AT
EAGLE ROCK

Editor's Note: In order to be accepted into the Smith College School for Social Work, former ERS intern Claudine Solin wrote an autobiographical sketch which largely focused on her year at Eagle Rock.

At Eagle Rock School and Professional Development Center students hug teachers, students provide honest feedback for their mentors, students shape their curriculum, students shape those who are present to “educate” them. A full year spent as the Language Arts Intern at this alternative, year-round, residential school in Estes Park, Colorado...brought me intimately in touch with my professional ego, my personal defenses, my survival skills, my courage, my compassion.

I arrived at Eagle Rock prepared to stand upon the wisdom of my two years of teaching writing, literature, and outdoor skills to students at the Forman School, all of whom were diagnosed with learning differences.

I arrived at Eagle Rock prepared to stand upon my time spent working as a field instructor for the Aspen Achievement Academy, a therapeutic wilderness program for “at risk” teenagers.

I had studied with Carol Gilligan and other gurus in the world of education and developmental psychology at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. I had my Masters in Risk and Prevention.

Eight-hour shifts on the Child and Adolescent Inpatient Units at Charter Asheville Behavioral Health Services; I had worked at a psychiatric hospital.

I arrived at Eagle Rock having run the Boston Marathon, having climbed Mount Kilimanjaro and Mount McKinley, having taught Shakespeare.

I arrived at Eagle Rock having worked for the National Organization for Women and the National Coalition of Women at the United Nations, having worked for a Rape Crisis Hotline, having run a sexual assault awareness and support group at my college, having spent endless hours tutoring and hanging out with an endearing fifth grade boy born with birth defects, having shopped for and spent time with a woman in her early 90s every week of my 16th, 17th, and 18th years of life.

Trail building, basketball court construction, adding the finishing touches to a Native Alaskan Clan House in the town of Klawoek.

Upon arrival at Eagle Rock, none of this mattered.

Instead, my eye contact mattered, my honesty mattered, my commitment mattered, keeping my word mattered, my ability to hold and make changes with respect to feedback mattered. My walk was noticed, my voice, the way I carry myself, the way I react.

Upon arrival at Eagle Rock, my experiences and their composition on my resume quickly became irrelevant. I soon discovered that to teenage faces I would see each morning, I was simply another new adult face, a woman with skin and bones, muscles, freckles, a mind, a brain, and emotions just like everyone else. And I soon discovered what a community truly looks like when actions are valued over words.

...I...recognize that I...cannot exist in a vacuum. Eagle Rock is the first place I can remember which brought me, through experience, to understand how dynamic learning and personal growth can be within a relational context held together by love and honesty openly expressed. Over the course of my 12 months spent there, my richest experiences came from daily morning gatherings, Wednesday night community meetings rotated with student house and gender meetings. These gatherings were all based in connection and personal growth within the larger context of maintaining a healthy community of learners. I slowly began to let down the layers of walls which I had erected through my 29 years of life; I never would have imagined that it would be teenagers, those deemed “at risk,” no less, who would contribute so deeply to my personal process.
FIFTEEN STUDENTS AND 
TEACHERS, 200 DOLLARS, AND
A SHORT YELLOW BUS

By Kyle Bunten, Student

Summer trimester ER 30 featured blocks during which students took only one class at a time. It allowed students in these classes to go on one- to three-week trips without disrupting the learning going on in their other classes. This worked out perfectly for the Power of Poetry class, allowing us to go to Taos, New Mexico for a week. We had the unique experience of volunteering and participating in the Taos Poetry Circus.

We drove down to Taos on Saturday, June 7th, arriving at our campsite in time for homemade ice cream, a weekly tradition provided by our campsite hosts. We quickly put up our tarps and discussed our coming days. Mary Vieira, PDC fellow, and Jeff Hinson, art fellow, did an amazing job with teaching the class by maintaining a balance between being friends helping us to learn, and being very respectable instructors and leaders. I can’t, of course, forget Lynn Gatti, wilderness fellow, who went with us to help out with logistical needs. She was there to help out with things like cooking, cleaning, and basically making sure we were all happy and healthy. This was a chance for all fifteen (staff and students) of us to learn and grow, as well as set examples for each other and pass along knowledge.

June 8th – 15th, the first week of Block-2 here at ERS was also the week-long Taos Poetry Circus. This annual gathering of poets has been going on for several years, and consists of a different event each day. Many of these events were slams. A slam is a competition consisting of several rounds in which two to fifteen poets perform their work. The poets are given scores between 1.0 for a poem that left listeners in a worse mental state than they began with, and a 10.0 for the best piece of work you have ever heard. Three volunteer judges give these points to the poets from the audience. As the slam progresses, poets are eliminated, with the poet receiving the highest scores being the winner. This same format is followed whether it is the Next Generation Youth Slam or the World Poetry Bout Association’s World Championship Bout.

The first Sunday of our trip included a brief description of our duties as volunteers before we took our positions for the first event, the Next Generation Youth Slam. This was a slam for people 21 and under. Eight competitors showed up, and the rest of us had a great time hearing work from members of our own age cohort. We met many kind and interesting people, one of whom actually invited all fifteen of us to her home for dinner. On Monday and Tuesday, we watched the two qualifying rounds for the Open Slam. A fair number of our students and even one of our teachers performed in this. Amber Horton and Vanessa Harvey both made it into the Finals of the Open Slam, while JR Garcia, Mollie Woodruff, and Mary Vieira all moved the crowds with their work. On Wednesday, we attended the Open Slam Finals and heard and saw some astounding poetry. In one round, the poets are given a random word or phrase and must create a poem from it, on the spot. This extemporaneous round can bring either great or horrendous poetry; we saw some of both categories. On Thursday, we saw several semi-famous poets perform during a poetry event called Contemporary Voices. On Friday, there was a Tag-Team Poetry Bout, a slam with two ‘teams’ of two poets each. The next day, Saturday, brought the main event of the Taos Poetry Circus, the World Poetry Bout Association’s World Championship Bout, in which Pat Payne competed with Willie Perdomo. Pat Payne was the defending champion, after narrowly beating Saul Williams at last year’s Poetry Circus. This year, Pat beat Willie by one round, and our involvement with the Circus came to a close.

The Power of Poetry class is very thankful for our chance to go to Taos, and for being able to have such a great experience. I, personally, learned a lot and had a chance to grow quite a bit.

STAFF REFLECT ON LESSONS LEARNED: 10 FOR 10

Eagle Rock staff, students and visitors have learned a great deal about how to keep young people in school and re-engage them in learning. These ten lessons emerge from ten years of experience as most important:

1. Students thrive when expectations are high and conditions variable.
2. Every school should be its own professional development center.
3. All schools should be small schools.
4. Everyone learns; everyone teaches in a school.
5. Students cannot be parsed; they come to us as whole human beings for whom personal growth is as important as academic growth.
6. Students should do school rather than have school done to them.
7. Learning about learning is critical.
8. A diploma must have integrity.
9. Finding a need and filling it leads to both personal and academic growth.
10. Student voices must be sought and used.

An article providing details, examples and explanations of this list of ten has been submitted for publication to Education Week. It is available in rough draft form from Lois Easton, Director of Professional Development, at 970-586-7109 or leastoners@aol.com.
JAMIE STEEL REPORTS THAT THE INTERNSHIP PROGRAM IS ALIVE AND WELL

Editor’s Note: This email was sent to Gary Kessler, Executive Director of the American Honda Education Corporation; Robert Burkhardt, Head of School; Lois Easton, Director of Professional Development; and Dan Condon, Director of the Public Allies Program at Eagle Rock.

Robert, just wanted to write you to tell you that the Eagle Rock mission in terms of the internship program is alive and well. This past year, Eagle Rock has played a bigger role in my life than I could have ever imagined. [Jamie worked at Boulder High School as a social studies teacher.] I find myself thinking about, speaking about, or employing a lesson I learned in my year at ERS almost daily. I pass on my thoughts to my students at public high school; I employ them in my class; and I walk around and use quotes from ERS. I even pay attention to the language and atmosphere that is pasted in the halls of my new school.

In addition, I had the unique opportunity to work with two students who left ERS without graduating. V was my student aid this past year and, between naps on the couch in my office, helped me with my school work. He is finding success in his life largely due to what he learned at Eagle Rock. C was in my World History second semester and, although she received an average grade, she showed promise for the future. Both of these experiences confirmed my belief that ERS is good for anyone and everyone who has the opportunity to work and live there.

Cheers, Jamie

PS. Aspen is still the best house on campus!!!! BUP!!!!

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GRADUATE HIGHER EDUCATION FUND EXPANDS

The Graduate Higher Education Fund is now able to award every Eagle Rock graduate with $1,500 for continued education. College or university seniors are eligible to receive an additional $1,000 for their senior years. ERS graduates who go to graduate school at an institution of higher education are able to receive $1,000 for every year of graduate school.

Expanded awards make possible higher education for students who otherwise might not be able to continue formal learning. Expanded awards are possible because of your generous donations. Thank you!

If you would like to contribute to the Graduate Higher Education Fund, make your check payable to Eagle Rock School and direct to the attention of Richard Herb, Director of Operations. Thank you once more!

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