



# Monarch School

EDUCATION FOR LIFE



## Memorable Moments

May 2012

### Spring Graduation ~

During the spring graduation I was most struck by the adult presentations of the graduating students. Each student requests a staff member that they felt closest to and one who could speak most about the students' growth and work. The students choose staff from every position in the school: Creative arts teacher, school managers, life skill instructors, teachers and therapists. Each presentation told the story of the creation and growth of a meaningful relationship, one that has enriched both the staff's and the student's lives. These relationships foster the change that graduating students credit for helping redefine their lives. ~ *James Nippert, Peer Leader*



"Our son arrived at Monarch a young, insecure, anxious, and withdrawn 14-year-old and left fifteen months later a mature, confident, calm and passionate 16-year-old. The staff, students, setting, and philosophy of Monarch form an incredibly unique and nurturing environment that encourages personal exploration and growth. Monarch students help support and guide one another and the single greatest gift our son received was learning what constitutes a meaningful relationship and developing life-long friendships as a result. We chose Monarch after visiting many schools because of this unique emphasis on positive peer support and mentorship. On our first parent visit we shared our hope that our son learn to have intimate, honest friendships by the time he left Monarch---when we experienced his graduation day, we marveled at the loving embraces and joyful tears that encircled him. Our son left Monarch deeply saddened to leave his friends, but deeply aware that these friendships would endure. He left with confidence in himself and in his ability to harmoniously coexist and bond with others. He left happy."

~ *Dana, Parent*



My second day at Monarch School was graduation. I hadn't gotten to know the graduates well but I did talk with a few the previous day. I had never seen any school's graduation before then so I really didn't know what to expect. When I saw the parents and families of the students I knew that it was going to be a serious and emotional event. While the graduates were walking with their escorts some cried, some laughed, but all of them looked triumphant. I was actually brought to tears when I saw all of the feeling that everyone showed towards each other. It was really eye-opening for me to see how comfortable people were with expressing their love with one another. It was at that point that I realized there was a lot of work and a lot of growing for me to do between then and *my* graduation. It was really neat for me to see my end goal as soon as I arrived and it gave me motivation, determination, and hope. I have a year or more ahead of me and that could get overwhelming but most of the time I think of graduation and the day in front of me.

~ *Stephen, Student*