

RWA



News

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DECEMBER 2016–JANUARY 2017

A Word From The Administration

Mr. Tony Pita, Principal

Ms. Chantal Juhasz, Vice-Principal

Mr. Steven Manstavich, Vice-Principal



A Word From The Administration

The administration would like to wish members of the Royal West Academy community a peaceful and prosperous New Year! We hope you all enjoyed a restful holiday surrounded by loved ones.

We would also like to take this opportunity to extend a warm welcome to our newest staff members:

- Ms. C. Reece (School Organization Technician)
- Ms. V. Di Manno (Night Caretaker)
- Ms. G. Doldron (Special Education Technician)

The past two months have been eventful ones here at Royal West Academy. The week of December 12–16 saw RWA students and staff working together for a wonderful cause. Homerooms competed against one another to see who could collect the most money, non-perishable food items, and toys to support the Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre, John Grant High School, and Westmount Park Elementary School. Our annual Penny Wars was a great success (*see page 4 for details*), as all of our students and staff did a fantastic job promoting the event and worked together to show

what great work RWA can do to help those less fortunate. During that week, students raised \$9347 for the Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre, which offers support programs and services for underprivileged communities in the southwest sector of Montreal.

A special thank you to Ms. S. Di Pietro, Ms. D. Colannino, and Mme C. Goudreau for organizing the Toy Drive in which RWA sent over 400 toys to Westmount Park Elementary School, and the Food Drive that supported families from John Grant High School. We would also like to thank Mr. J. Bateman for organizing the Penny Wars event and our wonderful SLA and Mr. J. Zigby, Prefects, and Leadership students for all of their dedication during this most successful week.

December 10 marked our second annual Hackathon event (*see page 7 for details*). Students from Royal West Academy, Vincent Massey Collegiate, and Merton Elementary School participated in a day of programming code. Thank you to Mr. S. Nemeth, Mr. C. Northey, Mr. A. Vamvakas, and Mme L. Bourdeau for organizing the event.

Our return to school in January has also been quite a busy one. During the week of January 23–27, RWA students wrote various supplemental exams in subjects such as Math, Histoire, and Science and Technology. All Secondary V students wrote the Français langue seconde exams. We are proud of how hard our students prepared for these exams. As well, during the week of January 30–February 3, 2017, RWA students will be writing their mid-year examinations. Students are working very hard to prepare for their exams.

On January 17, RWA staff and students participated in our annual Winter Carnival Day. Participation in this year's event was the highest in recent memory. The event involved some great activities such as skiing, snowboarding, hockey, tubing, cabane à sucre (*see*



page 8 for details), and the opportunity to enjoy some in-school activities. Students and staff enjoyed the good weather conditions and reported having a great time. Special thanks to the SLA (led by Mr. J. Zigby) for their efforts in organizing this event.

On January 26, RWA hosted its third Secondary I Parent Seminar of the school year. The theme of this seminar was how to help your child manage stressful situations. Our Student Services team discussed a variety of strategies that parents can utilize to help their child cope with the various stressors that occur in a high school setting. This seminar was especially relevant given that our Secondary I students wrote mid-year examinations for the first time. Many thanks go to Mr. J. Mateus and Ms. C. Almeida for the hard work they put into creating this seminar.

Royal West Academy will be holding some upcoming Grade Level trips. On February 7–10, 2017, Secondary V students will be participating in the annual New York City Trip, and our Secondary II students will have the opportunity to participate in the annual Stoneham Ski Trip.

On February 23, 2017, RWA will host its annual Science Fair (*see page 4 for details*). Approximately 400 students participate in our annual fair, while many others will volunteer their services. Parents are reminded that only those students participating in the Science Fair are expected to attend school that day. Parents and students are free to visit the fair during the school day or the evening session.

Students and parents have already received the 2017–2018 Course Selection forms. This document serves as your child's registration form for next year. Students presently in Secondary I are required to select their Arts course despite not yet having completed their three rotations of Music, Visual Arts, and Drama. Students may revise their choice for elective courses later in the year. Any student, at any level, can change selections any time between January and June by forwarding to the Administration a letter signed by a parent. Placement in an elective of your choice is contingent on number of students enrolled, marks, and prerequisites. If you are concerned about your child's placement in Math or French, we encourage you to

meet with your child's teacher at the upcoming Parent-Teacher Evening on March 16, 2017. If your child is not returning to Royal West Academy, please send a letter to that effect as soon as possible.

Finally, we know Montreal can be faced with some harsh weather conditions that sometimes cause delays in getting to school. We request that students and parents plan for these possible delays during the winter months. Student tardiness is extremely disruptive, and it stifles the learning process. We ask that parents and students make every effort to minimize late arrivals. Parents should still call the school or send a note if they expect their child to arrive late. Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Once again, all the best in the New Year!

SHARING THE STAGE WITH YOU.

HABS Raffle Scores at RWA

By Mr. Mitchell White, RWA President

For the past four years, I have been intimately involved in raising over \$450,000 for the Royal West Academy Foundation. There is nothing more exciting and successful for our school than the HABS raffle we have going on. To date, the HABS raffles from previous years have raised almost half of all the fundraising that we have done since I came on board.

This year, Sheila Fanzolato won the early bird draw for a set of tickets to the February 4, 2017 game against Washington. Congratulations! Thanks to all who have purchased to date.



Ms. Taylor (right) draws the early bird winner with Mitchell White.

If you win the actual raffle, you could win up to 10-sets of season tickets in the Desjardins Section. Go to



<https://rwaf.ca/shop/raffle-tickets/canadiens-hockey-raffle/> and purchase your tickets now. A little help goes a long way and it is for our children!!! Thank you!

Agatha Christie's *Appointment with Death*

Call for Door Prizes

By Ms. Carole Shemie

Save the date! Royal West Academy's very own Doug Floen is hard at work producing Agatha Christie's *Appointment by Death*. This play, which will feature actors from the school community (students, staff, and alumni), will be performed at RWA on April 13, 2017, in support of the Sharing the Stage With You capital campaign.

Do you have access to any gift certificates, gift baskets, sport/theatre tickets, AIR MILES, etc. that could be given away as a door prize? This is a call out to parents to donate items to give as door prizes at the performance. Please send anything that you would like to donate (new items only) to the office and to the attention of the RWAf.

Royal West Academy Foundation

The RWAf is run by volunteer parents and is currently focused on transforming our over 80-year-old auditorium into a state-of-the-art Performing Arts

Centre for our children. The \$2.2 million campaign will enhance our out dated auditorium, which is currently inadequate for the scale and quality of productions mounted within. The auditorium plays a central role in the entire academic life of the school and in the wide variety of extra-curricular learning opportunities at Royal West Academy.

If you have any questions, would like to volunteer, or have any fundraising ideas, contact the foundation at rwafoundation@gmail.com. You can also make a donation at <http://rwaf.ca>.

MADD Ceremony

By Nicole Stafiej



November 30 was a day to remember for Royal West Academy students and staff. We were honoured to hold a memorial ceremony to commemorate a former RWA student who was the victim of a drunk driving crash.

The ceremony was held by Mothers Against Drunk Driving. MADD is a charitable organization that brings awareness to the issue of impaired driving, with the hope of bringing an end to it. The ceremony was filled with touching moments as we received speeches from various individuals.



Firstly, the president of MADD Montreal, Debby Coveny, spoke to us about the organization itself. This gave the students and staff insight into what the charity is all about.

We were then privileged to listen to Kiki Souranis, mother of the former RWA student, and victim herself. She explained to the audience that the ones who are in the car at the time of the crash are not the only victims in the situation. Everyone around the person—family, friends—they are all victims themselves as they must face the grief of losing a person they love.

Finally, the victim's best friend who was in the car himself, bravely recounted the deadly crash. This included the events leading up to and those that followed. Tears welled up in the eyes of many when it was heard that he held his best friend's head in his lap before passing. A horror story for many became his reality that he will have to live with for the rest of his life.

As the ceremony came to an end, a select few made their way to the school foyer where a memorial bench was to be unveiled. This bench was a kind donation from MADD and it was surrounded by two bare trees waiting to be wrapped in red ribbons. Every student in the school would then be given a red ribbon in the following weeks to place on one of the trees and participate in this meaningful ceremony.

Science Fair

By Ms. Jennifer Pevec, Science Fair Coordinator



Royal West Academy students are working hard to finalize their projects for our 28th Annual RWA Science Fair, taking place on February 23, 2017. That morning, nearly 400 Secondary II–V students will be presenting their projects to judges from both the academic and professional sectors.

The Science Fair will then be open to the public at 12 noon–1 PM, and again that evening at 6:30 PM–8 PM. Students look forward to presenting their projects during these public viewing times as the pressure of official judging will be over by then.

The day will end with the awards ceremony, where all Science Fair participants, family, friends, and judges are all welcome to attend. Hope to see you there!

For more information, contact Jennifer Pevec at rwasciencefaircoordinator@gmail.com.

Penny Wars for Tyndale

By Lauren Perlman & Spencer Gearey, Tyndale Student Activity Coordinators (LLS) and Mr. Jeff Bateman, Penny War faculty supervisor



Once again this year Royal West Academy took on the challenge to raise money in support of Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre and the work they do in the community of Little Burgundy. Our Secondary I and II students attended an assembly that informed them of all the services offered by Tyndale so they could understand why our school puts so much effort into this week-long event.

In addition to homerooms holding bake sales, raffles, pie a prefect, etc. to raise money, we also held our annual Penny Wars. Penny Wars has gone through a number of changes over the past few years, specifically the removal of the penny from circulation, but the enthusiasm for the event has not suffered. In short, the grade with the greatest number of points at the end of the week wins. Our school council, with the support of the Board of Governors and Administration, sweetened the pot by offering an afternoon off school on February 20, 2017 to the winning grade. At the end of each day the Leadership and Leisure Studies students would get together to count and roll the money to prepare an account of where each grade level stood. Secondary I opened up a huge lead by being consistent and adding to their bucket each day. But Friday brought with it a huge effort from the other grades to make the challenge close.

In the end, every member of the Royal West Academy community were the winners, knowing that through their coordinated efforts we raised \$9347.37 for Tyndale St-Georges. This money will go a long way to help this very worthwhile organization continue to do great things with people in need.

We want to thank all the teachers who gave up their lunch hours to help their students plan, set up, and run the various activities that helped raise money. We also want to thank the custodians and administration for their cooperation and understanding when dealing with some of the mess that is a by-product of such an event.

On behalf of the LLS classes, we want to congratulate the Secondary V students for having the most points at the end of the week—and the Secondary I students for drawing the ire of the rest of the school and being the genesis of an influx of nearly \$2200 in “bombs” on Friday alone.

A shout-out to Ms. Kissin’s and Mr. Girardin’s homerooms for raising \$400.10 and \$376.25, respectively, with delicious goodies and hot chocolate sales!

Thank you all for making the 2016 Royal West Academy Tyndale week the most successful ever.

Mackay Centre Volunteering

By Annalies Smith



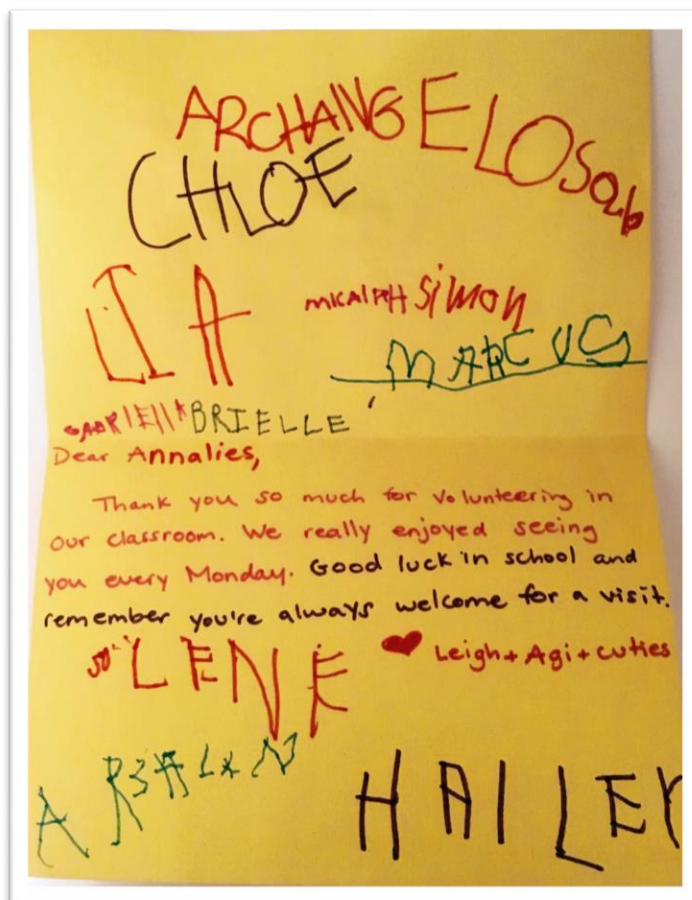
The Mackay Centre School is a school for deaf and disabled children in Notre-Dame-de-Grâce. It is an elementary school, with a senior class for students up to 16 or 17 years old. Because of its nature, the Mackay Centre does not function exactly as other public schools, and extra help is often required. Which is why Royal West Academy sends some of their students each year to help some of the teachers. This year I was fortunate enough to be one of them.

Volunteering at the Mackay Centre consists of helping out a teacher with whatever they might need. This can range from helping the students read or write, to printing or filling out various forms and paperwork.

I was a volunteer every Monday morning for a period of ten weeks. Going into it, all I knew was that the Mackay Centre was a school for disabled children, but I had no idea what the kids would be like or how the school actually functioned. Immediately it was clear that all the teachers and staff were extremely kind, and cared a lot about the kids and their development. The students were also very sweet and almost always smiling.

During my time volunteering I was in a kindergarten class of 11 students, which I learned is actually quite large compared to other years. The students were all amazing, and though at times some of them might act up or misbehave, they all had their hearts in the right place. Volunteering for the ten weeks was amazing because I got to see the students grow and develop. In only a few weeks I watched a student go from barely being able to write his own name (needing boxes for each letter and a lot of prompting) to being able to write it clearly and easily. I watched the students learn to count, colour, write, and draw shapes. Meanwhile I learned all sorts of things about them, getting to know them as people.

Volunteering at the Mackay Centre also helped me gain incredible respect for the teachers and staff at this school. The teacher I was with knew each student inside and out, being able to tailor work to each one of them. Just walking around the hall I saw different teachers interacting with different students, and was in awe of how well everyone was able to handle any situation.



In the end I learned a lot from this experience. I learned about how to interact with and handle kids with various disabilities, but I also learned that almost none of these kids are very different than the ones at my own school. Although some of them have a harder time with certain things—be it interacting with other kids or learning new concepts—or might have a physical handicap, they still act like any other kid I have ever met. This experience helped me realize that people with disabilities are a very important part of our community, and I personally think everyone should have an experience like this.

Though I was sad to leave the Mackay Centre, I will never forget the kids I met and what they taught me, and I will always keep the card they made for me.

Marc Hall

By Justin Sacksner



On November 1, the students and staff of Royal West Academy were fortunate enough to welcome Marc Hall as a visitor, at an event organized by the Royal West Academy Foundation. The moment lunch began, students grabbed their lunches and quickly made their way to the auditorium. Everyone wanted a front row seat! Some had already been given a brief introduction of Marc Hall's story by teachers, and had a general idea of who he was.

During the first half of Hall's presentation, he told his prom story. In 2006, his Catholic High School had denied him permission to take his boyfriend to prom, causing Marc to hire a lawyer and take the school to court. Marc ended up winning the court case by appealing to the public, and with the media on his side, his story became an inspiration to students everywhere.

Marc Hall sent a very strong message that if we stand up for what we believe in and what we think is right, there is nothing we cannot accomplish. He described his prom night as going exactly how he had ever dreamed of it being.

Pamphlets of the musical *Prom Queen* were then distributed to all members of the audience. The musical was playing at the Segal Centre for Performing Arts. Marc explained the premise of the musical and how it was based on his prom story.



Marc Hall (right) with Justin Sacksner

Marc Hall's presentation hit very close to home for me. Considering I am in Secondary V, prom is just months away. His story opened my eyes to the realization of how lucky I am to be a student at Royal West Academy, an open-minded and progressive school that I know would welcome my prom date and I with open arms, regardless of the gender of my date.

Student Life Association

By Charles Taylor

Student Life Association (SLA) is a group of students that share a homeroom and try to make the year better for others. It is student run. To get into the SLA, you have to either:

- run as your grade representative (and win)
- form a slate with three other students (one in Secondary II, one in Secondary III, two in Secondary IV) and present to the whole school ideas on how to make the school year more enjoyable (and win), or
- be interviewed by the two SLA co-presidents.



To become a co-president of SLA you have to be one of the Secondary IV students in a slate and win. Multiple slates can run. After they have all presented to the school, the students write down their favorite slate on a ballot. All this happens at the end of the year—if you win, then the following year is when you take your position. Each slate has a secretary (Secondary III) who takes notes at meetings, a treasurer (Secondary IV) who deals with everything financial, and finally the two co-presidents (Secondary V) who lead and run SLA.

So far this year, there has been the Welcome Back barbecue, SLA breakfast, miso Monday, taco Tuesday, and the dance. All of these events were fun and successful but I will focus on the dance, which took place on November 18 when the doors opened at 7 PM.

To get into to the dance you had to pay for a ticket. Student tickets were \$5. If you wanted to bring a guest it was an extra \$7. There was a DJ with a bunch of sound and lights equipment. The theme of the dance was “Friday Night Fever” so if you went you had to be ready to dance. At 9 PM there was a mannequin challenge that everyone participated in (the mannequin challenge is a mainstream challenge on social media where you make a video showing everyone pretending that they’re a mannequin, meaning they have to be frozen while doing a pose). Later on in the evening everyone made a big circle and there was a dance off. As you can tell the dance was very exciting and fun. You could also buy food and drink at the dance.

Jennifer Lynch, co-president of SLA 2016–2017, said, “I’m just so happy to see everyone participating and having fun together, this year is going to be such a wonderful year!! [...] So far, all the activities have run

smoothly and have had some great feedback from the students!”

Hackathon

By Jason Wang

On December 10, Royal West Academy was proud to have hosted its very first interschool Hackathon event, organized by Mr. S. Nemeth, Mr. C. Northey, Mr. A. Vamvakas, and Mme L. Bourdeau. The Hackathon is a gathering of people who engage in creating video games; however, they must create the video games within a certain theme, and only have a limited amount of time to do so. In this year’s event, students from Royal West Academy, Vincent Massey Collegiate, and Merton Elementary School came to participate. This time, the participants were to create a game with the theme of “Helping the Environment”.

Once the students were gathered in the library, Mr. Nemeth and Mr. Northey explained the rules of the event. The primary rules were that the game must be centred around making the world a better place and that its objects must relate to the environment in some form. Once all the details had been explained, participants from each school split themselves into groups of three or four and began working on their video games. The groups were given eight hours to plan and create their video games, with a one-hour break in the middle for lunch, during which the students were fed a pizza lunch. Once time ran out, all the groups came together and began presenting their games. A large variety of unique and creative games were created, and every group was eager to present their own. Once every group had presented their game, each group was acknowledged and awarded on the strength of their projects.

As both a participant and a mentor for the other students, I experienced firsthand the event as a participant, but was also capable of observing the other participants. While I was helping some of the less experienced participants, I could sense the enthusiasm and enjoyment they had for the Hackathon. Despite their limited knowledge in designing and creating video games, they were always willing to learn and understand concepts and skills. This is great for the event, as when asked to what is the purpose of the





event, Mr. Nemeth responded, “The main goal for the Hackathon is to bring together students interested in computer programming, and have them learn and improve these skills.”

Overall, the Hackathon was successful, with many participants glad to have had this experience. The organizers have stated their intentions of making this an annual event, and to invite more schools, making the Hackathon an even bigger event in the future.

Winter Carnival: Sugar Shack

By Leila Rafai



Royal West Academy’s annual Winter Carnival Day offers multiple options of activities for their students to

choose from. For this year, some of my friends and I decided we would go to the Sucrierie de la Montagne, a sugar shack out in Rigaud.

On the day of, we departed the school at 10 AM to make our way there. It was about an hour drive, but we saw beautiful scenery of the bright snow and pretty trees along the way.

When we arrived, we took a short trip on a horse carriage up the mountain to the main shacks. To begin our trip, we had a five-minute explanation by one of the employees of the sugar shack. He explained the steps they take to extract the sap from the trees, which will later become maple syrup.

Later on, we went to the shack where there were multiple long tables set up for us to sit and eat. As we





waited for our food, we had some entertainment as some students went up in front of everyone to participate in playing Quebec folk music. We were then served with foods such as pancakes, mashed potatoes, beans, egg, ham and sausage, and of course we couldn't forget the fresh maple syrup!

After some time of enjoying food and the company of friends, we headed over to the gift shop where their famous maple syrup was sold amongst other local maple specialties and souvenirs. We finished our trip by having the popular maple taffy, which is essentially maple syrup that is boiled, poured onto clean snow, and finally rolled onto a stick.

Overall, it was a fun-filled day and we all really enjoyed ourselves. Sarah Moghrabi, a student that attended this outing said, "It was a very fun trip. I'm glad I got to spend it with my friends and that I got to learn about the process that is taken to make maple syrup!"

Glee Club

By Isabella Pietrantonio



Glee Club is a student-run extracurricular activity that requires passion, commitment, and confidence. Their leader, Jonah Fried, and their co-leader, Kevisha Williams, both put a lot of time and effort into making this year's Glee performance as close to perfect as possible. Vocal Fire, this year's Glee Club, is composed of nine students ranging from Secondary I

to V. The following were the participants in this year's Vocal Fire: Ella Barakett, Lilah Barry, Maëlla Fortin, Sofia Larocci, Tatiana Thevenin, and Dalia Tobenstein, all from Secondary I; Christina Polichronopoulos, from Secondary III; Kevisha Williams, from Secondary IV; and Jonah Fried from Secondary V.

A Glee High School Showdown was held at Oscar Peterson Concert Hall on November 20, where 14 schools showed up to compete. The competition was a fundraising event for the Just For Kids Foundation that had an overall goal to raise \$500,000 this year, so the Montreal Children's Hospital can purchase medical equipment to support their ophthalmology, cardiology, craniofacial surgery, and NICU departments. In order to participate in the competition, each school had to raise a base minimum of \$1600. Vocal Fire raised over \$3000 as a team! Lilah Barry alone raised \$1000, winning the third highest amount that an individual raised out of all 14 schools!



Front (from left): Christina Polichronopoulos, Dalia Tobenstein, Tatiana Thevenin. Middle (from left): Ella Barakett, Lilah Barry, Maëlla Fortin, Sofia Larocci. Back (from left): Kevisha Williams, Jonah Fried.

Vocal Fire's performance consisted of a mashup of Whitney Houston's *How Will I Know* and *I Wanna Dance With Somebody*. They sang and danced beautifully and harmoniously as a group and it was an overall amazing performance.

When asked what the best part of Glee Club is, Jonah Fried said, "Vocal Fire is a group whose main focus is to spread happiness through its love of singing and dancing. With that in mind, the most amazing part of the whole Glee experience is to help others while doing what you love."

RWA
News

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

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Jan 30–Feb 3	Mid-year exams
Feb 7–8	Leadership Winter Experience
Feb 7–10	Secondary II trip: Stoneham QC
Feb 7–10	Secondary V trip: New York NY
February 13	RWA Foundation meeting @ 7 PM
Feb 16–18	Senior Robotics competition
February 17	SLA Formal Dance
February 20	Governing Board meeting @ 7 PM
Feb 20–23	Staff Appreciation Week
February 22	Salon des inventions
February 23	Science Fair
February 28	Home & School meeting @ 7:30 PM
Mar 1–8	Honour Band trip: Cuba

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!

