FRIDAY, APRIL 13, LUCKY DAY FOR GRADUATES

Friday, April 13 was a lucky day for these students who graduated during ceremonies at Eagle Rock: Jena Argenta, Boulder, CO; Stephanie “Sweets” Baldwin, Trenton, NJ; and Abe Neas, Fort Collins, CO. Graduation of these students brings Eagle Rock to a total of 58 graduates.

SOCCER MAKES EAGLE ROCK PARTICIPATION IN NATIONAL SERVICE LEARNING CONFERENCE WORK

by Lois Easton, Director of Professional Development

It’s a good thing that Instructional Specialist Dave Hoskins knows and likes soccer. He was charged with planning the logistics for the recent National Service Learning Conference which was held in Denver. What came to mind, naturally, was to organize the volunteers from Eagle Rock and several Denver-area schools into squads and goalies and deploy them as a coach might play his first, second, and third strings.

The National Service Learning Conference sponsored by The National Youth Leadership Council was held in Denver April 4-7. It attracted over 3000 adults and students engaged in service learning from across the country and around the world. Eagle Rock supplied the “backbone” to the conference by organizing the logistics and providing volunteers to carry them out.

The conference theme — Partnerships for a Civil Society — focused on “how service learning can create partnerships among educational, governmental and community-based organizations to assist in building a global society.”

Students and staff served as greeters and
door monitors, site monitors, hall monitors, session monitors, meal and ballroom monitors, help desk attendees and VIP ambassadors. Their jobs were especially critical because the conference site was the Adams Mark Hotel in downtown Denver, a hotel in two buildings with underground, street, and bridge crossings linking the two buildings but providing a lot of confusion. The most common question students and staff were asked was, “How do I get to . . . ?”

Students and staff stayed overnight at PS-1, a charter school near downtown Denver and showered each morning at West High School, just across the street. They walked the many blocks to and from the conference site. In addition to organizing the squads from Eagle Rock, Dave also organized volunteers from Foothills Academy, the Community Involved Charter, and PS-1. He was assisted by intern Eli Spanier and students Stephanie “Sweets” Baldwin, Vincent Davis, Monique Navarro, Hayla Delano-Nuttall, and Stacey Tennille. This team could be recognized by their impressive, high-tech ear phones and microphones and their serious strategizing about how to find a missing presenter or help a handicapped person get to a room that seemed inaccessible.

Keynote speakers at the conference included John Glenn, Jr., Kumi Naidoo, Jonathan Kozol, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Pedro Reyes, and Wokie Weah.

American Honda was one of the sponsors of the conference and, as part of its sponsorship, equipped all volunteers with a blue denim shirt that identified them as volunteers. Volunteers also sported “Ask Me” buttons.

The Eagle Rock Choir, composed of both students and staff, performed at the begin-
S.O.S. IS NOT A CRY FOR HELP; IT’S AN ANSWER

by Christian Champagne, Intern

Have you dreamed about trying a new sport or activity but never gotten the chance? For a group of lucky Eagle Rock students, this dream came true in the sport of snowboarding. The majestic mountains of Colorado were heaped with fresh snow this trimester and we got a great chance to frolic in this winter playground.

Eagle Rock partnered with a non-profit organization called S.O.S. (the Snowboard Outreach Society) in bringing a group of Eagle Rockers to learn to snowboard in the Colorado Rockies, an opportunity that was richly enjoyed by all those who participated.

The days were long: Imagine waking up at 5:30 am, driving 3 1/2 hours, snowboarding for 7 hours, and then driving back later that night. However, these long days were packed full of silliness and good times, making the drive more than worthwhile. Combine this with the fun of learning a new, exhilarating sport in a stunningly beautiful environment, and you have a bunch of friends having a heck of a good time.

S.O.S. is a non-profit organization that is dedicated to helping improve the quality of life for young people through the teaching of their five “core values” and through the sport of snowboarding. S.O.S.’s core values are Courage, Integrity, Compassion, Wisdom and Knowledge (8 + 5 = 10 anyone?). Snowboarding has an inherent “cool factor” that is attractive to many of the young people in our society; it is exciting, easy to learn (pretty easy, anyway), and is a truckload of fun. All these factors combine to make snowboarding a sport that most young people would want to learn.

S.O.S’s founder, Arn Menconi, recognized this fact and began S.O.S. roughly seven years ago. His vision was to create a non-profit that could pool the resources of the large corporations involved in winter sports (i.e., Vail Resorts and various snowboarding companies) and help get kids out to try snowboarding, especially those kids who might not otherwise have the chance to get into this sport. Through the hard work and dedication of the S.O.S. staff and a crew of volunteers, S.O.S. now teaches its core values through the sport of snowboarding to thousands of young people across the West.

Eagle Rock has been very lucky to have worked with S.O.S. over the past two years. We snowboarded with S.O.S. last winter, mountain biked with S.O.S. over the summer, and even partnered with S.O.S. in a math class focused on non-profit organizations. This winter, their hard work and dedication provided us with five day-passes at Keystone, free instruction from three excellent guys, Scotty “Scarecrow,” C.D., and Danny the Kiwi, and free equipment. The effort put forth by all those involved shows their faith in the effectiveness and importance of S.O.S.’s message and in the joy of snowboarding. We definitely owe them our gratitude.

There are many good memories to take away from the S.O.S. experience this trimester: the time when Paul went flying a little too high or watching Darren and Ian come screaming down the slopes. Seeing Ashlyn’s smile as she rode on the last day, realizing how far she had come, was excellent. Certainly the cheesebox (our affectionately nicknamed bus) was memorable...and stinky. Snowboarding with S.O.S. was a blast; however, it was more than simply snowboarding that made it great. S.O.S. brought us together as a group; we all now share a common memory and a common experience. It helped us to strengthen our friendships and build our community which, as we all know, is vital to the sense of family we feel at Eagle Rock.

(Special thanks go out to Susan Bronzino and the S.O.S. staff, whose flexibility and determination made all this possible.)
EAGLE ROCK INVITED TO TRANSFORMATIONAL EDUCATION CONFERENCE

by Lois Easton, Director of Professional Development

“This Conference is by invitation only. You were invited because your program is recognized as exceptional. You provide young people with an alternative to traditional education that has proven both successful and somehow life changing. Yes, of course, you provide academic instruction so that these young people can achieve their scholastic and professional goals. But you are also providing supportive services of some sort. You are inspiring them to get their lives in order and stay focused. You are helping them transform their lives.”

These words were included in a letter to Eagle Rock inviting the school to participate in a conference entitled, “Alternatives to a Broken System: Identifying Best Practices in Transformational Education and Youth Development.” The conference was a project of the Los Angeles Conservation Corps and funded by the Walter S. Johnson and Mott Foundations.

The focus of the conference was on the participants — students and educators — who had something to share on three “big picture” issues: academic standards, guiding principles, and best practices.

Robert Burkhardt, Instructional Specialist Dave Hoskins, and two students, Amy Sedillo and Sandy Rivera, attended the conference in Los Angeles May 9-12, 2001. In early April they completed a set of Pre-Conference Reflection Questions, such as “What is your mission? How does your program achieve your mission?” and “What is your vision for what ‘transformational education’ could be for vulnerable youth? What is good education? How would you know a young person is well-educated?”

Responses from each of the invited schools were distributed to all participants. Conference organizers reported that the questions were “our first attempt to engage you in the Conference mentality of thinking about, talking about and sharing information about your program, and your responses represent the first step towards our work in addressing best practices.”

Other organizations involved in the conference were the National Association of Service and Conservation Corps, American Youth Works, the National Center for Education and the Economy, YouthBuild USA, Youth Opportunity Initiative in Philadelphia, and the National Employment Coalition.

“Service Learning Conf.” — Continued

n of the opening plenary session. ERS dancers, rappers, musicians, and singers brought repeated applause. According to Robert Burkhardt, Head of School, “It was a remarkable performance, highlighted by Junior Garcia’s strolling through the crowd as he performed an original rap piece focusing on service, backed by trumpets, organ, drums and guitar.” The Eagle Rock Choir was approached after the performance by a leader in service learning and asked if they would go on the road, next stops Fort Lauderdale and Seattle!

Burkhardt commented in an email to parents, “This exemplary service did not go unnoticed. The National Youth Leadership Council and Youth Service America, organizers of the conference, paid a special (and unexpected) tribute to Eagle Rock at the closing banquet. Sweets, who had opened the conference by singing

“Eli and Dave display the organizational strategies that helped make the conference a success.”

See “Service Learning Conf.” – Page 6
NEW STUDENTS HAVE MUCH TO LEARN AT EAGLE ROCK, BUT VETERAN STUDENTS SHARE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR LEARNING — by Robert Burkhardt, Head of School

Editor’s Note: Robert shared this with parents and friends of Eagle Rock through an email. He wrote this list as a way of reminding veteran students how far they have come and how they needed to “make haste slowly” with new students (this trimester, ER 23).

WHAT ER-23 DOESN’T KNOW

ER-23 has never seen a Presentation of Learning.
ER-23 has never put out an issue of “From Under the Rock.”
ER-23 doesn’t have a single accomplished math portfolio.
ER-23 has never participated in EagleServe.
ER-23 has never studied AIDS with Dan Condon.
ER-23 probably doesn’t have three pals named Gussie, Merlin and Jake.
ER-23 has never run the gate on a clear, cold winter morning.
ER-23 has never bought Girl Scout cookies from Carly or Nia.
ER-23 doesn’t understand simple English: “I made a copy of my ILP in the PDC and went to the LRC looking for an IS to proof my POL packet. Couldn’t find anyone so I went to the Dojo in the HPC.”
ER-23 has never lost on the Field of Dreams and then walked slowly home.
ER-23 has never been on time for KP. Or late, either.

ER-23 probably thinks eight plus five equals thirteen.
ER-23 has never led a Gathering.
ER-23 has never willed its way to the top of Twin Sisters or Windy Peak.
ER-23 has never gotten a 3P (punctuality, preparedness, participation) ding — but just wait a few days.
ER-23 thinks “Salud” is what people say before drinks.
ER-23 has never heard a Second Chance letter or served on a Second Chance panel.
ER-23 has never experienced Explore Week.
ER-23 has never cleaned up the Lodge, the HPC or the LRC late at night.
ER-23 has never won an ERS Excellence medal.
ER-23 has no art or articles gracing ERS walls.
ER-23 has never carried a flag at graduation.
ER-23 has never had to sit on the Hearth and face this community.
ER-23 doesn’t know about Aikido — yet.
ER-23 has never done on-site service with Eli.
ER-23 has never lingered over Sunday brunch.
ER-23 has never been to Writers Club.
ER-23 has never been to a Women’s or a Men’s meeting.
ER-23 doesn’t know there will be a wonderful slide show on April 13.
ER-23 doesn’t know who Karelle is or why Janice is so important.
ER-23 doesn’t know what Saturday Seminars are.
ER-23 has never played hacky-sack on the Esplanade.

ER-23 has never sung “Lift Every Voice” at graduation.
ER-23 has not yet produced a 3P superstar.
ER-23 hasn’t gone on break and returned to ERS with a new perspective.
ER-23 has never had lunch outside on the picnic table.
ER-23 doesn’t know Shaman from Bonepipe.
ER-23 hasn’t been on a Sunday Stroll — yet.
ER-23 doesn’t know what Close-Up is.
ER-23 has never been on solo.
ER-23 hasn’t sung in the chorus or played in the band.
ER-23 hasn’t sat in the common room in quiet conversation, getting to know better a housemate from the other side of the country.
ER-23 has never been in a summer production at the outdoor amphitheater.
ER-23 has no idea why Diane Burkhardt and Rick Roberts are so beloved in this community.
ER-23 doesn’t know that Donny and Brian are at CU, Jeremy and Erin at Maryville, and Davian has been accepted in grad school.
ER-23 has never earned money for the Graduate Higher Education Fund.
ER-23 doesn’t know you can’t be in the art building without permission.
ER-23 doesn’t know why we have POL panels.

Robert concluded his presentation to veteran students (and his email to parents and friends) with this statement: “ER-23 may not know these things, but you do. How are you going to help them come into knowledge and understanding? Think about it.”
TOM DEAN REMINISCES ABOUT SHARING A WILDERNESS TRIP WITH NEW STUDENTS

by Tom Dean, Executive Director, American Honda Education Corporation

"Solitude is a silent storm that breaks down all our dead branches. Yet it sends our living roots deeper into the living heart of the living earth. Man struggles to find life outside himself, unaware that the life he is seeking is with him." Kahlil Gibran, The Prophet

The Superstition Mountains near Phoenix, Arizona, are best known for the mystique surrounding the Lost Dutchman Mine, believed to be in the proximity of Weaver's Needle. As I traveled from California to rendezvous with our newest group of students near Weaver's Needle, I read about the Lost Dutchman and reflected on fantasies I had years ago of finding the lost gold mine.

Of course, I realized that on this occasion I would not be discovering gold...what I didn't fully realize was the richness of this adventure of self-discovery in which our students were engaged. As I hiked towards Weaver's Needle, I was yet to discover that this wilderness experience would also give me opportunities for reflection and introspection. This was not to be my typical hike in the woods!

After nearly a week, I was just beginning to understand the dynamics of the group...the interplay of individual behaviors and their effect on the overall group. Individual issues emerged with some acting as catalysts that moved the group toward critical mass. These issues served as stimulating learning opportunities for the group. In most cases, I was a quiet observer, admiring the incredible skills of our course leaders as they helped the group resolve issues through a self-discovery process.

A few situations, however, offered me opportunities to get more involved. I was delighted that I was able to help resolve these issues by sharing some of my own experiences and insights. By involving myself, I also began to feel a deeper sense of mutual trust, respect and understanding with the students. I was reminded of similar moments I had with my own son during times we enjoyed together on our daily early morning runs and yearly backpacking adventures. These are moments I still cherish...moments that allowed us to get to know and understand each other more deeply and helped us grow together and respect each other as individuals.

Our futures are shaped by the choices we make when faced with opportunities to grow and learn—often through reflection and introspection. It takes real courage to look deep inside to discover our errors and, as a result, make decisions to change. Further, it takes real maturity to help others grow through a climate of cooperation and understanding.

The wilderness experience helps students find and focus on growth opportunities. It tests their courage to make needed changes and tests their maturity to support the efforts of others. It clearly demonstrates the relationship between choices and consequences and the importance of accepting individual responsibility for the choices they make...it is a rite of passage to affirm their transition into young adulthood as well as into Eagle Rock School.

The group was preparing to begin their solos as I prepared to return to California. They would spend three days in solitude, reflecting on their lives and beginning to make decisions that would shape their future. They would discover that their future is determined by their actions through the choices they make. As I started my hike out of the woods, I reflected on my week and felt confident that they were ready...well prepared to begin charting their future!

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**DEMOGRAPHICS OF EAGLE ROCK STUDENTS**

(as of February 2001)

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**EAGLE ROCK LOOKS INTO THE FUTURE: OUR CURRENT & FUTURE TECHNOLOGY PROGRAM**

by Richard Gordon, Instructional Specialist, Learning Resource Center

*Editor's Note:* This article was first published in "Eagle's Nest," January 2001.

Educational technology is an integral part of the Eagle Rock School curriculum and life. Students and staff use computers, the Internet, and the Eagle Rock School network on a daily basis.

While we recognize the importance for our students and graduates to be computer literate, we also realize that some students will use computers and technology more often than others will. Computers, the Internet, and our network are tools to facilitate learning for all our students and are the focus of the curriculum for only a small proportion of our students.

New students at Eagle Rock are presented with a thorough introduction and orientation to information literacy and technology during the ERS 101 (orientation) and ERS 201 (transition) classes, which all students take before and after their Wilderness Trip.

More advanced skills and learning opportunities are integrated into courses they take after completing their first trimester at Eagle Rock School. For example, "Write for the Rock" is our student newspaper class. In addition to writing articles for the newspaper, students are able to practice desktop publishing skills using Adobe PageMaker and PhotoShop software.

ERS Press is a class where students write and publish books for elementary school students in the Denver Public Schools. This interdisciplinary course provides students research, writing, and desktop publishing learning opportunities all in a ten-week class.

During the past year, we have made significant advances with our technology program. Many courses have assignments which offer opportunities to research, write, or present their learning through the use of computers.

Eagle Rock School has its own website (www.eaglerockschool.org) and every student and staff member has a school email address. Also, students also have student folders on the school network where they may store and access their computer work from the network hard drive.

For all you techies out there, we are connected to the internet over a 256K fractional T1 line and maintain our own mail and web servers. Karelle Scharff is our part-time adjunct faculty who maintains our 60+ computer's network and our always evolving website. The Macintosh computers in all instructional and administrative buildings on the campus are linked to our network server with state-of-the-art fiber optic underground cable. Students and staff have access to eighteen new DVD iMac computers, which include programs for editing digital videotapes.

All students are required to demonstrate keyboarding, word processing, multimedia presentation, and electronic research skills before graduating. Every Eagle Rock graduate will leave school with an electronic portfolio, which includes examples of his or her best work on a CD disk and, possibly, on their own WebPages.

As our website develops, it will include valuable information for students, staff, parents, and educators around the world. Parents will be able to obtain staff names and email addresses, curriculum information, school calendars, and other relevant information. We are exploring ways to create a parent electronic bulletin board for parents who have access to computers and who wish to exchange information and ideas about their student's experience at Eagle Rock.

Educators will be able to obtain information about the Professional Development Center, including information about internships, visits to the campus, publications, and other materials.

"Service Learning Conf. -- Continued"

the National Anthem, was celebrated with thunderous and sustained applause for her indefatigable and omnipresent energy.

"Then Eagle Rock students were awarded the President's Student Service award and were brought up to shake hands with Harris Wofford, former head of the President's Corporation for National Service. The compliments just kept flowing."

Students got a lot out of their conference participation as well, finding that they were quite capable of deal-
EAGLE ROCK FEATURED
IN TEACHER MAGAZINE

by Lois Easton, Director of Professional Development

The cover of the February 2001 issue of Teacher Magazine shows Gabe Ferdinand against a backdrop of the granite dome, Shaman, and the buildings in the learning village part of the Eagle Rock campus. Some have said Gabe looks proud; some have said he looks serious. Gabe has taken the fact that he’s on the cover of a national magazine calmly, refraining from giving autographs and even blushing a little.

The headline on the cover reads, “A Change of Attitude: When trouble dogs them at home, some teenagers head to the Colorado mountains, where one school expands their horizons.”

The lead story, written by David Hill, with photographs by Michael Lewis, is accompanied by another photograph of Gabe plus some pictures of students and staff at Gathering and sitting on the Esplanade. One picture features Reynaldo Benally, December 2000 graduate, doing his graduation Presentation of Learning; another features Matt Rutherford in the DoJo. Still another portrays Joelle Strasser, a 1995 graduate, doing a graduate Presentation of Learning.

The story begins with these words: “At 8,000 feet above sea level, Eagle Rock school offers troubled teens a fresh start by transporting them to an idyllic Colorado campus. And the individualized attention at the tuition-free school doesn’t hurt.” The story of how Gabe came to Eagle Rock and how he is progressing here bookends the article. In between are segments about the history of the founding of Eagle Rock, a description of a day at Eagle Rock, a description of the campus, and a narrative of the author’s visit. It also describes the journey Robert Burkhardt, Head of School, made to get to Eagle Rock.

The article also tells the story of student Matt Rutherford and describes the admissions process, the purposes of the professional development center, and even the processes of Second Chance process. It describes, in depth, Gabe’s December 2000 Presentation of Learning.

The article concludes with a question: “How successful is Eagle Rock? There’s no simple answer.” And, the author considers all points of view in answer to this question, at last returning to a focus on the success of the individual students, Matt Rutherford and Gabe Ferdinand.

If you would like a copy of the article, please phone me at 970-586-7109 or email me at leaston@eaglerockschool.org.

A GRADUATE REFLECTS
ON HER GRADUATION

by Jena Argenta, ER 23 Graduate

Graduate Jena Argenta reflected on her Eagle Rock experience in the packet, “The Elephant and the Shoebox,” that she prepared prior to her graduation Presentation of Learning:

“I spent 23 days in the woods.
I loved.
I danced in a gold top hat. I threw strawberries in a Gathering.
I learned more about being human.
I loved.
I learned to use a chainsaw. I threw snowballs off the roof.
I climbed trees.
I loved.
I talked about God. I had heated debates. I led student meetings, community meetings, intern meetings. I took out the garbage.
I loved.
I climbed out the window. I cried. I asked questions.
I loved.
I listened to people’s stories and told a few of my own.
I had water fights after curfew.
I loved.
I learned to read notes. I went mountain biking in Vail and studied Buddha in a condo. I ate snails. I painted a mural.
I loved.
I climbed on Devil’s Tower. I got a ticket. I cultivated tact and rough edges at the same time. (I like my rough edges.)
I loved.
I learned the meaning of community and became bound by empathy.
If you would like to make a gift that would help students who graduate from Eagle Rock achieve their high education goals, please make your check payable to the Eagle Rock Graduate Fund and mail to Eagle Rock School Graduate Fund, P.O. Box 1770, Estes Park, CO 80517-1770. All gifts are tax deductible and donors will receive a letter of thanks and a gift receipt.

You may also assist by participating in an eScrip program. If you are interested in eScrip, please complete the following and send to Dick Herb at the above address:

___ Yes, I’m interested. Please send enrollment materials to

Name: ____________________________________________
Address: ____________________________________________
City, State, Zip: ____________________________________________
E-Mail: ____________________________ Phone: (____) _______________________

AMERICAN HONDA EDUCATION CORPORATION
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2750 Notaiah Road, P.O. Box 1770
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