

RWA



News

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

NOVEMBER 2014

## A Word From The Administration

Mr. Tony Pita, Principal

Ms. Lindsay Heckersbruch, Vice-Principal

Ms. Chantal Juhasz, Vice-Principal



November has been a busy month for Royal West Academy!

On November 8, several RWA volleyball teams competed in the GMAA city championships (*see page 5 for details*). Our teams all played valiantly and demonstrated excellent sportsmanship. The Midget Girls and Juvenile Boys teams fought hard to win gold medals in their respective championships. The Midget Boys and Juvenile Girls also fought hard in their final matches and ultimately won silver medals. Congratulations go out to all our volleyball players! You make RWA proud!

On November 10, our school demonstrated respect to those who have served our country in a number of Remembrance Day ceremonies, led by our Spiritual Animator, Mr. Monachino. These ceremonies were accompanied by a beautiful and touching commemorative display of student work in the main lobby, put up by Mr. Diacoumacos's Secondary V History classes. Thank you to all involved.

The RWA Senior Debate Team recently traveled to Ottawa to participate in the Xerxes Cup at Carleton

University, in which they competed against high school teams from Ontario and Quebec. Congratulations to Logan Stack and Isaac Harris who placed 2nd and 7th, respectively, in a field of over 120 debaters. Out of 60 teams, this pair had the third highest average score. Honorable mentions go out to the other members of the Debate Team: Aaron Bensmihen, Sam Segal, Abigale Singer, and Daniel Mendelson.

In other student news, Ayla Shanks, a Secondary I student, was recently selected as 1 of 36 girls from thousands of applicants across North America to attend a leadership summit in Monterey, California, for Discovery Girls magazine, to discuss real-world issues facing girls between the ages of 8 and 13. Ayla is featured in the Discovery Girls magazine issue published this month, which can be found in the RWA Library.

Royal West Academy's Bullying Awareness Week was held November 17–20. Thank you to Ms. Henriquez, Ms. Suarez, and the Visual Arts students for the artwork on display in the auditorium.

The interview process for the upcoming 2015–2016 academic year has now been completed and letters of acceptance are being sent out. Thank you to Mr. Scrivener, Ms. Wright, and Ms. McDougall for carrying out the more than 400 interviews! Your efforts are very much appreciated!

In an effort to improve safety and security, Royal West Academy successfully held a lockdown drill in the third week of November. Students and staff handled the lockdown calmly and it was completed without incident. We remind parents that in the event of a real emergency, please avoid communicating with your child via cellular phones, in order to keep the lines free.

The cold days of winter are definitely on the way. Parents and students are reminded that students must come to school and leave school in uniform. Students may not wear jeans or any other pants with their skirts



or over their school pants. Students may only wear their Physical Education jogging pants, if necessary.

Coming in December 2014, RWA staff and students will once again come together to raise awareness and funds for Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre. This unique partnership, in which RWA provides support for the Centre, is a holiday tradition of which our school community is immensely proud. Tyndale St-Georges has provided empowering educational programming for residents of Little Burgundy from birth through adulthood since 1927.

Finally, we say farewell to Ms. Heckersbruch, who has departed Royal West Academy in anticipation of the newest addition to her family. We wish her all the best in the coming months! We warmly welcome the return of Mme Cheff as Interim Vice-Principal for the remainder of the academic year. Mme Cheff will be responsible for the students previously under the care of Ms. Heckersbruch (family names M–Z).

As the holiday season approaches, the RWA Administration wishes all the very best to students, staff, and their families! May the holidays bring you good health, happiness, and success in the new year!

## SHARING THE STAGE WITH YOU.

By Ms. Jasmin Uhthoff, Vice-President, RWA Foundation

### Buy your raffle tickets now!

We are counting on parents to help sell tickets—selling **all** 4500 tickets would net us over \$150,000, giving us the funds needed to move ahead with Phase 2 of the renovations: air conditioning and new chairs.

**We are asking all Royal West Academy families to sell at least five tickets each.** Those who sell ten or more tickets by January 14, 2015, will be eligible to win a pair of tickets to the January 20, 2015, Canadiens game. Order your tickets by emailing [rwafoundation@gmail.com](mailto:rwafoundation@gmail.com) and stating how many tickets you want, and then we'll send you the tickets. To be eligible for the January 14 draw, payment for all ten or more tickets needs to be returned by January 13. Of course, anyone who buys ten or more tickets is also eligible for the draw!

We've improved the prizes again! Third prize is now seven (not five) pairs of Habs tickets for the 2015–2016 season!

**\$40**

**PARTAGEZ LA SCÈNE AVEC NOUS**  
**SHARE THE STAGE WITH US**

**40\$**

Numéro de licence/Licence: RACJ 000000

Aidez la Fondation de l'Académie Royal West à recueillir des fonds pour la campagne de financement pour l'auditorium de l'Académie Royal West  
Support the Royal West Academy Foundation's goal to raise money for the Royal West Academy Auditorium capital campaign

**Gagnez 15 paires de billets pour la saison 2015-16 des Canadiens et d'autres prix fabuleux!**  
**Win 15 pairs of 2015-16 Canadiens season's tickets and other fabulous prizes!**

Tous les billets sont situés dans la section Desjardins A, rangée B et incluent la nourriture / All tickets are in the Desjardins A section, row B, and include food

<b>1<sup>st</sup> PRIX PRIZE</b>	<b>15 parties games</b>	<b>Value \$5,679</b>	<b>6<sup>th</sup> PRIX PRIZE</b>	<b>52" HD TV Sony</b>	<b>Value \$1,000</b>
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> PRIX PRIZE</b>	<b>10 parties games</b>	<b>Value \$3,786</b>	<b>7<sup>th</sup> PRIX PRIZE</b>	<b>2 vélos  Simple Single</b>	<b>Value \$798</b>
<b>3<sup>th</sup> PRIX PRIZE</b>	<b>7 parties games</b>	<b>Value \$2,650</b>	<b>8<sup>th</sup> PRIX PRIZE</b>	<b>2 passes de 3 jours à Osheaga 2015</b>	<b>Value \$500</b>
<b>4-5<sup>th</sup> PRIX PRIZE</b>	<b>5 parties games</b>	<b>Value \$1,893</b>			

Pré-tirage le 7 mai 2015, 20 h pour les passes à Osheaga / Early-bird draw on May 7, 2015 at 8pm at RWA for the Osheaga passes  
Tirage le 11 septembre 2015 à RWA / Drawing on September 11, 2015 at RWA  
Ordre de tirage: 1<sup>er</sup>, 7<sup>e</sup>, 6<sup>e</sup>, 5<sup>e</sup>, 4<sup>e</sup>, 3<sup>e</sup>, 2<sup>e</sup>, 1<sup>er</sup> / Order of draw: 6<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1<sup>st</sup>  
Les prix doivent être réclamés avant le 30 sept. 2015 au: / Prizes must be claimed before Sept. 30, 2015 at:  
Royal West Academy, 189 Easton Ave., Montreal West, QC H4X 1L4 - Tél.: 514 489-0454

No.: 0000

Tickets are available now on <http://rwaf.ca>. The early bird draw for the Osheaga passes will be held on May 7, 2015, and the final draw on September 11, 2015, to coincide with the Start of Year Celebration.

# SHARING THE STAGE WITH YOU.

By Ms. Lindsay McLeod, Secretary, RWA Foundation

The perfect holiday fundraiser: **FündScrip**

Every month you spend hundreds of dollars on food, gas, clothing, pharmacy, restaurants, electronics, home renovations, department stores, and so on. Why not pay for some or all of your purchases using GIFT CARDS bought at face value from FundScrip participating retailers? Best of all, a percentage of every gift card purchased is contributed to our fundraising efforts for the Auditorium. So instead of paying with cash or a debit card, use a gift card that you purchased through RWAF's FundScrip. It costs you nothing extra but you earn money for the school.

## How does it work?

FundScrip has hundreds of retailers listed on their website at [www.fundscrip.com](http://www.fundscrip.com). You can purchase gift cards from any one or more of these retailers and a percentage of your purchase will be given to RWAF. You receive the full value of the cards; in other words, if you order a \$100 gift card for Metro for your groceries, you get a \$100 gift card.

If you spend \$250 a week on groceries, and use only FundScrip cards to pay for groceries, you will earn Royal West Academy at least \$7.50 each week. That's like making a donation of \$390 in one year without you actually spending any extra money! Some more examples:

- In our first week, 23 supporters joined FundScrip. If each of them buys a \$100 gift card for Chapters, Royal West Academy would earn \$184!
- If 200 families bought \$200 of their weekly groceries using FundScrip gift cards, those families would earn Royal West Academy \$62,400 per year—without changing their shopping habits!
- If 500 families bought \$200 of their weekly groceries using FundScrip gift cards, those families would earn Royal West Academy \$156,000 per year!

The RWAF's FundScrip goal is to pay for a new air conditioning system for the auditorium. Here's how you can help:

1. Go to [www.fundscrip.com](http://www.fundscrip.com)
2. Support a Group with this Group Invitation Code: **WMSTBS**
3. Purchase gift cards for your favourite stores
4. Repeat step 3

Gift cards make great gifts, too! The perfect stocking-stuffer size. The perfect hostess gift. The perfect gift for a picky teenager. Stock up!

## You can play a part!

We are always looking for volunteers to join the RWA Foundation. No matter your experience or time available, everyone can play a role. If you have any questions or fundraising ideas, contact Jasmin Uhthoff, Vice-President, at [rwafoundation@gmail.com](mailto:rwafoundation@gmail.com) or visit us at <http://rwaf.ca>.

Make a donation! Just go to our website at <http://rwaf.ca> and give what you can. Every donation takes us closer to transforming our 80-year-old auditorium into a state-of-the-art Performing Arts Centre for our children.





## Orientation Day

By Jennifer Lynch

Royal West Academy held its annual Orientation Day on August 28. Orientation Day is a chance for the new students to meet each other and get used to the school before it starts. The school's Student Life Association (made up of students from grade eight to eleven) organizes and hosts this event every year, right before the beginning of the school year.



Throughout the day, the students took part in activities such as "Catch 22", "Ice Breakers", "Gaga Ball", water fights, soccer baseball, and many more! They also got tours around the whole school and had a Question and Answer session.



Here at RWA, we believe that new students deserve a proper welcoming to our school. After all, we do "stand tall with pride as we venture far and wide"!

## Welcome Back BBQ

By Max Taylor, Treasurer, SLA

Royal West Academy's Welcome Back BBQ was a huge success! The amount of students that came to this event was a new record. Organized by the members of the Student Life Association, these students set up a BBQ in the front field with many exciting activities. Some of these activities included a bouncy castle, a dunk tank, and face painting.

The activity that received the most of attention was definitely the dunk tank, because what's better than watching your teachers fall in to ice cold water? The students who bought a ticket for the BBQ received two hot dogs, a drink of choice, and a Freezie. All the money raised went to charities such as Médecins Sans Frontières, Dans la Rue, Montreal Children's Hospital, and the MAB-Mackay Foundation.



I asked Rachel Copnick, one of the SLA Co-Presidents, a few questions regarding the event. Rachel explained that it went very well and was very well organized. We raised a good amount of money based on how many people showed up, she told me. She also mentioned that we had to adjust to having a much bigger space than previous years because of the change of location to the front field from the backfield.



The Welcome Back BBQ is a tradition at our school. It is a good way to bring the whole school back together after the summer break in a fun and casual way. SLA also organizes many other fun events throughout the year such as dances, a winter carnival, and sometimes breakfasts before school. The BBQ is most the popular event that SLA organizes because it's a great way to catch up with your friends and to start a new school year!

## Juvenile Girls Soccer Win GMAA Silver

By Rashiya Phillip-Wilson



The Royal West Academy Juvenile Girls soccer team had yet another great season, winning the silver medal in the GMAA finals against Beaconsfield High School. The RWA Wildcats went 5 and 1 in the regular season and finished with 15 points—just under the BHS Bisons, who had 18 points.

After having a successful season, the Wildcats headed into the playoffs with a bye, and then playing Sacred Heart School in an exhilarating semi-finals that would come down to the wire. The game was a very intense one, in which both teams would rally against the other, scoring goals one after another. In the end, RWA emerged victorious, winning 4–3 against SHS and advancing to the finals for a second year to face BHS on Halloween.

The Wildcats knew they were up against a very tough opponent and their coach, Ms. Belina, would make a couple of defensive adjustments to cope with the bolstered offense of the Bisons.

“Coming into the game we just want to start off strong and get a goal first to get an edge on them,” said Vanessa Travisano, captain of the Wildcats team.

By setting out that ambition, they were able to do just that. The Wildcats started off the game strong, scoring an early goal and imposing their playing style on the defending champions. However, the Bisons soon regained their composure and were able to tie up the game, making it 1–1 right before the half. Despite the game being tied, the girls were still confident in their ability to hold up against the Bisons and re-entered the second half fired up.

The Wildcats found another way to put pressure on the Bisons by scoring once again in the second half, making the score 2–1 with time winding down. But as the Bisons were still keen to win the game, they were able to put themselves back, tying it up 2–2 and sending the game to overtime. As the girls came to the bench, the cheers from the parents and supporters from RWA greeted them, encouraging them to stay focused and play hard.

There was still a sense of determination in the huddle as the girls motivated each other to go out and win the game, refusing to be defeated. However as overtime progressed, fatigue kicked in, causing them to make defensive mistakes, which the Bisons capitalized on and used to score on them. The final score ended as 4–2 BHS, and RWA would win the silver medal for a second year in a row.



A job well done by both teams and their coaches as they both worked very hard to get to the finals. Take nothing away from the Royal West Academy Wildcats, as they showed heart and determination and will be a strong force in GMAA soccer for years to come.

## GMAA Volleyball Finals

By Megan Chau



On November 8, Loyola High School's gym was filled with volleyball teams of different ages competing in the Division 1 finals. Although the tournament was being hosted at Loyola, it was Royal West Academy students that were dominating the gym—all four of our juvenile and midget girls and boys teams were competing for the championship titles of their categories.



Volleyball has always been a strong point when it comes to RWA's sports teams. Usually the girls teams are the stars, but this year the midget and juvenile boys teams have shined just as much. Four of the five volleyball teams were in first place in their pools during the regular season. Those four teams all made it to the playoffs and fought their way to the finals. The midget girls, midget boys, and juvenile girls teams also remained undefeated during that time.

The midget girls coach, Steph Leech-Pepin (former RWA student and now staff member), designed track suits and practice shirts for all of the teams. The players received them the morning of finals and got to wear their matching blue shirts with pride.



As the day went on, champions were crowned for each category. The juvenile girls and the midget boys were given silver medals after their final games. As for the juvenile boys and midget girls, they won gold and brought home the GMAA Division 1 banners for their categories. Nicole Stafiej, a power on the midget girls team, also won game MVP.

Royal West Academy staff and students who came to support their teams were thrilled to see the teams play their hearts out and have fun. The coaches were also proud of the players and of all the effort they put in to playing a good game. On the following Monday and Tuesday, the midget girls wore their full tracksuits and the juvenile boys wore their jerseys to school in honour of their accomplishments.

Now the first place teams are looking forward to going to the provincials which are being held later on in the year. The winners of the midget boys category decided

not to attend the tournament, so RWA will be taking their place at provincials.

Every volleyball player at Royal West Academy should be proud of their achievements and thank their wonderful coaches for putting in so much time to make our teams great. The volleyball program is one big family that will continue to strive.

## The Governing Board Report

By Mr. Kirk Kelly, Chair, Governing Board

At the board's November 5 meeting, there were a few initiatives that might be of interest to the Royal West Academy community.

The first has to do with the need for a portal at RWA to allow for more seamless communications between teachers, students, and parents. Creating a fully functioning portal is one of the major recommendations of the technology study carried out in the fall and winter of the 2012–2013 school year.

Class notes, reading lists, assignments, due dates, and test results would be available without the need for constant emailing and photocopying. Some RWA teachers already incorporate one or another of the easily available portal solutions into their classes, though its functionality is generally limited to communications between the students and teachers.

### Portals already exist in some classes

Different teachers, at RWA and other EMSB schools, have chosen different portal solutions, which raised the concern of some parents on the board that the longer it takes to get a single functioning portal covering all the schools, the harder it will be to get all the teachers to adopt a single solution. While incorporating a portal into a course offers many benefits, it is labour intensive: a lot of time has to be spent transforming analog resources into digital resources. The work is almost doubled if, at a later date, all the resources have to be transferred to a new portal platform.

The selection of a portal is generally the responsibility of the school board since it makes sense for all the schools in a board to use the same resource. This means students can progress easily from one school to

another without having to learn a new communications system.

A subcommittee was set up, headed by parents Michael Delis and Ryan Ortiz, to look into possible portal solutions and to potentially make a recommendation for Royal West Academy's use if the Board refuses to address our need.

We also agreed to talk with other schools in the EMSB to see if we can find a common cause around the portal issue so as to more forcefully convince the Board of the need to move on this quickly.

### Learning life skills before graduating

A second issue that was addressed was the need for a "Life Skills" course for students approaching graduation. The idea is to give students practical knowledge about personal finance, managing a budget, and understanding financial instruments such as bank accounts, credit cards, mortgages, RESPs, student loans, etc. One parent had looked at a similar course offered at Loyola High School that has gotten great feedback over the years from both parents and teachers.

A study group headed by parent Deidre Dimock will work on the course idea with teachers in the history and contemporary world areas and report back to the board on the feasibility of getting something up and running for next year.

### Trips: too many or just right?

The school's trip policy was the third major area of discussion. There was a lively discussion around the number, duration, and timing of trips at Royal West Academy. While acknowledging that trips are an important part of the RWA experience, concerns were raised that some students were spending too much time out of class when they might benefit from having more time in class with their teachers. Exchange students sometimes miss almost two weeks of classes, which can mean a lot of catching up while continuing to learn new material; it places strains on students and forces teachers to give up their lunches and planning time to administer missed tests or to coach students who are having trouble catching up on multiple days of work in six or seven courses simultaneously.

Solutions suggested included limiting the number of trips a student can sign up for and disallowing trips during the first few weeks of a school year as these are critical teaching weeks. The principal will consult with the school council as to their thoughts on the trip policy before the next board meeting.

### The role of teacher collaboration in job satisfaction and student success

The final issue touches on increasing the amount of time that teachers have to collaborate. It is based on the idea that teaching is a learned skill for most teachers and that learning must be lifelong. It stands in contrast to the idea of the person who is "born" a teacher and can just enter a classroom and work miracles.

Collaboration can take the form of meeting to plan common approaches to a subject, sharing results from different classes to see what teaching methods are working where, taking turns sitting in on a colleague's class to observe their teaching methods, having that colleague sit in on your class, etc.

Royal West Academy teachers already go out of their way to find time to collaborate in many subject areas, often taking from their personal time to devote to their students' success. Because of the nature of the school schedule and the relatively heavy teaching load of most teachers, finding common times to collaborate during the school day can be difficult.

Getting resources that would allow teachers to collaborate during the scheduled school day would increase their opportunities to work together and likely lead to finding some more effective teaching methods. It would also restore some of the teachers' personal time that is being used for collaboration now.

Best yet, RWA has recent first-hand proof of the value of collaboration: the success rate of RWA students on the much-feared provincial Grade 10 math exam set by the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport.

In spring 2012, RWA students achieved a success rate of 82% on the math exam; in other words, 82% of RWA students who wrote the Grade 10 math exam achieved a mark of 60% or higher.



One year later, on the spring 2013 exam, RWA's success rate rose to 84%, a 2.5% increase over the previous year's exam. Note that the average success rate across EMSB high schools was 67% on the June 2013 exam.

Last year RWA's grade 10 math teachers decided to collaborate more closely on how they would teach the course as well as set standard tests for all classes to be held on the same days of the week. They regularly compared class-by-class results to see what parts of the curriculum needed more effort, where students were progressing well, and what teaching methods seemed to be the most effective. On the spring 2014 exam, RWA students achieved a success rate of 96.8%, an incredible 15% increase in the success rate in just one year!

Now these are not the only RWA teachers who collaborate by any means—RWA's student success rate in many subjects is 100%. But the spectacular results in just one year on what is thought to be the hardest exam in Quebec high schools is certainly noteworthy for the fact that teacher collaboration played some role in our students' success.

The RWA Governing Board discussed the value of going out into the community to find resources so that teachers could spend more time collaborating in each subject area. There are a great number of issues to address in trying something like this, not least of which is that many teachers are unwilling to give up even an hour of the time they spend face-to-face with their students. It was agreed that we would return to this issue at the next meeting after speaking with teachers and administrators as well as examining the literature to see how other school systems handle the need for collaboration.

***The next meeting is January 14, 2015, at 7 PM in the library.***



## CALL FOR NEWS ARTICLES

**We are now accepting articles for the December 2014–January 2015 issue of RWA News!**

Send your submissions to [rwanews@gmail.com](mailto:rwanews@gmail.com)

**Deadline date: FRIDAY, JANUARY 30, 2015**

Thank you for your contribution!



## LOST AND FOUND POLICY

Please be advised that the Lost and Found boxes are cleaned out on the 15th of each month. While labeled items are returned to their owners, several bags of unclaimed unlabeled items are removed and donated to charity every month. So if you are looking for lost items, make sure to look for them before the 15th!

The Lost and Found bins are located in three areas at Royal West Academy:

- outside the new gym
- outside the guidance office
- in the main office under the teachers' mailboxes

In the meantime, please label all your belongings!



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Dec 1	RWA Foundation meeting @ 7 PM
Dec 2	Home & School meeting @ 7:30 PM
Dec 2–5	Bardolators: The Merchant of Venice
Dec 5	Pedagogical Day (afternoon only)
Dec 8–12	Tyndale Week
Dec 9–19	Computer Science Week
Dec 11	Holiday Concert
Dec 12	Free Dress Day
Dec 16	UN Debate
Dec 19	Last day of classes
Dec 22–Jan 2	Holidays
Jan 5	Classes resume
Jan 9	Variety Show
Jan 12	RWA Foundation meeting @ 7 PM
Jan 14	Governing Board meeting @ 7 PM
Jan 15	Winter Concert
Jan 20	Winter Carnival
Jan 20	Home & School meeting @ 7:30 PM
Jan 26–30	Mid-year exams

# RWA



# News

**Editor**

Ronald Pau (RWA parent)

**Assistant Editor**

Sophie Sun (Secondary V student)

**Junior Assistant Editor**

Yi Sen Wang (Secondary IV student)

**Staff Advisor**

Tony Pita (Principal)

**RWA News** is published during the academic year (from September to May) on the Royal West Academy website at [www.royalwestacademy.com](http://www.royalwestacademy.com). Articles, comments, and suggestions may be directed to the editor at [rwanews@gmail.com](mailto:rwanews@gmail.com).





Royal West Academy Bardolators presents

# The Merchant of Venice

by William Shakespeare

**Dinner Theatre**

**Friday December 5**

**Dinner at 6:00 pm**

**Performance at 7:30 pm**

**tickets \$25**

**(call 514-489-8454 Mrs. Westlake)**

