



# THE CATALYST

Vol. 4 • WINTER 2013

**ALZAR SCHOOL  
& COLLEGE  
APPLICATIONS**  
Page 1

**CULMINATING  
LEADERSHIP  
PROJECT**  
STUDENT WORK  
Page 3

**CONNECTING  
LANGUAGES &  
HEMISPHERES**  
Page 5

**BOARD EVENT:  
DINING AT  
BARDENAY**  
Page 5

**EMPOWERING YOUNG LEADERS**

# ALZAR SCHOOL AND THE COLLEGE APPLICATION PROCESS

BY KRISTIN BIERLE & SUE LOVELACE

Sue Lovelace is a co-founder of Step Ahead Idaho and parent of Alzar School alumnus Joe Lovelace, a freshman at Middlebury College. At Step Ahead Idaho, Lovelace helps students identify schools and navigate the college application process. She sees countless applications and offers the following insights on how an experience like the Alzar School can help differentiate the applicant and communicate preparedness for college.

“All students apply to schools with transcripts and test scores,” Lovelace explains. “Once the application reader decides you’re keen enough to be considered seriously, it’s the rest of the application that gets the scrutiny.” She continues to assert that the critical qualities which determine success in college—“perseverance, resiliency, and maturity” - are revealed through the personal essay. Lovelace observes that many traditional high schools are good at pushing students academically, but notes, “even the most engaged student may feel discouraged at the lopsided set of skills they will leave school with.”

Lovelace reflects on her son’s experience that while at Alzar School students are given authentic opportunities to develop the resilience and mature perspective colleges are looking for. Lovelace explains that an Alzar School student “can describe how they dealt with adversity like a flat tire on the kayak trailer, far from the closest Chilean village. They know what it feels like to dream up a project, rally support and drive it to completion.” These valuable experiences become fodder for college essays, providing unique evidence for personal strengths they’ve discovered through adversity.

Sue’s son, Joe, attended the Alzar School during his sophomore year. Sue states that when he returned to his high school he jumped into leadership roles: “Joe became the section leader in choir, ran for the vice president, then president of the Outdoor Club and founded an audio visual club.” Sue says his experiences at the Alzar School “broadened the idea of what was possible both geographically and personally” during the application process. Joe looked at colleges across the country and was flown by NYU to their Abu Dhabi campus. Sue says, “I don’t know that he would have considered [NYU Abu Dhabi] so seriously before his experience with the Alzar School.”

Sue notes that Alzar School students’ applications are bolstered by letters of recommendation by teachers who know the student from four months of living, traveling, and studying together. She says, this “gives colleges the confidence that they are accepting a student who is not only academically prepared but will be a true asset to their campus.” [▲](#)



VIEW WEBINAR WITH  
SUE LOVELACE



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

ALZAR SCHOOL'S  
SIX FOUNDATIONS 



BY MOLLY ROGERS & IAN SILBERMAN

**KRISTIN BIERLE**  
Executive Director  
Co-Founder

**SEAN BIERLE**  
Head of School  
Co-Founder

**ELLIE MOORE**  
English/Spanish Teacher  
Editor

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)

Alzar School  
PO Box 1609  
Cascade, ID 83611  
208.639.9891  
[www.alzarschool.org](http://www.alzarschool.org)

The Alzar School Teaching Fellowship is a semester long position where fellows explore nonprofit organizational structure, assist leading outdoor expeditions, and partner with a teaching faculty to develop and deliver academic curriculum. Ian Silberman and Molly Rogers, from North Carolina and Pennsylvania respectively, reflect on their growth through the school's leadership curriculum.

Both Ian and Molly came to the Alzar School with impressive resumes and experience in designated leadership roles. Molly notes that despite these experiences she had "never approached [leadership] before as a subject that could be taught, just like English and Math." The Alzar School's 10 Elements of Leadership curriculum gives students the vernacular to explore leadership from a hard and soft skill perspective in a variety of leadership styles.

Molly noted that teaching English taught her "the importance of an inspiring vision." She worked on speaking assertively and clearly in the classroom to convey expectations and was pleased to see students respond with enthusiasm as they understood the outcomes Molly sought. After hard work and clear communication she was able to watch Alzar School students share a soccer game, dinner, and autobiographies with Chilean peers.

Ian, an aspiring educator, viewed his fellowship as an "incredible opportunity to grow not only as a professional, but as an individual." Ian reflects on the many types of leadership he was exposed to through working from different staff. Specifically, he "learned from working with Dan in the Trinity Alps that you can effectively lead a group by giving them the tools and information to be successful, and then let them learn through their own experience."

Molly concludes that the 10 Elements of Leadership, "introduce a level of awareness into the practice of leadership that has honed my skills in motivating the group towards a common goal. I am excited to bring them to my next adventure and profession."

*Since completing their Teaching Fellowship, some recent Alzar School fellows have gone on to canoe the Mississippi in its entirety, work as patent agents, begin graduate studies, and work in admissions at Adventure Treks. ▲*



Academics



Leadership  
Training



Environmental  
Stewardship



Outdoor  
Adventure



Cultural  
Exchange



Service  
Learning



## CULMINATING LEADERSHIP PROJECT: ABRIENDO PUERTAS

BY ELLIE MOORE & ISABELLE LEONAITIS

*Over the course of the Alzar School semester, students identify a need in their own community and design a “Culminating Leadership Project” to address that need. The following is an interview with Isabelle Leonaitis - alumna of Alzar School Spring 2013 Semester - on her current CLP “Abriendo Puertas” (Opening Doors) she is completing in Atlanta, Georgia, to help native Spanish speakers learn English.*

### THE PROJECT

Every Thursday from 4-5pm my action team group meets a group of 25 native Spanish speaking students (grades 2nd - 8th) at the Centro Catolico to practice English. Each meeting we have a thematic focus. If we have free time at the end, we play games, like today we played “head shoulders knees and toes.” This Thursday was our eighth meeting and we hope to continue in the Spring.

### THE PROCESS

The hardest thing was finding a specific group of kids to work with. My original thought was to put up posters but it was disorganized. Working through Centro Catolico (a connection my Spanish teacher had) made it easier to keep track of our participants.

### THE IMPACT

In the beginning the kids were extremely quiet because the rule was that they had to speak English. As the sessions continued, they began talking more and more. I rarely hear Spanish in the classes anymore.

### THE FUTURE

I recently started an internship with LaAmistad. Here I help tutor kids with homework, and organize events like our recent trip to a Georgia football game. [Both projects have been] a cool introduction to non-profits. I want to end up doing something that allows me to travel and explore different cultures and the world.

*Isabelle was recently elected Spanish student representative for Lovett School to apply for the Governor’s Honors Program. She noted that in writing her resume for this application, she drew from her Alzar School experiences. If she wins this award she will attend a month of Spanish classes at Valdosta State. ▲*

“Skills I learned at the Alzar School helped me step up in front of an action team or the group of kids and corral them and help them get set on a goal for the day.”

- ISABELLE LEONAITIS  
ALZAR SCHOOL ALUMNA



## POLICEMAN ROSAS: A CHILEAN BIOGRAPHY BY ELENA PRESS

*Como se llama? Qué le gusta hacer?* Victor Rosas is a policeman in Choshuenco, Chile. He describes himself as sociable and very funny. Like many people in town, Rosas says that his favorite thing to do is fishing. When asked where he fishes, Rosas responds, “In the lake, in the river, anywhere I can!”

*Cuál es la parte mejor de su trabajo?* Rosas is a very dedicated member of the police force, having been in it for fifteen years. He eagerly exclaims that “Yes,” he loves his job! Rosas tells that his favorite part of his job is working with the people in the community. He gets satisfaction in helping the community become a better place.

---

**“It is truly an empowering experience to talk with people like Victor Rosas from completely different ways of life.” -Elena Press**

---

*Le gusta viajar?* Rosas enthusiastically tells that he likes to travel. He has gone to Argentina many times. As an avid traveler myself, Chile has been a whole new experience. Talking with Rosas, I am able to partake in everyday Chilean life. When I travel through small towns in Chile, I see that many people have fewer possessions and resources; from this, I am able to appreciate living simply. In these foreign surroundings, I often find myself confused amidst Spanish speakers. Yet, I have seen that making an effort to try and speak is what is most important. It is truly an empowering experience to talk with people like Victor Rosas from completely different ways of life; armed with an iPad, my brain and a notebook, I can have an incredible experience! 

### STUDENT BIO

#### NAME

Elena Press

#### HOMETOWN

Philadelphia, PA

#### GRADE

10th

#### THE ASSIGNMENT

Students worked in pairs to interview a member of the community in Choshuenco, Chile. They created transcripts in Spanish and English of their interviews, and individually produced a photo journal in English that offers insight into the interviewee’s life.

## CONNECTING LANGUAGES AND HEMISPHERES

BY DAWN WEIKER, HISTORY AND SPANISH TEACHER

After months of classroom Spanish grammar drills, vocabulary practice, and reading comprehension activities, Alzar Students gain practical language application while traveling throughout Chile.

Shopping lists become vocabulary lists and ingredients become meals through the guidance of Erica, local matrona and chef. She peeks over the students' shoulders and tells them, slowly, enunciating every syllable in her beautiful Spanish, how to roll out the masa so it will fry evenly: "Not too thick and not too thin." They watch in amazement as she deftly cuts it into small diamonds, and drops it slowly into a vat of hot oil. As it transforms into a golden puff, the students roll up their sleeves. Brows furrow as they zealously flatten the masa. "¿Está bien?" they ask Erica. She smiles, "¡Excelente!" High fives abound.

A week later, during classes on the Pacific coast, surf lessons are Spanish lessons. Instructor Nano yells, "¡Rema! ¡Rema! ¡Rema!" and students lay on their bellies in the sand, paddling fast. Quickly they jump to their feet. Too far forward. Not centered. Finally Nano stops, "Están listos," he says. "You all are ready." They grab their surfboards and run towards the ocean, grinning.

Throughout the five weeks in Chile, students complete a "Conversational Challenge" where they initiate conversations with residents in the communities we visit. They ask people about their favorite soccer team, the meanings of local slang ("Chilenismos"), directions to the closest hospital, and their political views. Students read their original Spanish children's books to local children, or challenge the niños to a "pichanga" (a pickup soccer game). Students at all levels build skill and confidence and, after five weeks, they see that through speaking a native language, they can begin to make connections within a foreign community. "When a woman on our ferry trip to Argentina started talking to me," one student reflects, "[I] listened intently and tried to communicate using what I knew. As we began to share snippets of our lives, I found that I didn't need my sheet of paper scribbled with phrases and questions to use, but that I just needed confidence in my ability." 



WINTER



### TRAVEL SCHEDULE

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

January:  
6th-7th Tampa & Miami, FL  
6th-10th CT, PA, NJ  
8th-14th NH, RI, ME

Feb. 17



### DINE & BENEFIT ALZAR SCHOOL

The Alzar School Board of Directors invites you to join the Alzar School for dinner and drinks at Bardenay Restaurant & Distillery in Boise, ID. 20% of sales will go to the Alzar School.

Where: Bardenay, 610 W Grove St. Boise, ID 83702

When: February 17, 2014  
5pm-9pm

# APPLY TO THE ALZAR SCHOOL

Spaces are available for highly motivated sophomores and juniors for the 2014-2015 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)



**ALZAR SCHOOL**

Empowering Young Leaders

Donate to:  Annual Fund  Campus Build  Scholarships

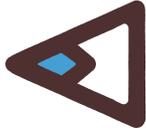
Name: \_\_\_\_\_  Scholar \$50 for \_\_\_\_\_ years  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  Graduate \$100 for \_\_\_\_\_ years  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  Honor Roll \$200 for \_\_\_\_\_ years  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  Dean's List \$500 for \_\_\_\_\_ years  
City: \_\_\_\_\_  Valedictorian \$1000 for \_\_\_\_\_ years  
State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_  Rebel \$ \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ years  
Email: \_\_\_\_\_  My company will match \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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.

Alzar School will not share your information with any other organization. Gifts to Alzar School are tax deductible.



**ALZAR**  
SCHOOL

PO Box 1609  
Cascade, ID 83611

Non-Profit Org.  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Boise, Idaho  
Permit No. 100