

# Inspiration

## A Cycle of Change

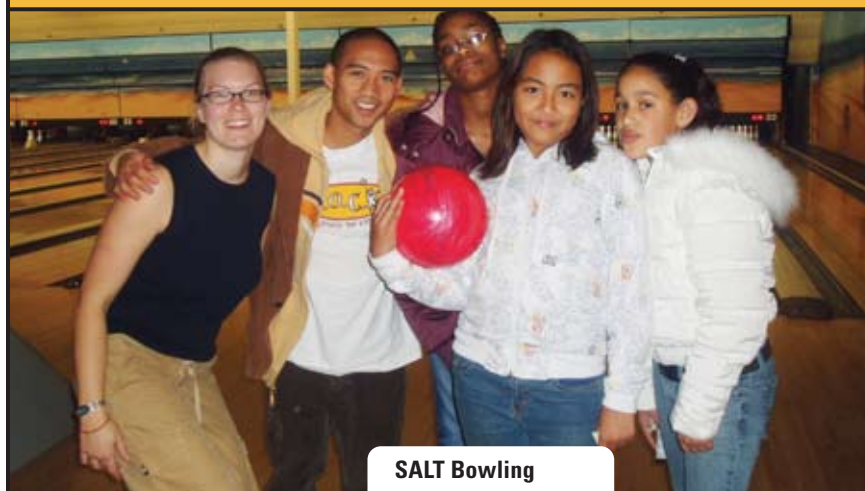
Curt Yagi, Executive Director

The day-to-day responsibilities in the world of ROCK can be difficult. The ongoing challenge of fundraising, the getting up early on Saturday mornings to the controlled chaos of Skill Drills and the weekly cleaning of the office can make for a long week. I often get so caught up in my daily routine that I lose sight of the big picture of what ROCK is all about. However, every so often, something happens that grounds me and reminds me of how much of a positive impact the organization is having in the lives of our young people.

As ROCK's Executive Director, I feel so fortunate that my job not only consists of the administrative duties involved in running a nonprofit, but also allows me to work directly in our programs and to connect with all of the young people I have gotten to know over the past nine years (It is hard to believe I have been involved that long). Recently during a Saturday Skill Drills session, our high

school participants, most of whom attended programs during their elementary school years, decided that they wanted to throw our kids a Valentine's Day celebration. Led by DeJesus and Mariah, they set up various stations including flower making, cookie decorating and Valentine's Day card creation. The program was a huge success and the kids loved the special day. Seeing how proud our high school participants were of what they were able to accomplish was a treat and a moment that I will look back upon when I need some inspiration of why I do what I do.

Sometimes those gems are hard to find, but when I look closely enough, there are so many of them, and they always prove that the ROCK model is working.



SALT Bowling



"ROCK is the only place I go to all the time...it's a great place to go if you need to talk to someone about your day"  
 – Brandon, Age 15



"I like making new friends at ROCK"  
 – Tina, Age 7



High School Visit to Doppelganger



Valentine's Day Dog Pile at Skill Drills

### Summer Sleepover Camp is Coming!

The kids have been talking about elementary school sleepover camp ever since they got off the bus returning from last year's camp. This year, we will be returning to CYO camp in Occidental, CA on June 22nd through June 24th and hoping to take close to 100 kids, high school councilors and adult volunteers. We would love for you to join in the fun (imagine three days of swimming, ropes course, skits, cabins and much more). However, if you can't make it, we could use your help to cover the almost \$10,000 cost to put on our big event. To learn more, feel free to contact Executive Director, Curt Yagi at (415) 333-4001 or [curt@rocksf.org](mailto:curt@rocksf.org).



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## Kids...Not Kitchenware

It was the least we could do. In many ways, it was ROCK that brought us together.

My experiences with ROCK and the ROCKers I came to know and love gave me the focus and motivation to quit my high tech career and pursue a law degree. Now I am a Deputy District Attorney in Placer County, trying to do my small part to address the environment of crime that our little ROCKers and others like them face on a daily basis. But along the way I attended UC Davis Law School, and more importantly I met Jen. Jen is a 6th grade teacher, and has spent her share of time with at-risk youth as a teacher in Richmond and now here in the Sacramento area. We started dating, and this last fall Jen and I were married!

As we slogged through the wedding planning process, we considered our wedding registry options. Although we were perhaps in a different situation than many engaged couples in that we were pretty well stocked with all the housewares we were going to need, we followed the wedding playbook anyway and registered at the usual places. But we just were not comfortable with asking our guests for things that we already had, or really

### ROCK'S MISSION & PROGRAMS

Real Options for City Kids (ROCK) was founded in 1994 in response to the needs within San Francisco's low-income neighborhoods for enhanced public education and positive after-school activities. ROCK's mission is to nurture the healthy development of children by listening attentively to their needs and by providing opportunities to those who might not otherwise have access. ROCK aims to promote the positive development and long-term success of the youth that it serves through a combination of in-school and after school learning enrichment, sports and fitness, leadership training, outdoor adventure and summer camp opportunities. ROCK's programs are designed to serve girls and boys, ages 6-17, who live in or attend school in San Francisco's Visitacion Valley.

*Financial sponsors include those during the giving period between 9/1/05 and 8/31/06  
\*Includes matching gifts  
\*\*Includes in-kind donations*

### Jim Deslaurier, Former Volunteer & Board Member

didn't want and certainly didn't need when the money could be put to better uses. We decided to offer our guests an option to make a donation to a charity instead of buying us a gift. The charity of choice was obvious to both of us. While attending law school and now settling in the Sacramento area has diminished my direct ROCK involvement, the organization's mission and children have remained near and dear to my heart. For her part, Jen goes to work every day to teach this region's version of ROCKers. So, we decided to give people an option to donate to ROCK in lieu of a wedding gift.

The response was overwhelming. We would have declared the idea a success if we approached \$500 or so. We achieved that amount with our first donation. To date, over \$6,500 has been donated to ROCK by our wedding guests. Our friends and family recognized the greatness of ROCK's work and were thrilled to lend their financial support to such a great cause. Family and friends continue to talk about how great they felt "buying us" a donation to ROCK instead of a ladle or a bowl. We couldn't be happier knowing that ROCKers will get to experience so many great opportunities as a result of the generosity of our friends and guests. ROCK has been a model of hope and inspiration for so many of us over the years, and Jen and I are so happy to have been able to share it with our friends and family in this special way.



Jim and Jen Deslaurier