

# RWA



# News

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MAY 2019

## A Word From The Administration

Mr. Tony Pita, Principal

Ms. Chantal Juhasz, Vice-Principal

Mr. Steven Manstavich, Vice-Principal

Ms. Christy Tannous, Vice-Principal

Mr. Rob Aiken, Interim Vice-Principal

Welcome to the final edition of Royal West Academy News for the 2018–2019 school year. Within, you will find many interesting stories of the accomplishments and undertakings of our students and community. All are worthy of your time as they reflect the dedication of our students, staff, and parents that make this community what it is. Interestingly enough, most are not about academics, but that is what May certainly is.

### BBQ d'adieu

Les cours réguliers ont pris fin le 3 juin 2019, et le SLA a tenu son BBQ d'adieu cette même journée. Le BBQ était la première activité pour le nouveau groupe d'élèves en SLA, élu le 10 mai.

Le service de cafétéria a pris fin le 31 mai. Le 7 juin 2019 reste une journée pédagogique.

### Exams

The exam schedule and student procedures for exams are posted on the school website and should be referred to regularly to ensure every student knows when they need to be at school and what is expected of them during the examination period. As per Ministry regulations, anyone arriving more than 30 minutes late for an exam will not be permitted to write that exam, thus receiving an unjustified absence. Parents are reminded that as of June 3, 2019, students may choose to wear their physical education uniform for exams. Grad apparel for Secondary V students is also permitted.

### Salon du livre

Le Salon du livre, qui s'est tenu les 30 avril et le 1 mai, a connu son succès habituel. C'était pour les élèves une occasion parfaite d'acheter les livres faisant partie de leur « summer reading list » or simplement d'acheter des livres pour le simple plaisir de lire.

### Canada-Wide Science and Technology Fair

Three Royal West Academy students attended the Canada-Wide Science and Technology Fair on May 15–17 in Fredericton NB. Royal West Academy Secondary IV students Adelka Felcarek-Hope and Sofia McVetty, for their project *The Poly-Phaeophyceae Method*, won the silver medal from Science jeunesse Canada which included \$2000 scholarships to Western University. Hajeong Seo, also from RWA, won the same honours for her project *Fog On, Fog Off* (see page 10 for details). In an EMSB podcast, Suzanne Desautels spoke with the students and teacher Ms. Dillon. Listen to the podcast at <https://soundcloud.com/englishmtl/podcasts/emsb-podcast-2019-science-fair-winners>.

### Changements climatiques

Le 23 mai, CBC Radio a passé en entrevue Stella Eleftheriotis et Bronwyn Farkas par rapport à ce qui les motive à protéger notre environnement. Grâce à notre Environment Committee, Royal West Academy a signé le Pacte de l'école québécoise, engageant Royal West Academy à tout faire pour protéger notre environnement. Notre futur est entre de bonnes mains! Cliquez sur <https://www.cbc.ca/listen/live-radio/1-102-radio-noon-montreal/clip/15709694-teenagers-talk-about-climate-greta-thunberg-and-why-they-are-speaking-up> pour l'intégrale de l'entrevue.

### Robotics

RWA participated in several junior robotics competitions over the last three months. On March 29–30 the students competed in the East





Robotics competition at Rosemount High School, in which the Echoes placed third in the triathlon competition, the Messi Robots placed first in 2-on-2 soccer, and the A.I. and The Unknowns placed first and second, respectively, in Save Metropolis. At the Robojunior competition held at Westmount High School on April 29–30, Anonymous placed first in the Search and Rescue competition. Finally, on May 10, several members of the team tried a new competition called Zone1 in which students competed in a variety of robotic challenges; this was a brand-new experience for the team, and a great learning experience for the participants.

Royal West Academy also participated in the CRC robotics competition held at Centennial Regional High School on February 21–23. Students worked long hours over several months to build and program a robot that could pick up balls and shoot them into buckets. They also built a Monopoly-themed kiosk called the *RWA Bank*. The team was awarded first place in the division two category for Kiosk and second place in the programming competition. Congratulations to all!

### Cinco de Mayo

Le 6 mai, Royal West Academy a célébré Cinco de Mayo grâce à l'aide des élèves des groupes d'espagnol. L'auditorium était bondé d'étudiants, de nourriture, de musique et de jeux. Nous tenons à remercier Mme Almeida, M. Wilson et leurs étudiants pour cette expérience culturelle fantastique.

### Activities

Spring music concerts and drama presentations filled the month with more cultural exposure, showcasing the talents of our students. Rugby, football, track & field, and Halo made up our busy GMAA spring calendar. We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the GMAA Midget Girls Flag Football team who won the silver medal. Congratulations also go out to the Midget Boys Rugby team who took home the GMAA banner.

Our students practice and compete, rehearse and perform hard to represent us well in these activities. Coaches, directors, and teachers work equally hard to offer support to these students, so they can experience success both in the playing and performing arena as well as in the classroom. We applaud their dedication to the school mission and their profession.

### Halo sur le mont Royal

Lors de la course annuelle Halo du 16 mai, nos 21 coureurs, répartis dans quatre divisions, ont tous très bien représenté Royal West Academy. Nous nous en sommes sortis avec deux premières, deuxième, et troisième places. Merci à nos étudiants-entraîneurs en leadership.

### Track & Field

Our girls and boys track teams performed exceptionally well once again this year, winning a total of three gold, seven silver, and five bronze medals. Also, congratulations to the Bantam Girls for winning the GMAA banner. Thank you to Ms. Di Pietro for her coaching commitment this year. Ms. O'Neil must be congratulated not only for her success as a coach, but also her ongoing dedication to the sport of track & field here at RWA.

### Nouveau membre du personnel

Nous tenons à souhaiter la bienvenue à Marika Bateman, notre commis d'examen, qui se joint à notre équipe pour une quatrième année. Elle offrira également du tutorat, ainsi que du soutien aux élèves en secondaire I pendant leur période d'examens.

### RWA Home and School Parent Volunteer Painting Program

On May 25–26, the second parent volunteer painting session for the school year was successfully held.



Thanks to the parent volunteers for repainting Rooms 312, 214, and 315; the third-floor utility room and many touch-ups around the school. The volunteer program allows for the continuous improvement of our school while freeing up school funds that would have been otherwise allocated for the repainting. A very special mention to Mr. Mendelson, RWA Home and School Paint Committee co-organizer. At the last paint session, Mr. Mendelson—Michael—was presented with a plaque by Mr. Manstavich for his outstanding efforts over the last seven school years (2012–2019). Michael's youngest will be graduating this year and so will he from this great program. In fact, over the last seven years, Michael has greatly expanded the scope of the program to not only include classrooms, but corridors, staff room, utility rooms, and the auditorium. On behalf of the entire RWA community, Michael, a heartfelt thank you!

### Time to say goodbye

We will soon be saying goodbye to all our Secondary V students, but in some cases to families that have been members of our community for over a decade. This could be sad, but as we walk the hallways, covered with murals and mosaics, we can see and feel their legacy and influence all around us. Thank you for all your contributions to our school community.

We would also like to take this opportunity to say goodbye and thank you to Mr. Pita for all his years serving Royal West Academy. In the early 2000s, Mr. Pita started as a vice-principal at RWA, and later came back to serve as principal. As of July 1, 2019,

Mr. Pita and his wife will be taking a well-deserved sabbatical year. At their last meeting, the RWA Governing Board took the opportunity to honour Mr. Pita by presenting him with a plaque. Regional director Ms. Nickoletopoulos and school commissioner Mr. Lalla were also present (*see page 17 for details*).

Ms. Vaudry is the newly appointed principal of Royal West Academy for the 2019–2020 school year. Ms. Vaudry is an experienced and dedicated administrator. Presently, Ms. Vaudry is serving as principal of John Grant High School and Links School. Previously, Ms. Vaudry served as principal of James Lyng High School and as vice-principal of Vincent Massey Collegiate. Welcome aboard Ms. Vaudry!

Nous vous souhaitons à tous et à toutes un merveilleux été!

## SHARING THE STAGE WITH YOU.

By Mr. Mitchell White, RWAF President

Can it be? Another school year has come and gone and classes are wrapping up. Another group of amazing students are graduating from Royal West Academy. Congrats to the Class of 2019!

If you have a child graduating this spring, why not celebrate his or her achievement by buying a chair in your grad's name for the planned performing arts centre? This gift leaves a lasting legacy in your grad's name and a place that they will always be welcome to sit in whenever they choose to return.

Buying a Grad Chair in your grad's name is simple and quickly done online. Just visit us at

<http://rwaf.ca/shop/donations/chair/>.

The first chair is \$250—if you would like to purchase an additional chair for another student in your family at the same time, the cost is just \$100 for each additional chair.

In other Foundation news, we were delighted to host a team of volunteers from the RBC branch on Westminster this month for a day of prepping the

school garden for spring planting. Under the direction of Mme Bourdeau, the RBC team varnished the pergolas that support the plants the students are growing. The RBC also supported RWA with a generous \$1000 donation to the Foundation. A big thanks to branch manager Velina Chakarova and to Mme Bourdeau for leading the day's activities.

This month I also attended a Montreal West city council meeting as well as the RWA Governing Board meeting—they were both very receptive to the idea of helping out the Foundation in the coming year. This is a promising start, and I will be following up with more details in the fall.

As the school year draws to a close, I would like to thank my fellow Foundation directors and members for an incredibly successful year. This year marked a new start for the Foundation with many new members getting involved and taking action to help the Foundation achieve its goals. In particular, I want to thank secretary Ian Swain; treasurer Robert Cerminara; directors Andre Asch, Lori Chazonoff, Kim Darlington, Anila Erindi, Massimo Fiore, Pat Nolan, Jimmy Roussos, Rhonda Rudick, Carol Shemie, and Tom Spiegler; and members Paul Broomberg, Ken Elman, Nijad Dehdah, Sarah Goblot, Joe Lalla, Patrick Marcovecchio, Michael Mendelson, Lindsay McLeod, Marc Mintzberg, Eric Moreau, Laurie Rossitto-Abrams, Randy Schwartz, Emilio Travisano, Jasmin Uhthoff, and Esterina Vescio.

None of our efforts would be successful without the collaboration and support of the school administration, particularly Mr. Pita, Ms. Juhasz, Mr. Manstavich, and Ms. Tannous. I can personally say it has been a pleasure working with all of you on the Foundation this year.

On behalf of all of us at the Foundation, I wish you all the best for a fun and relaxing summer with lots of sun, warm weather, and great memories. We are already planning some exciting activities for the fall, so please stay tuned! If you'd like to get involved, it's not too late to join us for our final meeting of this school year on June 10, 2019 at 7 PM in the Teachers Lounge on the 2nd Floor. This will be a Potluck event so come spoil yourself as we will feed you well while we share with you all of the excitement that the Foundation has in store for the school in 2019–2020. Access is via the

Ainslie 'Boys door' entrance. If you want to help but can't make the meeting, just send me an email and we will have plenty of other meetings to attend in the fall as the new school year starts.

Happy summer everyone!

## A Trip To Remember

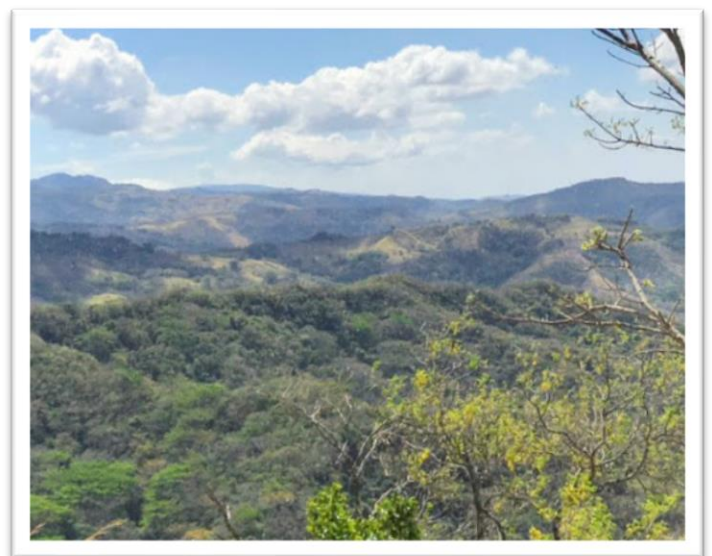
By Cassidy Comeau



When asked to describe my trip to Costa Rica in one word, the word that best fits it would be: unforgettable. When I signed up to go to on the trip, I knew it would be an amazing experience, but I didn't expect to test my limits, make new friends, and learn so much about an unknown country—all in nine days. The opportunity to immerse myself in a new and foreign culture and push my boundaries really helped me change my perspectives and outlooks. This trip allowed me to appreciate the world in a different way.

Meghan Knott, a student that went on the trip, described it as undeniably memorable, "The Costa Rica trip was truly an amazing experience. Everyone on the trip bonded and we became like one big family. Costa Rica is in my opinion the best trip that the school offers and I would encourage everyone to take part as it was the experience and trip of a lifetime."

The trip started off on a strong note when we were given the opportunity to visit a local school. This was a life-changing experience because we were able to meet





and interact with young Costa Rican kids. We were greeted at our bus and each introduced to a student. They then performed many dances for us and sang the Costa Rican national anthem. We played soccer and other games with the kids and did some volunteer work for the school to help them repair their desks. Our group brought several donations to the school, such as markers, pencils, and paper, and were pleased to hear that each child got to go home with plenty of new school supplies. This was one of the top moments for me because it was so special to be able to interact with kids who lived completely different lives than we do, and speak to them in Spanish which we had practiced throughout the year.

The best moments are hard to narrow down. However, it seems as though a lot of my favourite parts were unexpected. One night, the teachers spontaneously offered to add an extra activity. They told us that we would have a chance to go into the forest to see animals in their nocturnal state. While some decided to stay back, the majority of us grabbed our flashlights and went to see what we could find. The tour guide had us run silently around the forest and we spotted animals

ranging from a neon green snake to a sloth. We followed the tour guide as he searched and pointed out porcupines, sloths, toucans, coatis, tarantulas, scorpions, kinkajous, and quetzals.

A moment where I pushed my limits would be when we crossed several suspension bridges in the tropical forests. At first, this was stressful for me as I am scared of heights, and we were going to be walking on a rocky bridge thousands of meters above the ground. Nevertheless, I persevered and really enjoyed myself. By the end, I was able to cross each bridge and successfully faced one of my fears.

Spontaneous exciting adventures, immersion in a new and unknown place, learning about new cultures, and pushing my limits; this trip taught me a lot about how an experience like this can transform someone's outlook on life and change their perceptions. This trip showed me how much I love travelling and inspired me to begin to learn about other cultures. This opportunity allowed me to discover a lot about myself and I now know that I aspire to travel around the world.

## What India Exchange Has Brought To My Life

By Luka Suarez Bolduc



I had an incredible experience partaking in the India Exchange program and I want to let Royal West Academy know everything about it.

First off, don't go into this thinking that it's a regular school trip. You don't just pay money and go. We had to do a lot of fundraising two years in advance to pay for some of the expenses on the trip. For example, we spent a few of our weekends bagging in grocery stores and selling chocolate. But in the end it was worth it. You feel so proud after a buildup of two years with all of the work and effort put into this trip.

Before the Indian billets came to Montreal, we got their contact information. That gave us some time to get to know them a bit. The Indian billets first came to Montreal in the summer of 2018 and they spent a total amount of ten days here. We got to know them and spend time with them. We then went to India during the month of February for around two and half weeks. I





will be focusing about my experience of when the billets came here.

At first, I was a little nervous. I had been talking to Parth (my Indian billet) through social media but I still hadn't met him in real life. The first day was a bit awkward. He didn't speak much and seemed shy, although I didn't let that throw me off. Then, throughout the ten days we got to know each other and became good friends. Most of the activities we had done were as a group. So we got to bond with the other students' billets as well. With the group we went to visit the Old Port, the Olympic Park, Ottawa, and much more.

We also had free days without the group. I personally liked the free days more because I got to show my billet what I thought was interesting about Montreal. For example, we went to La Ronde, I took him out to try poutine, I showed him Mount Royal, and we hung out with my friends. I found it very interesting to share the Canadian culture/society with my billet. To them it's like entering a new world because of all the differences. For example, he finds it funny that the laws about driving are very strict here. Back in India they don't wear seatbelts and pedestrians aren't the priority. It's just

amazing to see the look on their face when they realize how diverse our society is. In Canada there are people from all around the world.

The program also gave me the opportunity to build new friendships with the younger grade and people from my grade. I never would have talked to these people if it weren't for India exchange. I now have a connection with someone that lives halfway across the world along with somebody that lives just five minutes away. Whenever I want to go to India or he wants to come to Montreal we'll both have somewhere to stay.

Being involved in the India exchange allowed me to meet new people of different cultures. I have created amazing friendships. I got to show a kid from India the beautiful city of Montreal. I had an amazing and insightful experience during those ten days and I couldn't wait until I reunited with my new friends in nine months. I will forever cherish this program through my life and I highly recommend it to anybody that is considering whether or not they should join.



# The Experience That Changed My Life

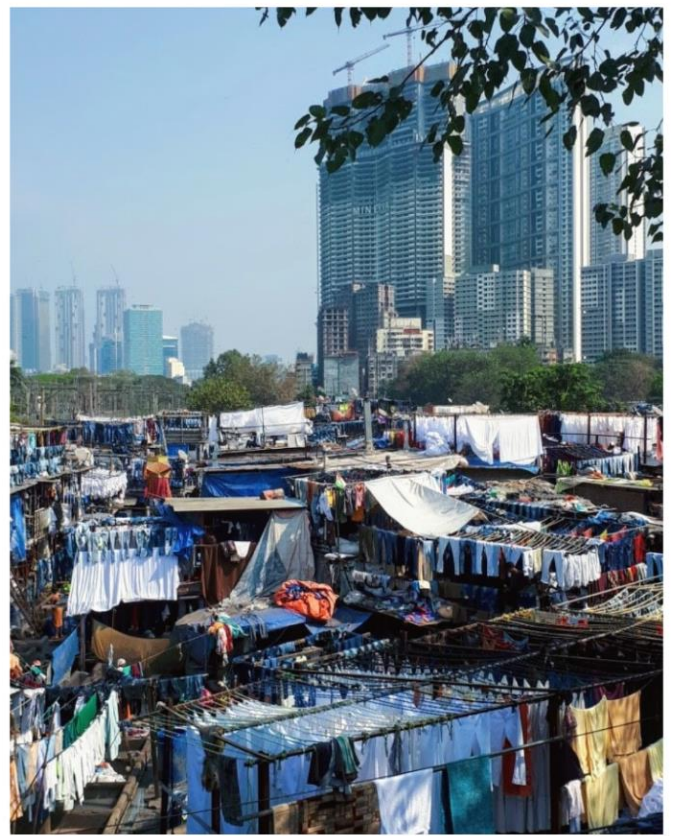
By Stephanie Dale



Something that I hold very close to my heart that I have experienced because of Royal West Academy's extracurriculars is the India exchange. This program has touched me in a way that I feel I cannot explain in my own words, but I will do my very best to try. The trip has changed me, and has inspired me to do good in this world and make deep connections with the people around me.

India exchange is an exchange of Canadian and Indian students where each get to go live with a host family for a little more than a week. When I first heard that this exchange was taking place, I automatically knew I had to sign up. I went through the process, wrote my essay, and expressed the reasons why I wanted to partake in this exchange so badly and I was lucky to say I got selected. However, the preparation for this exchange was not a piece of cake. To raise money as a group, we volunteered to bag at several supermarkets for hours on the weekend; and individually, we came up with ways such as finding sponsors on our own so that we didn't just ask our parents for money. We also did research on the country, their culture, and traditions before visiting. In June of 2018, each person on the Canadian side of the exchange hosted the Indian student they were going to stay with in February 2019. In February of 2019, we went to live with the Indian student and their families for eight days and toured New Delhi with them. However, I want to focus more on our side trip for this article.

After living with our hosts for eight days, we went on a road trip around the North West of India for around nine days. After leaving New Delhi, we went straight to Sawai Madhapur, then to Jaipur, Khimsar, and Jodhpur. From Jodhpur we flew to Mumbai where we ended our travels. There were many differences between living with an upper middle-class family in the heart of the authentic city of New Delhi and constantly hopping from city to city in the North West of India on a bus full of 24 students and four chaperones, stopping in different hotels every night, and meeting new people along the way.



While staying in New Delhi, we barely had time to meet new people, because we were on a tight schedule and the city was incredibly chaotic and busy. Of course, we were able to make connections with the host's families, but nothing can compare to the people we encountered on our side trip. No matter where we were on the road trip or who we were with, people were friendly. Not only friendly, but warm and welcoming. We were really able to observe that in the less civilized parts of India, the communities were caring towards others and amongst themselves. They helped us and helped each other.

During this part of the exchange, our group really had the chance to bond, learn, and grow together. After all, we were on a bus together for a good majority of the road trip and we were constantly around each other throughout the trip in general. When someone felt a little homesick, we did our best to comfort them. When someone was happy, or overwhelmed, we shared the joy all together. At the beginning of the trip, our group wasn't very close, seeing as half of us were in Secondary III and half of us were in Secondary IV. However, after spending hours on end around each





other, being there for each other through our ups and downs, and through us discovering and learning new things about this beautifully chaotic country and ourselves, we were a small family by the time we came back to Montreal.

Even after a few months of returning home, we're still a tight group of friends and we always give each other that knowing smile when we pass each other in the hallways, and remind each other how beautiful our experience was. I sincerely think that deep down we all realize how special this trip and learning experience was for us, even though we don't always think about it. I also know that we have all learned so much during this experience whether it be about the world, a society, the country we visited, the circumstances they live in, each other, or even ourselves.

My friend Chloe Olszeski wrote this after coming back from the trip: "This trip has been an incredible experience that I will carry with me throughout my entire life. I have learned so much about India and its rich culture, but also about all the people I met and got to know on this exchange whether it be the students from India, their families, my own peers, or kind people I met on the street. I cannot thank you enough for making this trip possible and a success in every way."

I myself know that this trip has pushed me to evaluate myself and better myself as a person and others around me. It has also inspired me to discover and explore the rest of the world and what it holds.

## Cuba: An Experience Of A Lifetime

By Malcolm MacInnis



Many people throughout history have lived their lives in the same corner of the world without

seeing much beyond their town or village. Even nowadays, living in a first world country in the 21st century, so many of us are hesitant to do anything that involves a little risk-taking, and many people don't start travelling until much later in life. So with that in mind, you could imagine that I'd jump at the chance to get on a plane to experience the vibrant colourful country of Cuba. This year, the Royal West Academy Honour Band went on a music exchange trip to Cuba where we got to see a different culture, experience a different climate (which some of us handled a little better than others), and most of all embrace a different style of music.

When I initially landed in Varadero and walked off the plane, I was immediately hit in the face with a blast of hot air and knew right then and there that this was going to be a different experience. What honestly made the Cuba trip stand out was the fact that it was a very big change of pace; everyone in Cuba was very friendly and seemed a lot more active. When we met the Cuban students at various music schools and high schools across Havana and Cienfuegos, we were very shocked at how they moved, their energy was so intense and in the moment—for those of us that weren't up for it or naturally active, we were almost knocked over when they started dancing after musical performances. Even when they were playing they were dancing!

This trip was not only a cultural exchange but also a musical one. A specific contrast that I noticed between the Cuban Mambo music and the music that we played was the intensity. We had a wide variety of music in our arsenal from *Three Folk Miniatures*, a set of French Canadian songs with three contrasting movements, to *Conquista*, a Spanish march. Nevertheless, what I noticed especially is that they loved the faster paced songs. For example, when we played *Mambo Greats*, a collection of Mambo songs, the Cuban students got so into it and soon enough, the whole room was singing and dancing. It was incredible! Unfortunately for me being one of the less coordinated people, all this -dancing made me feel a little self conscious at first, but by the end of it, I felt a lot more confident in my ability to be spontaneous. Thinking on your feet was something you had to do in Cuba and although the local boys and girls were still entertained by our stumbling, soon enough I really felt like I had mastered the art of dancing!





people, it is, without a doubt, the combination of good music, good food, and a dip in the ocean on a hot day.

## Spring Ski Trip

By Audrey Zoso

One very cold Saturday morning, the Royal West Academy students hit the road with their skis and snowboards and no idea what they were getting into. Fully equipped to hit the slopes up in Beaupré QC's Mont-Sainte-Anne at 2162 ft. in the clouds.

There was very unpredictable weather so this trip was made a little more interesting as we would either be skiing in winds and freezing weather or peaceful snowing in a somewhat warm forecast. But either way we can always manage to make it a yearly tradition well-carried out. Regardless of the warmth surprisingly hitting us in March, we were able to find enough snow to ski our day away while making sure we didn't slide down any black diamonds accidentally.

The first day consisted of mellow day skiing on light coats of snow followed by a little night skiing through the breezy night air of Sainte-Anne. Being overwhelmed by the day-long skiing, we all shared homemade spaghetti in our shared cabins and stayed up watching scary movies instead of playing hockey outside with the rest of the ski trip crew. Then, excited for the next day,

My absolute favourite part of the trip, aside from the music, was when we went to a few market places. Cuban vendors didn't have a fixed price on a lot of their goods, especially at many of the booths where they sold items like wooden cars, fans, Che Guevara t-shirts, and different instruments. Therefore, every time we wanted to purchase an item, we would have to bargain with the vendor. This is what made us really feel like we earned our souvenirs; the feeling of getting a t-shirt for 7 CUCs instead of 10 and getting a pair of claves thrown in made us feel like one of the locals.

I think what makes us all look back on this amazing opportunity with such fond memories was the bonds we created through music. What this trip really taught me was that if there's one thing that really unites



we all went to sleep that night exhausted in our little cabins.

Sunday morning began in a long bus ride to Le Massif. Most of us were terrified of the mountain's great heights and its weather forecast of extreme winds, but at least the pile of snacks we'd been accumulating along the trip (provided by daily trips to the dépanneur) came into good use finally. This day was marked to be a scary yet legendary experience for us all as we went down the one and only mount adjacent to the Saint Lawrence River. Skiing down facing the Saint Lawrence was one irreplaceable experience. The top of the mount was quite frosty but it just made it all the better as we then had a full 15 minutes of sightseeing as we slid down the steep mountain. The gondola up was just as breathtaking as well. We also had some great opportunities to interact with fellow skiers from the great north and the well-known mountains of Colorado.

Following this incredible ski we all took a trip back and settled for a deluxe supper at the nearby sugar shack. Eggs, pancakes, sausages, and ham were served topped with homemade maple syrup just as they started serving chilled maple syrup taffy on snow right by a shack filled with old tools used to make maple syrup throughout history.

We finished off our cozy visit with a classic folk dance after supper, personally the highlight of my trip. We made our way back to the cabins following the sugar shack with our stomachs full of syrup, finishing off the ski trip with a taste of the Canadian culture.

I, for one, am so happy to have discovered one of Royal West Academy's most enjoyable trips and for this reason I encourage all Secondary IV and V students to not miss out as well!

## The Most Ambitious Agriculture Method

By Michelle Dubois

Every year, there are loads of creative projects displayed at the science fair. Some have the potential to turn into something great—these projects get chosen to go to regionals, and some even make it to provincials and nationals. One student in particular, Hajeong Seo, had a project that not only made it to all three, but also



won awards at each fair. At the regional fair she won greatest distinction and a Concordia scholarship. Then she moved on to the provincials where she won a bronze medal and another Concordia scholarship. She even made it to nationals where she won a silver medal.

I asked her a few questions about her project, starting with what the project was. She said that the goal of her project was to make a convenient and efficient fogponics system. If, like me, you have no clue what a fogponics system is, Hajeong explained it as a form of agriculture that doesn't require soil, instead using fog particles to water and feed the plants. It's considered the most effective way of agriculture but Hajeong noticed it hasn't been developed very well. She developed it herself by modifying and redesigning its components. She did this based on trials using different greens and mathematical analysis of humidity and temperature changes in the system.

I also asked her about future plans for her project and she said that there are multiple ways her project could go. There's the possibility of making it large-scale or creating a completely automated system, but studying

fogponics also gave Hajeong a whole other idea: maybe plants could get “water” from sources that aren’t actually water. She may be able to develop a form of agriculture that doesn’t actually use water.

Hajeong’s project is extremely ambitious and really has the potential to make a huge difference in the world of agriculture, and this is only a taste of the amazing projects that can be found in the Royal West Academy Science Fair!

## A Memorable Leadership Experience

By Brandon Ciccarello

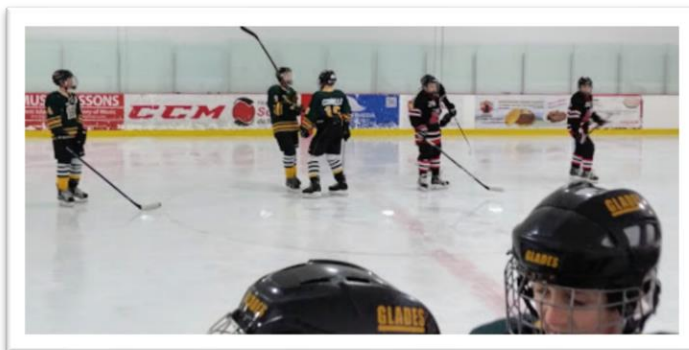


Every year the Secondary IV leadership classes are tasked with the job of running an event or organizing a sports team with the goal of strengthening all aspects of their leadership skills. These students are thrust into a leadership role (some of them with zero prior experience) and must complete the task to the best of their abilities.

I am one of these lucky students and for my *Beyond the Classroom* project, I decided to coach a 3-on-3 ice hockey team filled with a bunch of my closest friends. I decided to take on this task because I thought that it would be a fun experience, and why wouldn’t I want to be with my friends while I did a project? At first it seemed like a marvellous idea.

The first game on April 2 was approaching extremely fast, all the players were excited to get back on the ice after our regular season had ended. I had sent out messages to make sure the players knew what time to be at arena for and bought water bottles for team. Then the time came, we had a full roster, and I was feeling confident as a coach. I filled the bottles and we played our game. Our first game was without a doubt a success as we played hard and ended up winning 10–8 to a very strong team—but most of all we had fun doing it.

But as the second game started getting closer, I noticed that I had only gotten “maybes” from a handful of the players regarding attendance. I blew this off because the last game had gone so well, but when I showed up at the arena I had just three skaters and a goalie—this was a big problem because that meant the players would have to stay on the ice for the entirety of the



game. By the third period everybody was exhausted, so we blew our lead and lost a game that we should have easily won.

Despite calling everybody before each game and even once offering pizza to the players that showed, I was unable to spark any interest in the team, so the rest of the season played out almost identically to the second game: we were always down players and we only won one other game throughout the season.

Although this experience might seem like it was a total waste of time, I actually learned quite a bit of valuable life and coaching lessons, one being that although it’s fun to hangout with your friends, being put in a leadership role above them usually doesn’t end well because it’s hard to gain their respect.

## Forced Into Greatness

By Kevin Adams



About halfway through Secondary II, during the 2016–2017 school year, I joined Bardolators. It wasn’t so much a choice as the director of the musical in which I was already a part of, advised me to join—so I did. To be honest, I really didn’t want to join, since I had no real interest in joining a group of “geeks” who seemingly just memorized and recited different works of Shakespeare. Back then, I was



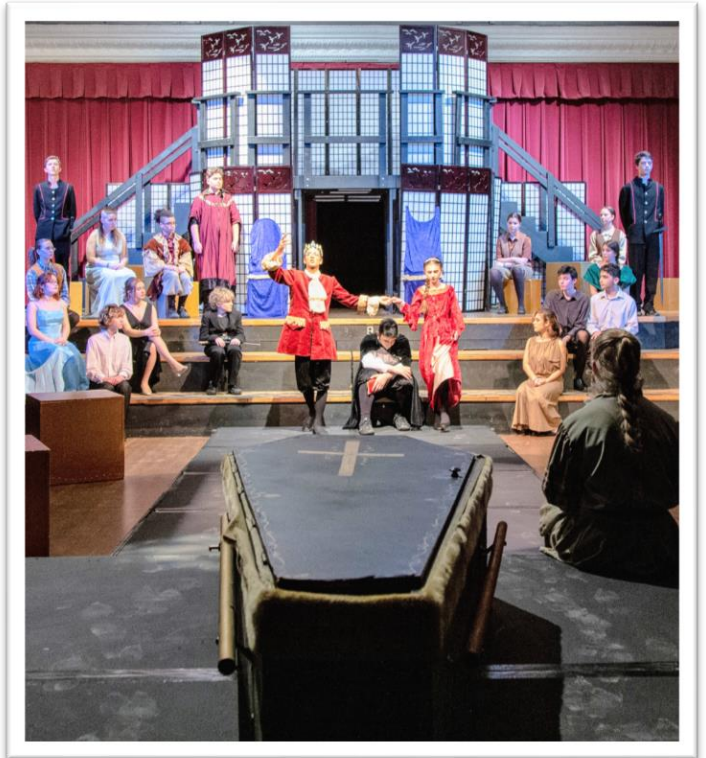
so torn about joining or not, that on the day that we were supposed to receive our scripts for the Spring play, I missed the meeting!

Luckily after that came the weekly after-school meetings on Wednesdays, where I was able to meet and mingle with all those who had already joined. Contrary to what I thought would be the case, most of them were super nice and inviting. They seemed to be trying to get me to open up and I didn't know why.

Now that I've been in Bards for a few years, I understand why we need to have this "open" behaviour towards newcomers. Being in Bards and having to memorize dozens, hundreds, and sometimes thousands of lines is extremely stressful. It requires us to be comfortable with each other in order to make it clear that if someone needs help, they can just ask for it. I've seen even the busiest of Bards stop what they were doing when someone else needed help, which I find to be really awesome.

When we finally got near the last play of the school year, things surprisingly felt less stressful. As show week drew closer, we got more and more excited. Our lines were all memorized, our costumes were prepared, and we were more than ready—until show week actually started. All my previously gone stress came flying back, and I felt like I was going to break down. I kept asking myself, "What if I forget my lines?" and "What if I miss a queue?" But after venting to some older members, I was told to relax, and that it would be fine if I made mistakes so long as I caught myself well enough. They were more than right.

The performance itself couldn't have been more different than the moments before it, and it became stress-free after my first couple lines. It felt more like a weird party than anything else, all my worries slipped away, and I realized something that I hadn't been aware of before: I loved Bards. I loved the idea of performing in old Shakespearean English. I loved the costumes and the decorations. I loved everything about it. Sometimes I think back and wonder what would have happened if I hadn't joined Bards, and the thought of that makes me sad. I've made so many friends by joining Bards, and it doesn't feel right thinking about how things would be without them.



I can say without a doubt that the Bards have been something extremely special to me, no matter how tough some of our plays have been. When you join a group like this one, it isn't a challenge to make good friends since everyone is going through the exact same thing, and I'm proud to say that I could never regret joining. Just the thought of graduation makes me sad and reminds me that I only have one more year to go of meeting new people like myself, and missing the ones that graduated already.

## Paying It Forward

By Maxine Noik

During my time at Royal West Academy, I have been fortunate enough to partake in our school's famous Dance Show. The show is completely student-run and I have performed in the show since Secondary I. This extracurricular activity goes from the beginning of September to the end of March. Dance show has helped me integrate into the student body with ease and gave me the opportunity to make new friends. As I wanted to do as much as I can for the show, I applied to be an executive of the show for Secondary IV and V. Luckily, I was selected to be one of six executives of the show, which is something I have dreamed of for as long as I've been at this school. As an executive, you perform in the

show but you are also responsible for organizing the show and doing all the behind-the-scenes work.

One of the most important decisions made by the executives is the theme of the show. In between every scene, there are short video clips that make up a story, which is included with the goal of entertaining the audience. The theme also inspires the name of the show. This year, we decided to change up the theme a bit. Usually, the themes are used as diversion in between scenes. They also give the dancers time to prepare for their next performance. This year we wanted our videos to deliver a meaningful and impactful message to the public; not just an amusing storyline. We wanted our audience to see how we, as teenagers, perceive life and what we feel on a daily basis.

Every year, our dance show raises a significant amount of money for an organization called Dans la Rue. Dans la Rue is based in Montreal and helps homeless teens get access to food and shelter. This has always been our organization of choice, since we can empathize with these teens and we want them to have the same opportunities as we have. Raising money for Dans la Rue is what inspired the changes that needed to be made concerning the content of our videos. We realized how important we are, as teenagers, to society. Many adults think we are a nuisance, therefore we wanted to prove our worth. Our goal was to show how we really feel and how we view the world differently than everyone else.

Considering the show is divided into two halves, the videos in the first half showed the cast speaking about their hobbies and passions as well as many other topics pertaining to their lives as teenagers. The videos in the second half focused on the dancers discussing how they would feel if their life was different, resembling the lives of the teenagers seeking help from Dans la Rue. This allowed the audience to see the contrast between their lives and the lives of homeless people, more specifically homeless teenagers. It also allowed the audience to reflect on how privileged they are to live a comfortable life with a home, enough food to sustain them, and a good education.



Macey Zemel, one of my co-executives, said, “We want people to understand that everyone has their own story, everyone comes from a different background, and that no one should be defined or set back based off what they have or don’t have.”

Making these videos was a great learning experience for me as I was able to see how fortunate our school community is to be able to receive an amazing education. In my opinion, Dance Show has much more to offer than improving one’s dance skills and putting on a show. Dance show has not only taught me social skills, but it has also taught me to empathize for those who are less fortunate and to give back to our society.

Although I am slightly biased considering I was an executive this year, I think this was the best dance show Royal West Academy has put on in the past four years that I have been in the show, and I am honoured to have contributed to it.

## Art Show

By Ella Beccherini

At the end of each school year in May, all Royal West Academy students in the Visual Arts Department have the chance to put their art on display. This incredible





experience is called the Royal West Art Vernissage. I've personally had the opportunity to be a part of this show for the past three years, and year after year it gets better and better. The show is mainly organized by our two wonderful art teachers, Ms. Leech-Pépin and Ms. Suarez, but a lot of it is actually run by the students. Whether we are staying after school to set up for the show, acting as guides to visitors during the show, or coming in later to clean up, we really put in a lot of effort to make sure the show can be as amazing as it always is.

For the art show to go as well as it does every year, it takes weeks of preparation. Recently, my classmates and I not only set up and prepared for the show in class, but we also stayed after school for the two days leading up to it. We framed projects, hung them up all around the first floor of the school, and set up tables where we placed more 3-dimensional projects. I honestly really enjoy the setting up process because I get to appreciate all of the amazing projects that my peers have created. The creativity and uniqueness that go into a lot of these pieces are truly mind blowing. While setting up, we really try to make the entire first floor of the school into an unrecognizable space where the visitors can observe

and admire the impressive pieces that RWA students have created throughout the school year.

Of course, all of these preparations are finally worth it when it comes to the night of the show. This year, the show took place at 5 PM–8 PM and each student was required to stay for a two-hour timeslot between those two times. My friends and I all went to the show from 6 PM–8 PM so we could come back with our families to show them around. Last year I invited my grandparents, and my grandma loved it so much that she asked to come back this year. When I asked her what she thought of the show she said, "I came here last year not knowing what it was going to be about, but was so pleasantly surprised by the amazing show and all the pieces in it. Incredibly enough, this year's show was somehow even better than the last." It really meant a lot to know that my grandma truly valued all the hard work that each and every one of us put into our art and the show.

The art show was filled with so many amazing pieces this year. The most prominent pieces of art that the show is always filled with are the students' ATCs, also known as Artist Trading Cards. Each student taking an

art class is responsible for making three sets of 4 cards over the span of the school year, so by the end, there are well over 700 cards. The cards covered many walls in the art show this year, and they were so beautiful and interesting to look at. They are generally one of the most popular pieces to look at because each one of them is so different from the rest. You can really see each student's self expression through them. Other pieces in the art show this year included, but were not limited to, the Secondary II's chalk pastel pieces, the Secondary III's animal portraits, and the Secondary IV and V's coral projects.

The Art Show was a definite triumph this year! All the work that the students and staff put into making it as successful as it was really paid off. The night was a wonderful experience as it always is. Additionally, not only did we get great feedback from the visitors, we also managed to raise over \$400 for next year's art trip. Overall, it was such a positive experience, and I'm so happy that I get the chance to be a part of it every year.

## Coaching Bantam Boys Basketball

By Cassandra Bélanger



An interview with Zuhayr

Mahmood about coaching the Royal West Academy Bantam Boys basketball team.

Zuhayr Mahmood, a Secondary V student, voluntarily took it upon himself to coach the Bantam Boys basketball team at our school. He has a very well-known passion for basketball in which he puts many hours aside every week to nourish. As a graduating student, Zuhayr had the opportunity to pass on his passion and knowledge to the young boys just beginning their high school experience who were looking for a sports team to join. I decided to interview Zuhayr to get the inside scoop about his basketball journey on the court and behind the bench.

Zuhayr Mahmood has been playing basketball since he was only six years old, but he only actually began liking the sport in Secondary I, so at 13 years old. This means that he has been playing for a total of ten years now. He currently plays for two teams: the West Island Lakers Basketball Association (WILBA) and, of course, the



Juvenile Boys Wildcats. He originally did not plan on coaching the Bantam team. However, when a physical education teacher at our school told him that they needed a coach or else there would not be a team, he knew that he had to step in to give all the Secondary I students a chance to get immersed in the sport, even if it interfered with his own basketball career.

Zuhayr also told me a bit about practices and games. He said that he wanted the team to play basketball around 2–3 times a week whether it be a practice or a game. During practices, he liked to use drills that focused on the team's weaknesses and replicated game scenarios. He usually had a goal that he wanted to reach in each practice, for example, 100 layups in 2.5 minutes. Zuhayr has been playing for a quite a bit of time so he stated that while he has various drills in mind, he occasionally created his own if he wanted to work on something specific.

This isn't Zuhayr's first year coaching as he worked with a team last year as well. I had the opportunity to coach alongside him last year and I can say that I have personally seen a change in his coaching style and method, such as listening to his players to get their input and considering their suggestions during the game.

A few words from Zuhayr on sportsmanship and enthusiasm are, "The most important thing I tell my team is to stay as a team on the court. If one person triumphs, we all triumph. If one team member fails, we



all fail and to always have that hustle, passion, and desire in their hearts to win.” He also revealed that confidence is a major key to success in the sport and that he does all he can to keep the boys’ confidence at a peak throughout each season. The team unfortunately did not end this past season with a win. Nevertheless Zuhayr Mahmood says that what he will miss the most about the experience is watching each player improve and grow as basketball players. Although they didn’t pull out a win, he feels as though coaching has definitely won him some experience.

## Boys Rugby

By Nicolo Marsala



The 2019 Juvenile Boys rugby season was short but hard fought. Even though the beginning was slow, the team never gave up. Having won one out of their four games, the team put up a fight. From the beginning, the practices in early April were a slow start. The lingering thought of being a primarily Secondary IV team going up against older teams was making some guys question themselves. Although, when the practices started happening outside, the team started to get back into the zone. Practices were intense and we were getting ready for our first game against Collège Jean-de-Brébeuf.

In that game, we had a few first-time players going on the field and it was both as exciting for them as it was scary. We also had players trying new positions that they’ve never played before. In the end the game was a victory and the team rejoiced. Sadly, that was the last game that they’d win that season.

The next game against Collège Sainte-Anne didn’t go as well. The opposing team overpowered our own. That game ended with Royal West Academy having three injured players, all three being out for the rest of the season.

A devastating loss did not discourage them though. The team continued to practice and went on to play against Loyola High School. This game also ended as a loss for Royal West Academy, but the team still didn’t stop there, the last game was still to come.

This last game has been hyped up since the beginning of the season. A final game against Selwyn House School

at Molson Stadium. The majority of our team has been together for the past three years, so this game was our shot at redemption. Once again, Royal West Academy didn’t win this game.

The season ended on a low note, but the team will not give up. Next year, we’ll come back even stronger. These losses just showed us what we need to fix for next season. The new players this year will have improved their skills and we’ve now familiarized ourselves with Rugby 15s. We won’t have to worry about playing against older teams, and our team will be the product of four years of training and team chemistry. The 2020 RWA Juvenile Boys rugby team will be better than any other year we’ve played and that’s certain. The next season is waiting and so are we. We’re coming for that banner next year, and we’re going to get it!

## Mandala Club

By Cassidy Gonzalez

### A Great and Easy Way to Destress

In school, we find ourselves with rare moments to take a break away from our work. Sometimes our stress and assignments even spill into one of our only breaks: lunch time. Mandala club offers a solution as a nice way to escape from the unnecessary stress and chaos of school life—the club’s goal is to provide a peaceful place to destress and wind down while drawing or colouring mandalas. You can sign up for Mandala Club at the beginning of any term to spend 50 minutes a week doing mandalas at lunch.

Ms. Di Pietro and Ms. Leech-Pépin do an amazing job of creating a calming environment, perfect for anyone looking to take it easy. They have a selection of colouring pages to choose from, ranging from small to large and from simple to very elaborate. Students from all grades come to mandala to enjoy the benefits of slowing down. I love this ECA since it doesn’t require much effort or additional worries—participating is as simple and easy as showing up and sitting down to colour with your friends. They’ll usually have a music playlist going on in the background making for a light-hearted environment, and all in all it’s an enjoyable way to spend your lunch period.



and you can find the signup sheets just outside Room 225.

## The Governing Board Report

By Ms. Fotini Markopoulos & Ms. Anne Monereau

Our last 2018–2019 Governing Board meeting was held on May 30. As usual, quorum was met and another productive meeting took place. The following were the highlights:

- The Royal West Academy Foundation (RWAF) president, Mr. Mitchell White, was our invited guest and gave us an update on their events, fundraisers, and future goals. Thank you, Mr. White, for attending our meeting!
- Presented and adopted were the 2019–2020 Partial School Budget, Governing Board End-Of-Year Financial Report and the 2018–2019 Governing Board Annual Report.
- The 2019–2020 Safe School Action Plan was also presented and approved.
- The Royal West Academy Volunteer Reception will be held on June 17, 2019.

### Special recognition

As you are all aware, in the month of April, Mr. Pita announced that he and his wife will be taking a sabbatical year beginning July 1, 2019.

Mr. Pita's journey at Royal West Academy began in 2006, serving the entire Royal West Academy community with outstanding leadership skills and showing his dedication and commitment to all stakeholders, students, staff, and parents. It is without a doubt that he has been an asset to the Royal West Academy community and he will be greatly missed!

On behalf of the Royal West Academy community, the 2018–2019 RWA Governing Board presented Mr. Pita with a plaque, in recognition of his outstanding leadership skills and his dedication to the RWA community.

Our regional director, Mrs. Pela Nickoletopoulos, made a special guest appearance, thanking Mr. Pita on behalf of senior management, for his dedication, hard work, commitment, and most importantly, always wanting



For students who struggle to get all their credits or for those looking for an easy-going ECA, Mandala Club is perfect for you. In seven sessions, you can complete a cultural credit while making time for yourself to be more mindful. Mandala Club was an activity of choice for my friends and I since our very first year at Royal West Academy. From Secondary I to II, signup was in high demand and the only way to assure your spot in the limited space was to jump on it. However, my friends and I have become so accustomed to the inviting atmosphere of Room 113 that we found ourselves accidentally enrolled in Mandala Club for yet another year—two years in a row. We obviously had no complaints since this ECA is one we genuinely enjoy and find beneficial to our sometimes-overwhelming days. I personally take this time to step back from whatever is going on academically, to spend time with my friends, free from homework and tests.

We are finishing our fourth year now and I really recommend Mandala Club as an effortless and relaxing credit. Signup is usually announced in the Daily Bulletin



what's best for the students of Royal West Academy. Her surprise guest appearance was extremely appreciated and we thank her for taking the time to attend our meeting.

We are confident that Mr. Pita will be an asset to whichever school community he will serve in the future. His dedication, commitment, outstanding leadership skills, and expertise will leave life-affirming legacies in the lives he touches.

Thank you, Mr. Pita, for making a difference at Royal West Academy!

On behalf of the 2018–2019 Royal West Academy Governing Board, we wish the Royal West Academy community great success and good luck in your future endeavours! Have a great summer!



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

June 3	Farewell BBQ
June 6	Graduation Ceremony
June 7	Pedagogical Day
June 10	RWA Foundation meeting @ 7 PM
June 11	USED Uniform Sale @ 7 PM–8 PM
June 12	NEW Uniform Sale @ 2 PM–8 PM
June 13	NEW Uniform Sale @ 3 PM–8 PM
June 21	Graduation Prom
June 24	Saint-Jean-Baptiste Day
June 25–28	Pedagogical Days
June 27	Report Card Distribution
July 1	Canada Day
September 2	Labour Day

# RWA



# News

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