

Then and Now: The Alumni Corner

by Susan Siebert

Meet Cottonwood Alumni: Nick and Brooke Karler!

Nick and Brooke were among the first class of elementary students when Cottonwood School opened in 1995.

Nick attended Bosque School after graduating from Cottonwood in 1998. He was active in sports throughout his seven years at Bosque, playing basketball for four years and soccer for all seven. He traveled to Spain to study Spanish in his senior year. Nick received several awards during his years at Bosque which included the Gerald Ford Character Award when he graduated in 2005. Nick enrolled in the Mechanical Engineering Program at New Mexico Tech in Socorro. He played college soccer for 2 years. In 2010 he participated in a senior project to build a race car and competed, along with his team, in Michigan at the national level. Nick is currently completing his studies at New Mexico Tech.

Brooke graduated from Cot-



tonwood in 1999 and was accepted to Bosque School. She played volleyball in 6th and 7th grade, and competed in cross country all during high school. Brooke was a member of the Spanish Honor Society and an overall honor student throughout high school, graduating with honors as well as receiving the Yale Literary Award in 2006. She studied Spanish in Spain that summer. Brooke was accepted into the University of New Mexico's Honors Program in the Pre Medical Program and is scheduled to graduate with honors with a double major in Spanish and Biology in December 2010. She was awarded the Lina A Ruiz Memorial Scholarship from the University of New Mexico Spanish Department in 2008.

Brooke tells us, "What I remember most about my education at Cottonwood is definitely the hands-on learning and circle time lessons with the teachers. The education process was much more about discovery than simple instruction. **We learned actively at our own pace**, instead of out of standard textbooks and worksheets. I am still very

much a visual learner, and just the other day I found myself explaining the benefits of using flash cards, (a tool I learned at Cottonwood) to one of my peers. I also

credit

Cottonwood for instigating my love for young children. It was Cottonwood that allowed me to be intermixed with young kids which truly inspired my love for children. Playing with the kids in elementary school gave way to my first job of babysitting throughout middle school and high school, and now as a college senior I hope to enter medical school with a pediatric focus. Cottonwood School gave me a foundation for learning and methods for problem solving that I have built on and continue to use to this day. I am grateful for the dedicated, inspiring teachers that worked with me throughout my elementary school years at Cottonwood Montessori and I



wish everyone the best!" And Nick added, "I would like to add that we attended Cottonwood when it was still forming as an educational institution, so a lot of the facilities afforded to today's students simply didn't exist when we attended. I don't think that was a negative thing, how-

ever, simply because we didn't *need* much physical help to create such a wonderful environment for learning! The teachers were/are the lynch pin. Through their passion and, in my case especially, through their patience, they were able to foster a hunger for knowledge and fed that hunger through exploration. I am a firm believer in the Twain quote, "I've never let my schooling interfere with my education." While he might have meant it differently, I think in this context it highlights the fact that there is so much more to be learned than in a conventional schooling atmosphere; and that supplemental education is

what Cottonwood provides. **They plant the seed for the development of a good person, not merely a good student, which is very important.**"

ERROR: stackunderflow
OFFENDING COMMAND: ~

STACK: