EAGLE ROCK BRINGS NEW YORK TO ESTES THROUGH GUYS & DOLLS

by Lois Easton, Director of Professional Development

“I can’t believe that they were high school students!” This was just one comment following an Eagle Rock presentation of the musical Guys & Dolls. The energetic, exuberant, and professional Eagle Rock rendition of the Damon Runyan story was the eighth in a series of summer extravaganzas that has included Midsummer Night’s Dream, The Wizard of Oz, Grease, and Romeo and Juliet.

The musical was held at the outdoor Eagle Rock Amphitheater July 19, 20, 26, and 27, with an additional matinee performance at the Stanley Concert Hall on July 21.

Addison Trottner, Director and Producer, commented in program notes that the musical was chosen “as a gift to the city of New York, from whence many of our students hail.” The cast and crew studied the 1920s. “prohibition and speak-easies, women’s emancipation, racial consciousness, the crash of 1929, the Dust Bowl, the Great Depression, the shadowy lives of gangsters... Art Deco... the telephones, cars and cameras of the period... samba, foxtrot and swing... vintage fedoras.” They also read Damon Runyon’s short stories.

As Alison put it, we were “historians, anthropologists, sociologists; we became psychologists, analyzing each character’s motivation, style, physical characteristics... We are artists, jugglers, singers, dancers. Planes fly, steam rises, signs flash, dogs and children cavort, taxis honk, and a 1937...
SUMMER SEES MANY ADDITIONS OF SITE-SPECIFIC ART

The pictures on this page document the many ways Eagle Rock students and staff have beautified the Eagle Rock campus with site-specific art. The ceramic pieces in a gentle curve grace the “Y” in the road to Eagle Rock. Created by the Site Specific Art Class, they replace similar sculptures that were destroyed a few years ago. Students Rafael Martinez, Kanoa Breeland, Reina Aguilar, Ben Holtry, and instructors Mary McGuire and Mieko Ozeki contributed these wonderful replacement pieces.

The metal sculptures loosely forming a zany musical group perform between the Lodge and Lodgepole (a student residence). They were also created by the Site Specific Art Class. The ceramic totem pole resides outside a window in the Lodge; it was created in nine pieces by nine artists including students, Estes Park artist Susan Anderson, and Mary McGuire.

The mural was created in Lodgepole commons by students Leia Hill and Naeha Breeland.
THE DESIRE TO LEARN
by Luke Sledge, Student

My name is Luke Sledge, I was born and raised in New York City. I am 17 years old, and go to an alternative boarding school in Colorado called Eagle Rock. When I was younger I never thought of school as a place to learn. I always thought of school as a place to be watched and told what to do. All kids in elementary and middle schools are taught to hate school by T.V. programs, friends, and older siblings. Consequently, learning is the last thing a young person thinks of when he/she thinks about school. I feel that, if school teachers in my earlier years of school had emphasized the learning aspect of school instead of the discipline aspect of school, I would be much further along in my understanding of my education.

This is one of the reasons that Eagle Rock works for me and many other students. We learn the importance of learning. The term “life-long learner” is used frequently to describe teachers and role models here at Eagle Rock. Obviously students learn in traditional schools as well, but it is a different type of learning. The difference that I have noticed between the kind of learning in alternative schools as opposed to public schools is that the alternative methods of learning have instilled the desire to continue to learn in me. I want to seek out information for myself instead of waiting for someone else to spoonfeed it to me in the forms of lectures and dittoes. When one learns a concept from experiencing it, the concept becomes a memory like going to the beach with your friends, something that you did, enjoyed, and won’t forget.

I remember being in fourth grade in a NYC public school and staring at a poster that my teacher had up in her room. It read “Give a man a fish, feed him for the day. Teach a man to fish, feed him for life.” I did not realize the irony at the time but looking back now I see that the poster described as a metaphor my ideal way to learn, and there I was sitting in a class while the teacher fed me only for the day.

This leads directly into how schools can motivate their students. For a teacher to instill in students the desire to direct their own learning, the teacher must first teach the importance of learning. At Eagle Rock the whole system is built around the need for students to be self-directed learners. In order to graduate we must develop a passion for learning. Teachers encourage working independently and reward independent work with credit. They rarely ever give a direct answer to a question and usually encourage students to find answers for themselves. Teachers at Eagle Rock also encourage students to teach whole classes, based on the idea that the best way to learn a topic is to teach it. Some of these practices would not be easy to adopt in public schools. Some, however, are practical ideas that could be used in public schools to give students a desire to learn.

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DO STUDENTS CARE ABOUT LEARNING?
by Hayla DeLange-Nuttall, Student

The answer to the question “Do students care about learning?” is one that escapes a concise yes or no. I care to learn like I care to live. I cannot answer for everyone, but I hope anyone living cares as I do.

I am 18 years old from Wilmington, Delaware. I am not afraid to admit that I love to learn. “School” was not my motivation. Before I came to Eagle Rock, I learned to play the system. The private and public education system taught me nothing other than how to win a superficial game. This game was based on how to pretend to be perfect, to please others rather than serve them, and how to score higher than your opponent to gain approval of the judge. At my old school, my financial aid paid for me to attend classes merely to attain a grade that meant that I showed up, swallowed information and regurgitated it on a meaningless sheet of paper. This is what I like to refer to as “educational bulimia.” I kept no personal or academic nutrition of the subject, therefore, learned nothing. On my report card, I seemed to be an excellent student who was involved and highly intelligent. Honestly, I was an ignorant young woman who had no knowledge of self and who used drugs to make the grade to please her friends, parents and teachers. I was a prize in illusion, a basket-case in reality. My learning consisted of producing thoughts without thinking. I had lost myself in the awkward age of adolescence and in high school took the shape of a chameleon. I’ve always been able to survive, assimilate, accommodate and fill my cookie cutter image. I flew to an imaginary world of drugs where I lived in a blurry vision, where I felt alive. I lived a double life: superficial by day, fantasy by night.

I began to appreciate and utilize learning through my art and English teachers. They challenged me to use what I knew about myself and apply that. They showed me how to find myself within my subject. They gave me my first taste of true knowledge. That spurred a complete change in my life. I began to open my eyes to who I was and could be. It was not easy to accept that I was looking at the shadows on the wall like in Plato’s “Allegory of the Cave.” I continued to question my education but had an epiphany to change my life and give it meaning and purpose. I came to Eagle Rock searching for those things. What I found was that through my learning I could give those things to myself.

Attitudes towards education. This is the largest tragedy of our times. How can our society put a limit on learning? The greatest gift of our lives is to learn and teach. It’s true that students care about learning, but I am afraid that most of their caring is for the wrong reasons. The students in my old school and even at Eagle Rock, on a smaller scale, care about learning just so they can move on. They don’t cherish their learning. They feel that it just a test, an insignificant obstacle obstructing their future. I see education as vital as breathing. Eagle Rock has integrated many facets of learning: service, alternative classes, controversial subjects, self-directed morals, living, and learning. To learn from every instance is to devour and enjoy every moment of life. I wish that more students could stop thinking about their GPA and think about themselves in relation to the world. . .open their eyes and see that by expanding their knowledge they expand themselves, their horizons, hearts and minds. So many classrooms are empty of passion, full of agitation and boredom, students hungry for any kind of power. Students in those classrooms do not see that they can feed themselves with thought.

School is my sanctuary, a temple that I fill and find, use to refocus myself. I rest my heart and soul, feast upon human minds that have inspired me to be better. When I leave the classroom, I do not forget what I have learned but apply it and learn from every experience. School should not be regarded as lowly as it is. However, the system is set up for failure. The untamed wild curiosity of youth is wasted by teaching discipline and basic subjects. I never saw the connection between all subjects and myself until I came to Eagle Rock. School should be the birthplace of all learning. It is a place that can or can’t motivate its students. The second biggest tragedy is the school’s purpose to win the game to get a job to make the money to be happy. Maybe it is just an American dream to fit happiness into spare time after work. What a waste!?! Brainwashed to play a role in my education, the best years of my life.

Learning only needs one ingredient to make it meaningful: passion. Show students that they are what they know, and their attitudes will change. Finding the joy in my education was like returning to childhood when imagination and creativity were a way of life. I have changed my life around, like so many others, and I blame no one, regret nothing, question always, settle for nothing and cherish it all. The attitudes of learners at Eagle Rock inspire me. Their choice to change, learn, and grow ignites a flame that opens my eyes to always learn. I truly believe that any person with passion cares about learning whether they realize it or not. Teachers and learners everywhere need to make learning a sacred lifelong ritual and ignite the flame in others.

If I were to advise a lost learner, I would say find what makes you happy, share it, do what makes you feel alive. That is the root of all learning.
TRIMESTER RESULTS IN GOOD-BYES AND HELLOS

Good-byes. Thirteen interns and Art Instructional Specialist Mary McGuire departed from Eagle Rock at the end of the trimester. The thirteen interns were Abbey Corson-Rikert (musical), Chappell Marmon (English), Ian Dingle (mathematics), Jamie Steele (social studies), Jen Morine (human performance), Jesse Beightol (wilderness), John Joseph (service), Josh Blumberg (library), Mieko Ozeki (art), Paola Angel (Spanish), Sarah Bertucci (science), Susan Terwilliger (music), and Tim Riley (professional development). They will be missed!

Mary McGuire moved to the western slope of Colorado, specifically Fruita, where she had earlier purchased a house. She is employed part-time as an art instructor at Palisade High School, Palisade, Colorado. Student Laronda Moore wrote this tribute to her:

Mary was a very special person to me and many others without a doubt. She has worked at Eagle Rock since ER-5 (this trimester is ER-27, so you can see how long she has been here). After Philbert moved out of Aspen, she became the houseparent. She has been a wonderful part of my life and the Eagle Rock family. Mary has been my mother away from home.

Mary Elizabeth McGuire is a New Jersey native. She has one dog, Merlin, and three cats, Fred, Ninja and Tata. Mary loves her animals to death and many know that.

As a teacher, she has inspired me to draw more than just hearts, and that anyone can be an artist. Mary encourages diversity of art in her classrooms. She challenges us students to step out of our comfort zones and to make what comes to mind and not what was thought of before you started your project. She has helped many students who didn’t believe they were artistic. She encourages students to make art of their emotions and illustrate them.

Mary is an awesome teacher and mother. She’s very understanding and loving to the community. Mary is a good role model and preserves everything she does. She has spent a lot of time beautifying this campus with students’ artwork along with her legacies she has left behind. It will be difficult for the next art teacher to fill her shoes. One legacy she left behind is the ceramic pieces at the fork of the Eagle Rock road on campus. She is a fantastic supporter of all students in this community. She always supported the ideal of students doing their art in independent studies. She assisted many students to gain the permission from the curriculum administrators. Mary took on a lot of responsibility for staff and students behind the scenes.

As a mother Mary has done nothing but be there whenever I needed her, and I tried to be there for her in return. All you ever had to do was ask and you would receive. She also practiced this with the entire community on a daily basis. She shares difficult experiences and emotions to teach us from her life. Mary put her all into her many years here at Eagle Rock; she touched hundreds of students who have circulated through Eagle Rock.

Hellos. Twelve new fellows (interns) arrived early in September. They are Kathy Colville (English), Roberto D’Erizans (Spanish), Toan Do (library), Leah Engelbart (music), Lynn Gatti (wilderness), Jacob Handwerker (mathematics), Jeff Hinson (art), Rebecca Kobliska (service), Martin Mulvihill (science), Kristy Ladd (human performance), Mary Vieira (professional development), Marc Whitman (social studies).

In addition, two instructional specialists and a cook have recently joined the staff. Director of Curriculum, Linda Sand Guesi, introduces the instructional specialists:

Janet Johnson has joined the ERS faculty as our full time Instructional Specialist in Science. A graduate of Northwestern University with a B.A. concentrating in Evolution and Population Genetics, Janet will complete an M.A. degree this fall at the University of Colorado. Her CU degree will be in Instruction and Curriculum with an emphasis in secondary science.

Janet comes to ERS with a wide variety of experiences including working as a Research Technologist in the Endocrinology Division of Northwestern University Medical School, as a teacher at Chinquapin School in Highlands, Texas, and as a science teacher for Gilpin County School District RE-1 in Black Hawk, Colorado. She has several impressive publications to her credit.

When Janet first approached Eagle Rock for a teaching position, she was informed that her teaching style and methodology were too traditional for our students’ needs. She took the message to heart and enrolled in a graduate program which would educate her in methods more in keeping with ERS philosophy. A year later, finding that the science position had reopened, she wrote a “second chance” letter in keeping with the “second chance” letters written by students wanting to return to school. We welcome that type of initiative. Janet was re-interviewed and subsequently hired to the delight of all. Janet resides in Estes with her partner, LaShell Lymann.

We are also pleased to announce the appointment of Cynthia Elkins as the Instructional Specialist in Art. Cynthia is a local resident and has been an art educator for Park R-3 School District here in Estes for the last thirteen years. She comes to us with a Bachelor of Fine

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Arts degree in Painting from Colorado State University. She has been honored more than once for her outstanding abilities as a teacher and her works have been shown in many local and regional settings.

Cynthia volunteers in a variety of organizations within the Estes Park community and brings with her the prospect of increasing the involvement of Eagle Rock students in local art activities and increasing the involvement of the local art community in Eagle Rock activities. A teacher to many children of Eagle Rock staff members, Cynthia came with high recommendations and high enthusiasm. Cynthia lives with her son, Adain, age eight.

Scott Rashid has lived in Estes Park since 1989. As a new cook in the Eagle Rock kitchen, Scott has had many years of experience in Estes Park kitchens but states that he doesn’t own a single cookbook. While his vocation is cooking, his avocation is birds. He bands birds, rescues and rehabilitates them, paints them (creating cards, t-shirts, illustrations in a book, and prints) and records their sounds. He has made a CD called Voices From the Wild. He recently returned a rehabilitated great horned owl to the wild, after being sure it could fly in a Front Range rehab center. His wife Susan, who works at the YMCA of the Rockies, and he have cats and a horse as well as myriad birds.

GUYS & DOLLS — FROM A STUDENT’S PERSPECTIVE

by Tanya E. Wollerman, Student

This summer’s theatrical production was about more than the guys and dolls of Damon Runyon’s New York; it was also about Eagle Rock students. For the eighth year Eagle Rock has risen to the challenge of creating a show to be proud of. The purpose of the production is first to rehearse the principles of 8 + 5 = 10; second to display the remarkable talents of students and staff; and last, and most important, to enjoy the summer trimester to fullest.

The production started with Alison Truettner’s desire to pay tribute to New York after September 11. Many plays were considered, but Guys & Dolls stuck out because of its terrific storyline and colorful characters. Next came auditions. For two nights students showed off their best New York accents and gave their vocal chords a workout. Rehearsal began the next trimester with a solid cast of 27 students.

The four leads, Eric Zinn, Junior Garcia, Naeha Breeland, and Vicenel Ortiz, committed their entire class schedule to the production. First period was dedicated to memorizing lines and taking direction from Alison. Second period the remainder of the class joined for lines, blocking, singing, and character development. Continuing into third period, the cast began their exploration into the world of Damon Runyon.

Guys & Dolls is based on Runyon’s short stories. Along with reading the stories, students researched prohibition, gambling, African Americans, flappers, the depression along with many other aspects of the 1920s and 1930s. After immersion into Runyon’s world, pieces of the show started coming together. Karolee McLaughlin, orchestral music director; Rick Roberts, vocal music director; and Susan Terwilliger, assistant orchestral music director, fine tuned the sound of soloists and the chorus. Along with singing, Renee Leon the choreographer arrived to add both an air of professionalism and a dancing flare. After Renee, Lorie Brey became our costume mistress bringing with her good humor and an eye for making a show look good. Meanwhile a set of New York was recreated.

Graduate Matt Kasper returned to add his architectural passion to Sandy Rivera’s painting know how and Mike Christner’s handyman talents. These three and some students created an expert set true to the time with classy artistic liberties. All along there was the summer intern Abby Conson-Rikert ensuring an audience and playing the role of stage manager.

Nothing could stop this show; it survived heat, rain and fire. After five shows at the outdoor amphitheater and one at the Stanley Hotel Concert Hall well deserved bows and hugs were given. So long to a terrific show and an even better summer.

Photos by Mieko Ozeki
Ford Coupe rolls into Times Square.” All this learning made for a rich production.

Leads were students Junior Garcia as Sky Masterson, reforming gambler; Nahea Breelad as missionary Sarah Brown; Vionel Ortiz as “wannabe married” dancer and singer Miss Adelaide; and Eric Zinn as never-to-be-reformed Nathan Detroit.

Crapshooters were Chris Hood as Nicely-Nicely Johnson; Joe Battista as Harry the Horse; Taylor Clements as Benny Southstreet; Rosshounda Williams as Angie the Ox; Tanya Wollerman as Society Max and Joey Biltmore; Bruce Phlegley as Big Jule. Other crapshooters were played by Kanoa Breelad, Robert Burkhardt, Carlton Ganger, Amber Horton, Matt Kasper, Charles Reeve, and Reggie Stirling.

Missionaries were Ariann Wade, Charles Reeve, Angelique Williams, Ally Alexander, Sarah Baker, and Reggie Stirling.

Head of School Robert Burkhardt was the Hotbox Master of Ceremonies. Hotbox Dancers were Angelique Williams, Katherine Manzanares, Imagyn Fennessy, Tiffany Churchwell, Tareva Savage, Kelly Morris, and Madison Trucco.

Other roles were handled by Jasmine Castro, Jennifer Garland, Carly Bowles, Eileen Burkhardt, Patrick Burkhardt, Ayanna Smith, Nia Smith, Mike Glowacki, Abby Corson-Rikert, Burt Bowles and Mike Christner.

Rick Roberts of the University of San Francisco served again as Vocal Music Director, joined by Karolee McLaughlin and Susan Tervilliger who led the orchestra. Summer intern from Princeton, Abby Corson-Rikert, was stage manager and handled publicity and props. Graduate Matt Kasper lent his hand to set design, assisted by students Sandy Rivera and Ashanti. Former staff member Mike Christner was in charge of set construction and special effects. Renee Leon designed the dance numbers and taught students their steps. Lorie Brey was assisted by wardrobe mistress, student Ally Alexander, in costume design. Graduate Brian Hansen once again handled lighting design, and student Zach Brick managed sound design.

In addition to the people mentioned above, the band consisted of Robert Burkhardt blowing trumpet, Ian Dingle on trombone, Kathryn Getek and Susan Tervilliger on clarinet, Lan To on flute, Dave Noble playing bass guitar, and Jill Jones handling percussion.

Photos by Mieko Ozeki
for this topic was sparked last year when she met Sister Helen Prejean, the famous anti-capital punishment activist whose story is featured in the movie “Dead Man Walking.” Ashanti states, “She inspired me to learn about the death penalty.” This fall will find Ashanti attending Evergreen State College in Olympia, WA. Long-term plans include law school, where Ashanti wants to become a criminal defense lawyer.

Charmaine Mitchell also hails from Spruce house, and entered Eagle Rock from Pasadena, CA, with ER-16. She enjoys different kinds of art in her spare time and credits Eagle Rock with teaching her how to become a self-directed learner. For her major research paper, Charmaine tackled the complex issue of special education. Her original goal was “to convince others that the special education system is a bad system,” and after a lot of time and research spent on the subject, she realized that the system has its pros as well as its cons. The paper is titled “When Johnny Met Special Ed.” Charmaine’s fondest Eagle Rock memory is of her prospective visit. She recalls being very anxious about whether or not she would be invited back to the school. As she boarded the bus to leave, unsure about whether or not she would ever be able to come back as a student, “Robert came up to me and kissed me on the forehead and said, ‘See you in September.’ This was after he knew me for four days.” Charmaine’s future plans involve a degree in social work so that she can work with children and some day open up a group home.

Ariann Wade, a Ponderosa graduate who came in with ER-12 from Eaton, CO, loves spending her free time with God. She also enjoys reading the Bible, doing art, studying foreign policy, and talking to her friend Taylor. When asked what she feels Eagle Rock has done for her, she responded, “It’s fed me. It’s given me a family and a home and a beautiful place that I love.” One of Ariann’s legacy projects that she’s particularly proud of is the straw-bale house which she helped to raise money for and then build on the Navajo Reservation. Her favorite Eagle Rock memory is “Mostly every day,” and her future plans involve “following Jesus.” Specifically, Ariann will attend Bible College in upstate New York.

Congratulations to all of our graduates this trimester. They are strong young women who will undoubtedly perform great works and exert a positive influence on everyone fortunate enough to cross paths with them.