Rocky Mountain School of Expeditionary Learning
Executive Director Communication

November 24, 2015

Dear RMSEL Parent Community,

I want to take the opportunity on the day prior to our departure for the Thanksgiving Holiday to share just a few of the amazing aspects of our school that I am thankful for. As I entered the building this morning at 5:30 a.m., our Athletic Director, John Stene was hovering over the copy machine preparing for a 6:00 a.m. girls' middle school basketball practice. John has helped build a program and an entire sports conference for our students, providing them opportunities to demonstrate our values of character beyond the classroom and on the field. Our students are passionate and dedicated to the program as they pour themselves onto the field and court, not in the pursuit of competition, but the pursuit of growth and inclusion of their peers. Some seasons we have up to half our students on our team who have never participated in an organized sport playing alongside seasoned student athletes.

Every Friday throughout the fall, we have every crew leader return to RMSEL dirty and a bit on the smelly side (Patagonia Capilene works great for wicking and trapping a good backcountry stench). It never fails, as our Kindergarten students drag their duffels from the bus or middle school students scrub the seam line of tents, character is built until the final minute of every crew trip. The amazement comes from the jubilant smile on the face of the teacher who has been out with your son/daughter for 120 hours; they share in the work and find joy even when the going gets tough. In support of our trips you will always see a herd of RMSEL parents volunteering to drive a bus, camp in the wilderness, walk to the museum, sail a small vessel at Cherry Creek, and/or help organize portfolios in a teacher's classroom. Each member of our community plays a unique and special part of our program.

While these are a couple of the highlights, I also get to see the struggle; when two students are debriefing over a piece of scientific research, building a small combustion engine, and preparing to debate alternative energy before a panel of experts. We have two local energy corporation CEOs attending the middle school Alternative Energy Forum on Wednesday, December 16, 2015! The learning at RMSEL truly pushes students to not just meet identified standards of learning, but to understand why each aspect is relevant to the industry which they may enter as they prepare for college and workforce programs. This type of energy and dedication doesn't happen in a textbook and is just one example of the autonomous curriculum opportunities of our teaching staff.

Finally, I would be remiss not to thank those that do the "business of school" that sometimes goes unseen. Making sure our insurance is up to date, building a calendar, booking a bus, repairing a bus, covering lunch duty, supervising before school, assisting with college applications, finding a student support in an internship, and the list goes on and on. The office staff and administrative team truly make sure the gears in the cog continue to turn every day. I wish you all a Happy Thanksgiving! I am certainly thankful to find joy in the work I do every day!

Sincerely,

Chad