



# THE CATALYST

Vol. 3 • FALL 2013

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EMPOWERING YOUNG LEADERS

# CAMP 4 COLLECTIVE PRODUCES VIDEOS FOR THE ALZAR SCHOOL

BY KRISTIN BIERLE

Skip Armstrong joined the Alzar School five times over the 2012-2013 school year documenting the Alzar School experience on the trail, in the classroom, and from the air using a Red Epic X, Sony FS100, Sony FS700 and the Sony VG900.

Armstrong is an award winning director/cinematographer whose client list includes National Geographic, NRS, Patagonia and more. His films have been screened at many festivals including Banff, Telluride, Kendal, 5Point and have won numerous awards for best film and best cinematography.

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You can find the Alzar School videos on our vimeo page: [www.vimeo.com/alzarschool](http://www.vimeo.com/alzarschool) or by scanning the QR code below.

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Armstrong developed close relationships with the students and faculty which helped them open up for the camera. “The teachers are so passionate,” Armstrong observed, “and you can tell it’s not just a job, but a lifestyle. What happens when you have that kind of community, is an effort way above what you see in the traditional high school. Everyone is looking to better themselves, the classroom, and the culture of the School.”

Armstrong reported leaving his last filming day with the “overwhelming sentiment of how exciting it is that a school like this exists. I wish I could have [had this] experience.” An accomplished outdoorsman himself, Skip was impressed by the role the outdoors played at the school. He noted that while it is “fun to hike, kayak, and explore, it’s a vehicle to achieve the mission.” The mission of the Alzar School is to educate and facilitate the leadership development of high school students.

Armstrong is currently editing an expedition from Mongolia called “Nobody’s River.” He is working with the North Face, through the Camp 4 Collective.



ALZAR SCHOOL EDUCATES AND FACILITATES THE LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS.

ALZAR SCHOOL'S SIX FOUNDATIONS



## FOUNDATIONS IN ACTION: ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP BY DAN THURBER

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The Catalyst is a quarterly publication of the Alzar School, a 501c3 non-profit education organization with the mission to facilitate the leadership development of high school students.

The Catalyst celebrates the accomplishments of young leaders and seeks to inspire other young people to be involved in their communities.

Alumni and supporters can direct address changes to [kristin@alzarschool.org](mailto:kristin@alzarschool.org).

A paperless version of The Catalyst is available at [www.alzarschool.org/catalyst](http://www.alzarschool.org/catalyst)

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The Alzar School is built on a beautiful piece of land along the North Fork of the Payette River. However, necessary streambank maintenance was neglected by previous owners and several portions of the property have eroded significantly in the last decade. A multi-year stream restoration project on campus has been initiated and coordinated by recent Director of Advancement, Jeff Cole.

“The first step in all of this is to keep the river from cutting away at our land,” explains Cole. “The river is eroding the bank here because there’s no vegetation to hold the soil in place.” The Alzar School campus lies just three miles downstream of the Cascade Dam, which controls river levels for irrigation. As a side effect, the dam stops sediment transport downstream. The water coming out of the dam is clear, meaning it will cut away at the banks for several miles before collecting enough sediment to deposit in slow water.

Last spring, Cole involved Alzar School students and community volunteers in a tree revegetation project, where a dozen large trees were cut and anchored along the bank to prevent further erosion. “The trees are a temporary solution,” explains Cole. “Right now they’re slowing erosion enough that some plants can take hold.” With the trees in place, students planted willow shoots at water level with hawthorne bushes, pines, and spruce trees on the top of the cutbank. Through their efforts in planting, students are experiencing a working leadership project with a focus on environmental stewardship.

Returning to campus six months after the first phase of planting, Cole has been pleased with the progress. “The survival rate of our willows is much better than expected,” he remarks. “All these grasses and flowers on the cutbank weren’t here a year ago. The tree revegetation is letting our plants get their roots started, and the plants will ultimately keep the river in place.”

Future classes of students will carry the torch for another five years. In a decade, Alzar School alumni will be back to visit campus and the first sight after walking through the gate will be strong trees they planted growing on a stable, healthy streambank. ▲



Academics



Leadership  
Training



Environmental  
Stewardship



Outdoor  
Adventure



Cultural  
Exchange



Service  
Learning



## CULMINATING LEADERSHIP PROJECT: COMMUNITY GARDEN

Katherine Sharp arrived to the Alzar School with a passion for sustainability and a strong work ethic. She invested in herself for a semester, progressing through the school's 10 Elements of Leadership, practicing turning ideas into action, and motivating peers towards a common goal.

Katherine left the Alzar School with a plan to address a need in her home community, Hammond Louisiana, and the tenacity necessary to see the project through to completion. Katherine organized a series of three action days and recruited eleven volunteers to prepare the garden for sustainable growth. The group prepared the land by clearing and uprooting old plants, then weeding and raking the area. They reshaped, fertilized, and laid plastic for all of the rows. Finally, they planted okra, string beans, cabbage, green bell pepper, purple bell pepper, banana peppers, squash, eggplant, slicing tomatoes, cherry tomatoes, cucumbers, and green onions. The "Garden in Grace" is composed of five 25' rows and four 4'x8' planter boxes.

While many would feel accomplished planting and tending a garden, Katherine took the project a step further. She developed a relationship with "Our Daily Bread," a food bank in Hammond to deliver the produce to families in need. She then developed a relationship with an Americorps volunteer to ensure the project will continue after her departure to college.

The garden produced twelve different varieties of fresh, organic vegetables. It also brightened days with beautiful sunflowers, zinnias, and celosia grown at Grace Church. "Garden In Grace' has been great for Hammond!" Katherine reflects; "Our produce helps feed ten families each week."

Katherine took her green thumb with her to the University of the South this fall where she is living in the sustainability house on campus and looks forward to working in the garden that supplies food to the university dining hall.

You can watch Katherine's garden grow online by taking a look at her CLP page: <http://www.alzarschool.org/home/garden-in-grace/>

**"I tried to keep it fun and cool in the Louisiana heat with music, granola bars, and ice water. My first action team worked really hard and after three long hours I treated them to snowballs!"**

**- KATHERINE SHARP  
ALZAR SCHOOL ALUMNA**



## WHERE I COME FROM, BY JESSICA SHOTWELL

I come from the smell of sagebrush lingering in my nose, from bright twinkling lights and impatient cars and pollution. I come from the wild, where animals know how to live without the bars of humanity. Stars sprinkle the sky in a fine dust. Rivers and canyons slither their way through the landscape of my home. Mountains rise to challenge the helpless air. Everywhere I go, I take a piece of my stars, my rivers, my mountains, and my helplessly open sky.

I tread lightly in my worn sneakers and think of all the miles behind me and all the miles ahead. I don't come just

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**“I come from what will happen, my hopes for the future, my aspirations and passions.”**

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from the past, from the places I've been and the things I've experienced. I come from what will happen, my hopes for the future, my aspirations and passions.

I come from birds taking flight in a flap of wings and bears scrambling up creaking pine trees. I come from homemade lemonade and scraped knees and bocce ball on my lawn and kindergarten soccer. I come from small towns and aspen trees and thrift stores and the smell of rain. I come from more paint smeared across my face than on my canvas. I come from the thud of my running shoes pounding down on an open road, kicking up dust in time to the frantic beat of my heart.

I come from my family, from my mom's compassion and my dad's sense of humor and my little brother's attitude. I come from Idaho. ▲

### STUDENT BIO

#### HOMETOWN

McCall, Idaho, but lived on a wilderness ranch for 2.5 years as a child.

#### GRADE

10th

#### THE ASSIGNMENT

In English class students explore themes of adventure and sense of place, learning to connect curriculum to direct experience. This assignment challenged students to reflect on how their environment has shaped who they are.

# INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

BY SAM GOFF, SCIENCE TEACHER

Five times throughout the semester students attend Saturday class. Teachers pair up and create interdisciplinary lessons that facilitate real world thinking and problem solving. In late August, the math and science teachers created a streamflow measurement lab for the first Saturday class of the fall semester.

Students from varied math levles and science disciplines created and implemented a scientific approach to measure the volume of water flowing in the Middle Fork of the Payette River. They then compared their results to the USGS Stream Flow water data report.

To measure streamflow, students determined the vertical profile of the river (cross-sectional area) by multiplying width and depth. Then, they multiplied this measurement by the river's velocity, resulting in streamflow. Students demonstrated creativity and resourcefulness while inventing ways to measure depths across the uneven riverbed and used rope, meter sticks and stopwatches to calculate velocity.

For Alzar School Saturday classes, there's more to it than measurements and calculations: in real-world applications of learning, lie greater lessons in non-designated leadership- teamwork. The students worked together to devise and implement the plan and directed each other to accomplish a common goal.

Effective education isn't only about recalling facts. Effective education should equip youth with the tools to explore and improve their dynamic world and surroundings as thoughtful leaders. Students who can think critically and problem solve will lead with greater resourcefulness and self-reliance. When students apply textbook science and math topics to real world questions, the walls of the classroom begin to dissolve and students see for themselves that a dynamic world awaits. 



FALL



### TRAVEL SCHEDULE

Representatives from the Alzar School will be in a community near you. Please let us know if we are in your area:

October:

1st-4th Philadelphia & NYC

7th-11th Atlanta

30th- Nov 1st Memphis

November:

4th-8th DC & VA, Denver

11th-13th Boston & Chicago

14th-15th St. Louis

18th-22nd San Francisco

and southern California

Oct/Nov



### OPEN DINNER INVITATION

Please join us for dinner! We would love to have you visit the Alzar School campus, see classes in action, and eat dinner with us. Come experience life at the Alzar School!

Contact Sam Goff to arrange a time: [sam@alzarschool.org](mailto:sam@alzarschool.org)

# APPLY TO THE ALZAR SCHOOL

Spaces are available for highly motivated sophomores and juniors for the 2013-2014 school year. Spend a semester exploring Idaho and Chile while taking academic classes.

*The world awaits...*

**DEADLINE:** February 15, 2014

Learn more and apply at:  
[AlzarSchool.org/Student](http://AlzarSchool.org/Student)



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Enclose form and mail check to: [Alzar School](http://Alzar School) | PO BOX 1609 | Cascade, ID 83611

View campaigns and donate by credit card online at: [www.AlzarSchool.org/donate](http://www.AlzarSchool.org/donate)

I do not want to be recognized in Alzar School materials.

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