



## Words From The Admin



Vice-Principal

Steven Manstavich



Principal

Angela Vaudry



Vice-Principal

Catherine Lumsden

### Welcome Back Notice

Welcome back to full-time in-person school! Royal West Academy staff are excited to see everyone in the building and are grateful to be back in classrooms, labs, offices, and gyms with the students. We would like to extend a particularly warm welcome to any new members of our student population and their families. On behalf of the RWA administration, we wish everyone a safe and enjoyable 2021–2022.

Additionally, welcome back to RWA News after an 18-month hiatus!

### New Staff

Please join us in welcoming new staff members to the RWA team:

- Nadine Bolduc (Secretary – HR)
- Adriana Chronopoulos (English/ERC)
- Chad Du Mond (Guidance counsellor A–L)
- Marie-Oriole Louissaint (Français)
- Catherine Lumsden (Vice-Principal A–L)
- James Magee (Science)
- Claudia Pulice (ERC/Social Studies)
- Nicholas Rafael (English/Drama/Visual Arts)
- Patrick Stewart-Reid (English/Visual Arts)

We would also like to take this opportunity to welcome back some of our returning staff:

- Thomas Gordon (Math/Science)
- Ariane Gouin (Français)
- Alexa Le Marquand (English/Social Studies)
- Hélène LeBlanc (Français)
- Maude Martin (Math)
- Alexander McLachlan-Macpherson (ERC/ETP/ETD)
- Lambros Tzovanis (ELA/Social Studies)

### Mozaïk Parent Portal

By now, parents and guardians have created their own Mozaïk account. Mozaïk will be implemented across the EMSB and serve as the main information hub. This is where you will find invoicing, reports, and registration come springtime.

Royal West Academy encourages parents and guardians to visit the portal regularly.

### Lost and Found

There are three bins. The first, smaller container, is located on the counter in the office closest to Ms. Vaudry's office. This colourful box contains smaller lost items such as glasses, keys, and even OPUS cards.

The second larger bin is located just down the hall from the main office. This contains an assortment of treasures ranging from pencil cases to jackets.

The third large bin is located outside of the new gym.

Please take the time to label all school uniform items with a minimum of first initial and family name. Without this information, your items are destined to linger in the lost and found bins.

Feel free to reach out to the Lost and Found committee at [rwa.lostandfound@gmail.com](mailto:rwa.lostandfound@gmail.com) should there be any questions or concerns regarding a lost object.



### Peer Tutoring Opportunities

If your child requires tutoring at any time this year, RWA has an excellent peer-tutoring program at minimal cost. Any questions or concerns in this area should be directed to Ms. Di Pietro, our school-community animator (ECA coordinator), at [sdipietro@emsb.qc.ca](mailto:sdipietro@emsb.qc.ca).

### ECAs

Extra-curricular activities are an integral part of RWA's program. Students are required to participate in three out of four different types of activities (cultural, sport, community service, and environment). Activities may take place before school, at lunch, or after school. Here is the link for [ECA options](#) 2021–2022.

### Uniform in Cold Winter Months

The cold days of winter are knocking on the door. Parents and students are reminded that students must come to and leave school in uniform. Students may not wear jeans or any other pants with their skirts or over their school pants; they may only wear their physical education jogging pants, if necessary, or appropriate external winter apparel.

### Covid-19 Protocol Update

High school students are no longer required to wear procedural masks while seated in their classrooms—they are obliged, however, to wear them in common areas such as the hallways, cafeteria, library, etc. Please be assured that we are respectful of our students' right to continue wearing procedural masks in class, should they choose.

[2021.10.08 - Que faire si mon enfant a des symptômes FRA](#)

[2021.10.08 - What do do if my child has symptoms ANG](#)

### Meet the Secondary I Teachers (September 7)

Meet The Teachers was a virtual event and can be viewed [here](#).



### Open House (September 14)

Open House 2021 was a virtual event and can be viewed [here](#).

### Orange Shirt Day (September 30)

Royal West Academy students were encouraged to wear orange shirts and post orange hearts in the school to honour the experiences of Indigenous Peoples, to celebrate resiliency, and to affirm a commitment that every child matters. Many teachers took time in their lessons to discuss the effects of residential schools and their legacy. After a land acknowledgement, students took to Westminster Avenue for a somber walk.

Donations went to to [Native Friendship Circle of Montreal](#).

### Secondary I and II Parent Seminar (October 6)

Parents and guardians of Secondary I and II students were invited to *Surviving and Thriving: A Parent's Guide to Adolescence and the Transition to High School*, a video seminar. Presented by Mr. Mateus and Ms. Almeida, these seminars are designed to support parents of Secondary I and II students to help them navigate their children's journey through high school by providing insights into a student's everyday experience, with a focus on challenges particular to Royal West Academy. Due to the vagaries of the pandemic, seminars were not provided last year, hence RWA extended the invitation to parents of last year's Secondary Is as well.

Stay tuned for the next seminar!

### Waste Reduction Week (October 18–22)

The goal of Waste Reduction Week was to make students more aware of ways they could reduce their carbon footprint. Students in the Environment Committee prepared workshops on different topics such as thrifting, upcycling, compost, etc. It was also when we brought composting back to the school; EC students wore their "green vests" and circulated in the cafeteria, encouraging people to compost organic waste rather than throw it in the garbage. The challenge of the week was to bring a waste-free lunch to school.

### Foundation AGM (October 19)

At the RWA Foundation's AGM, we were pleased to welcome the new co-presidents of the Foundation for this coming school year, Mr. Jesse Chaim and Ms. Anila Erindi.

Over the years of its existence, the Foundation has played an integral role in fundraising for some of the most important projects that we have had here at RWA, including the building of the New Gym, which was opened in 2008, as well as the current project that it has been working on in conjunction with the school for the past few years, the renovation of the RWA Auditorium into a Performing Arts centre.

The RWA Foundation is looking for new volunteers to participate in this group, especially any volunteers who are willing to take on a role to aid the Foundation in the dossier of communications and social media organizing. Interested parents can contact the Foundation at [info@rwaf.ca](mailto:info@rwaf.ca).

### EMSB Education and Career Fair (October 20)

All Secondary V students were given the opportunity during the school day to browse the EMSB Education and Career Fair. Despite technical issues, we hope that students and parents took the time to explore the myriad of post-secondary options for RWA students. Should any students have more questions about post-secondary options, please see the guidance counsellors Mr. Du Mond (A–L) and Ms. Wineberg (M–Z).

### Visual Arts Museum Trips (October–November)

In October and November, Secondary II–V Visual Arts students visited the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts. During their visit, students had a guided tour of the exhibit *All-World Arts*. After the guided tour, an art workshop was given in the Museum studios where each student got to create an artwork that was brought back to school. Overall, the school outing was an enjoyable and memorable experience!

### Geordie Theatre Visit (October 25)

Geordie Productions presented the play *Selfie* to the Drama students of RWA. Although students were assigned to watch the play from a theatrical perspective (observing the various dramatic techniques employed by the acting, set, and directing), the content of the play also raised important discussions on social media, consent, and integrity as well as social and peer pressure.

### Secondary I Activity Day (October 29)

The Secondary I students participated in a grade level trip where they got to spend the day at Base de Plein Air Bon Depart in the Laurentians. The students enjoyed a fun-filled activity day where they were able to further develop their team building skills and foster

connections amongst their peers. Throughout the day, the students rotated through a variety of activities such as archery, rock climbing, and forest trails. All activities took place outdoors where students were able to enjoy the nature setting and the beautiful weather.

### Remembrance Day (November 11)

Royal West Academy held a virtual Remembrance Day Assembly. *O Canada*, *The Last Post*, and the *Reveille* were performed by Secondary IV and V instrumentalists while Secondary IV students read *In Flanders Fields* and *Au champ d'honneur*.

The assembly had two main themes. First, to remember and honour the values the soldiers exemplified and fought for: civic duty; self-sacrifice for the greater good; comradeship and solidarity; and patriotism. Second, the importance of honouring the soldiers by honouring their values and using them to inspire us to action to fight social injustice and climate change.

### Anti-Bullying Week (November 15–18)

Royal West Academy students were encouraged to wear pink shirts on November 16 for anti-bullying week. Additionally, the Social Justice Club raised awareness during Anti-Bullying Week by selling pink ribbons and collecting personal hygiene products such as soap, shampoo/conditioner, toothbrushes/toothpaste, and deodorant. These donations were sorted into care packages to be donated to Chez Doris, a day shelter that offers a range of services and programs to meet the most basic and immediate needs of vulnerable and homeless women. Thanks to the overwhelming support and generous donations of RWA students and faculty, the Social Justice Club achieved its goal of creating 50 hygiene baskets and raised \$280 for Chez Doris!!

### Parent-Teacher Interviews (November 18)

Parent-Teacher interviews were held virtually. Thank you to everyone for respecting the five-minute time limit and understanding that some teachers have as many as 300 students and therefore could not meet with all parents. The next Parent-Teacher Interviews will be in February 2022.

## Governing Board Report

By Mr. David Stollow, Governing Board Chair

The Annual General Assembly took place on September 28. At the AGA, several parent representatives and substitute parent representatives





were elected to the Governing Board. The parent delegate to the EMSB Parents Committee and the alternate parent delegate were also named. In addition to elected parent representatives, the GB is made of teachers, school staff, and the two Student Life Association co-presidents. Members of Royal West Academy's administration, our EMSB commissioner, and two community representatives also attend GB meetings as non-voting members.

Since the start of the school year, we've held two GB meetings, on October 12 and November 22. Below is a sample of some of the matters that we discussed or approved during our meetings.

During our first meeting, we elected the chair, vice-chair, secretary, and treasurer of the GB. We approved the GB's internal Rules of Operation, the mandates of the Home and School Association and RWA Foundation, and the student trips in Montreal and the surrounding areas for 2021–2022.

During our second meeting, we approved RWA's Sexuality Education Program and the annual report on the Educational Project. We discussed ECAs and weather-appropriate uniforms, and we voted to ask the School Council to consider the issue of uniforms as this is within their mandate. We also discussed the status of masks in classrooms given that this is no longer mandatory; we were very happy to hear that our students are continuing to wear masks in classrooms.

Royal West Academy parents attended both meetings and asked questions during our *Question Period for the Public*, which is an agenda item at every GB meeting.

An issue of importance that has come up during our meetings is the role of the GB and what issues fall within our authority under the Education Act, which sets out our mandate and specifies that we must act within the scope and functions conferred on the GB under the Act. During our meetings, we have done our best to sensitize parents to this and address their questions and concerns while ensuring that we do not overstep our role.

All meetings in 2021–2022 are taking place virtually via Microsoft Teams. Information with respect to the dates of the scheduled meetings in 2022, documents that are considered during our meetings, minutes of the meetings (which are only posted after they have been approved at a subsequent meeting), and the process for requesting a link to join a GB meeting, is available on

RWA's website (at [www.royalwestacademy.com](http://www.royalwestacademy.com)) under the "Governing Board" tab.

Our next GB meeting is on January 17, 2022, at 7 PM.

On behalf of the Governing Board, I wish the entire RWA community a safe, healthy, and happy new year.

## LIFT

By Jasmine Lee

### A mind-opening program

A new school year has started. Homework is increasing and stress is high. As a Secondary IV student myself, I know the overwhelming feeling all too well. So how do I and other Royal West Academy students manage this pressure? This is where the LIFT program comes in. Brought to RWA by the non-profit organization Camp LIFT, the program's goal is to educate teens on how to live healthy lifestyles.



The LIFT program, led by mentors Will Charbonneau and Elwin Parker-Morris, started October 5 and is set to conclude at the start of December. The program occurs weekly for a total of eight sessions, both at lunch for Secondary III–V and after school for Secondary I–II. Each session begins with a PowerPoint-led open discussion, the theme of which differs every week. The many topics include channelling potential, recognizing stress, preventing procrastination, social media addiction, and the benefits of having good posture and nutrition.

One of my favourite sessions was on November 16 when we discussed the circadian rhythm. We were taught how to evaluate and improve our day-to-day circadian rhythm by setting healthy and realistic goals for ourselves, such as aiming to eat five servings of fruit every day or achieving a sufficient amount of sleep. Every session ends with a couple minutes of meditation, which is led by LIFT mentor Will, who is a yoga instructor. Will talks the students through the meditation, teaching us effective breathing techniques along the way.

Besides participating in the program myself, I asked Secondary IV student Brooke Chazonoff-Mosse about her opinion so far on joining this program. Brooke responded cheerfully, saying, "I think it's a mind-opening program that helps me organize my priorities inside and outside of school. It's really a refreshing break from class."

LIFT is perfect for students who want to improve their habits and balance school with fun. The program provides lifetime resources and a safe space for students who are overwhelmed by academic and social pressure. I for one think LIFT is a fulfilling and beneficial extracurricular activity for all students and I hope that Royal West Academy continues to collaborate with Camp LIFT for years to come.

## India Exchange Trip Cancellation

By Eden Zukerman

### No plane no gain

Covid-19 has transformed the world, and for the 22 Royal West Academy students hoping to experience the exhilarating country of India, it has chewed us up and spat us out.

It is no surprise that the 2021 India Cultural Exchange trip was cancelled due to the pandemic. Mr. Diacoumacos and the rest of the staff involved rightfully decided that the dangers of travel are simply too great. This was a difficult decision to come to, and it took many months of deliberation and hesitation before the official cancellation was finally announced. We had hoped for so long that maybe something could change, but the pandemic persisted and as wave after wave came, our hopes were crushed a little more.

The Exchange team has now taken on the daunting task of making the 2022 cultural exchange trip truly fascinating without us ever leaving Montreal. It was discussed that with the money previously raised by the hardworking students bagging groceries, we would do cultural lunches—a different type of cuisine that we would educate ourselves on. We look forward to having our first meal together in mid-December.

This was certainly an adjustment for the Secondary IV and V students that were hoping to travel abroad but we are still excited for what the upcoming year may hold for us. This situation has been difficult for everyone involved but each person participating is grateful to Mr. Diacoumacos and the sacrifices that have been made in our names. I am still in contact with my billet (the girl whom I was paired with to stay with while in India) and she expressed her disappointment regarding the cancellation but reassured me that she "was grateful that the situation was being dealt with conscientiously and that we were not travelling if it was not safe."

With an ever-changing world due to the pandemic, we still have hope that we could travel, perhaps not to India but another place entirely.

## Honour Band

By Samantha Schwartz

Since it began over 50 years ago, the Royal West Academy Honour Band has been a great way for students to play music, make friends, and enjoy themselves. As well, being part of Honour Band historically includes many trips and fundraising activities that were unavailable this year. In spite of this, students have been able to spend time with others and share their love of music.

In a regular year, being a part of Honour Band would include concerts, marching excursions, and band trips. Honour Band students were able to participate in numerous outings. I spoke with Sam Amar, an Honour Band participant that graduated from Royal West Academy in 2019. He expressed his enjoyment during the trip to Cuba as well as the Orford retreat at the beginning of the school year. Sam was grateful for the chance to have exciting experiences with his friends and learn more about music.

Honour Band also organizes an annual toy drive and encourages others to get involved! The Honour Band executive helps out with this and encourages others to participate. The executive is a great way for the students to get involved in decision making and administration. This includes concerts, music distribution, and fundraising events such as the toy drive.

While interviewing Emma Jemus, Honour Band vice president. She stated, "My favourite thing is the sense of camaraderie you get from playing all together." With Covid-19, there is the drawback of having to play at a distance. However, Honour Band was still able to offer a sense of togetherness. Even without the certainty of knowing whether we can play together in a holiday concert, Honour Band is still getting in the festive spirit with the songs they're playing.

Honour Band is a great way to explore an interest in music and have some fun! Anyone thinking of joining next year should give it a try and take advantage of the wonderful opportunity!

## Musical: The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee

By Isabella Abou-Fadel

### It takes a village to put on a show

September 7, 2021. Over 40 nervous students gather backstage to participate in the auditions for this year's musical, the Tony Award-winning Broadway show, *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee* by Rachel Sheinkin and William Finn, a funny musical involving a spelling bee and a host of strange and unique characters.

The students warm up and one by one, they audition. There are many auditions, but only 25 can be chosen. The next day, the callback list is posted. People come to check it and later those who have been named come with an excerpt from the show for the acting auditions. The remaining students are sent into the west wing in pairs to run lines until their names are called and they go backstage to audition. The day after, the cast list is posted. People come check it and the cast is set.

Now begins the difficult process of putting the show together. The singing rehearsals begin, led by music director Chris Barillaro. The group, divided into vocal groups, is taught the chorus parts. Other rehearsals,



directed by Jordan Gasparik, start on blocking, dancing, and character ideas. Jonathan Patterson comes in during a Saturday rehearsal to choreograph the biggest song in the show, *Pandemonium*, while Secondary V student Amy Doyle comes in to take various photos throughout the rehearsal. The Lights and Sound crew go up and down from the balcony, testing lights, checking microphones, and preparing the space. Costuming is under way, led by Secondary V student Zoé Cajelait-Asch. Mr. Bateman comes in, taking measurements and building sets with Secondary V student Dylan Laurin Lloyd.

However, we are not ready for show week. Sets are not finished, props are not assigned, lines must be memorized, and we have yet to do a full run-through. Despite this, everyone is working hard and come December 14, 2021, the musical will be perfect, thanks to the many people who have given much time and energy to the production. They say it takes a village to raise a child, but it seems to take just as many to put on a show.

## Swim Team

By Kelly Chow

Joining RWA swim team is a great choice for those who want to improve their swimming and get a sports credit at the same time. We train once a week to prepare for upcoming meets. The Secondary IV and V coaches have an eye for improving your technique and your endurance. They create drills that fit the group's particular level, whether you're a beginner, an intermediate, or an advanced swimmer.

There's nothing to worry about if you don't have any prior experience being on a swim team. Many of the swimmers are new as well. Eva-Marie Green, a





Secondary IV coach, describes her first experience being on a swim team and how it influenced her as a coach.

“When I first joined a swim team, I wasn’t a good swimmer at all. I didn’t know anyone there and I felt alone. It was stressful for me because I wasn’t as good of a swimmer as everyone else. I felt behind and I wanted to quit. But, thankfully, I stayed. I did end up improving and I made a lot of good friends. So now as a coach, I want them to feel included even if they’re below the level of other people. I don’t want them to feel the way I felt. I’m 100% confident that everyone who joins the RWA swim team has the same potential to improve!”

This ECA also offers a great leadership experience. As mentioned before, Secondary IV and V students are the coaches. For this role, it’s recommended to have past swim team experience. It’s also recommended to be a strong swimmer to be able to give advice. Not only is it a learning experience, but coaching can be an additional item to put on your CV.

Swim team is a place to grow alongside other swimmers and it’s also a stress-free environment. It’s an opportunity to make new friends while enjoying a sport that you love! If you are interested in joining, the sign-up starts in early October of next year!

## Midget Boys Volleyball

By Arshneet Singh Kalra

### Birth of a brotherhood

On September 1, a group of over 20 students gathered in the New Gym, eager to start tryouts for the volleyball team. They are met with a new instructor, a professional, who later stated that he would only be conducting the first tryout and that the real coach would join them later. Once it started, the students began to practice their techniques: bumping, setting, and spiking. As the first tryout concluded, the instructor notified them that there would be a second tryout the following week with their real coach, Ms. Fogel. The next week, the tryout held was the final step before the team was formed which incentivized everyone to play to the best of their abilities. Near the end, Ms. Fogel announced the team. And thus began the journey of the players.

Every week for the next couple of months, the team would meet in one of the two gyms and practice for their upcoming tournaments. These practices would



consist of many different tasks such as bumping in pairs, working on their form and cardio, performing serves and scrimmaging. Throughout all of these drills, the chemistry between the players became stronger. After numerous practices, the team was approaching their first tournament, which would be held at Laurier Macdonald High School. The players were filled with excitement and ready to show off all their hard work by defeating the other schools.

The Royal West Academy team performed adequately at their first tournament, winning one, tying one and losing one. They wanted to do better, so they practiced more often and incorporated game-like situations in their activities. Throughout the following tournaments, the team performed substantially, finishing the season tied for first place. The team was ready for the playoffs.

In the playoffs, emotions were running high. The gymnasium was echoing with loud yells and cheers. As Royal West Academy was down by six points in the final set, Ms. Fogel called a timeout. “All our hard work is for this moment, take a deep breath and let’s win this,” she said. Her words inspired them. Eventually, the game tied at 11-11 but RWA lost by four points. Although they lost, they loved every moment of playing together and created a bond that could never be broken, all through the sport of volleyball.

## A Run To Victory

By Kiara Breton

The Terry Fox school run is an event that Royal West Academy embarks on every year to remember and acknowledge Terry Fox’s legacy. Terry became a hero at the age of 18 when he decided to run across Canada to

help raise awareness for cancer. Not only did he cover a distance of 5373 kilometres in 143 days, he ran all of it with a prosthetic leg.

Terry was just like any other typical adolescent who wanted to help people. Terry not only wanted to educate people about cancer but he also wanted to motivate them to chase their goals, even if they seemed unachievable at the time. Terry was well aware that he would pass before seeing the Terry Fox Foundation achieve its full potential but all he wanted to do was go as far as he could.



For many years, the Secondary II students at Royal West Academy have been generous donors to the Terry Fox Foundation and have helped other students recognize the importance of raising not only awareness for cancer but also the perseverance it takes to create a movement of bravery. This year, the grade eight students raised \$7509, and two students alone raised \$2000. Terry Fox's family have reached out to RWA staff, such as Ms. O'Neil, Mr. Aiken, and Mr. Bateman, to congratulate our school on making the Terry Fox run a priority and taking the time and initiative to educate the students on such an important event. "He is my hero", explained Mr. Bateman.

This event is crucial to the Royal West experience because it has motivated students to do their very best—because if Terry can do it, so can they. This is why it is so important to Royal West Academy. It has inspired kids and teachers alike to be the best they can be and to not be scared to pursue their aspirations, even if they appear to be impossible. Terry Fox's dream has turned into a worldwide mission and inspired everyone around the globe.

## Juvenile Boys Volleyball

By Phoenix Trew

### A flawless start to the year

With dozens of banners hanging over students entering the gymnasium, it is fair to say that Royal West Academy thrives when it comes to volleyball. This sport is offered to all grade levels for both boys and girls.

The Juvenile Boys Volleyball team began practising on the very first day of school, portraying perfectly the school and the players' dedication to this cooperative sport. As a Secondary IV player joining this juvenile level team, I expected to be intimidated or disregarded while being amongst Secondary V players. Fortunately, that was not the case at all. Instead, inclusion, excitement, and gratitude were the feelings that I felt.

Our coach, Milen Hristov, trained us three times per week, teaching the team new formations, better technique, unstoppable plays, and sportsmanship, among other skills. As he once said, "You can never be too good at anything, especially volleyball." His attachment to the sport drove us to outperform ourselves every day. Morning practices were the hardest, but Milen never failed to bring an exhilarating energy onto the court, with music blasting across the entire gym. We are lucky to have him—his enthusiasm is contagious; inspiring many of us to play on teams outside of the school, and to pursue volleyball in CÉGEP.

Our first match was on September 12. We were going to be playing against Laurier Macdonald High School followed by Loyola High School. A clean sweep is the best way to summarize the day. Little did we know that this would apply to the rest of the season.

There we were, on November 9, with 13 victories, zero ties, and zero losses, ready to face Vincent Massey





Collegiate in the final match of this tournament, on our home court. When the score of the final set flipped to 25, our school's cheers of glory and pride filled the gym. The Wildcats of Royal West Academy were crowned champions of their division with a flawless performance over the tournament.

This is far from the end of our volleyball season. Starting in late November we began participating in a tournament competing against the best teams on the island of Montreal as well as the provincial tournament in April. We will make our emblem roar across Québec.

## Coaching The Swim Team

By Raphaëlla Etienne-Krief

After two years of waiting, the Royal West Academy Swim team is thrilled to report that we are back up and running!

Royal West Academy is a school known for students with initiative, an attitude of independence and eagerness to discover new activities, and this ECA reflects highly on those values.

The team has eight set practices before the competition season which will be taking place in the new year. Rain, snow, or shine, head-coach Yueran leads the swim team group to the Aquatic and Community Centre pool in Côte Saint-Luc by public transport.

Once at the location, the swimmers get into their swimming gear and head on deck, where a coach gathers the group and runs a few dry land drills before the swimmers dive into the water.

Throughout the hour-long practices, coaches go over basics, work on technique, endurance, dives, and sprints, all in preparation for the upcoming competition meets. The best part of the coaching experience is seeing both the joy in beginner swimmers discovering the water and excited to improve at every practice; and the advanced and intermediate swimmers in their natural element. "It's an experience even for me! My co-coach and I have built such a great relationship with our group and what's even better is seeing the enthusiasm of everyone on the team!" Coach Joy Zeeman explains.

The students partaking in this sport take their hard-working ethics and apply them to the water. In the span

of only two practices, swimmers in the intermediate lane with no prior swimming experience have perfected their flip turns and push-off techniques. Coach Enya Belley of the intermediate group exclaimed, "Planning all those practices was worth it! It gave me great leadership skills, helped the swimmers improve tremendously!"

At the end of practice, the swimmers sign out with the staff supervisor of the week, thank the pool's personnel, and head home with an air of pleasure and the chlorine hair the pool water gave them!

A special thank you to Ms. Kissin and Mr. Rafael for organizing the ECA and journey to the pool which Joy described as "the ultimate sensation of freedom after a long day!"

If you happen to see a teenager at the CSL pool on a Wednesday, laughing away with their friends and filled with contentment, it is most likely an RWA swimmer in their natural habitat.

As the practice season concludes, we cannot wait to apply the hard work and technique the swimmers have achieved at the competition meets and for what next year's swim team will bring!

## Return Of The RSEQ GMAA Cross Country Race

By Amy Semergian

On the autumn morning of October 7, the annual RSEQ GMAA Cross Country Race took place at Mount Royal Park. Approximately 100 Royal West Academy students represented our school in this much anticipated yearly event. Students in the Leadership program accompanied them by giving directions to the runners.

The participants have been attending weekly cross country practices since the third week of September every Tuesday after school. The enthusiastic students could be seen running along the streets of Montreal West, preparing for the big day alongside Mr. Rafael, their coach. In the end, all of those hours of practice turned out to be worth it when our school won four banners: Midget Boys, Midget Girls, Bantam Boys, and Bantam Girls.



Mia Simpson and Gabrielle Pomerleau, our very own RWA athletes, both came in first place in their divisions. Mia, competing in Midget Girls, ran an impressive four kilometres in 17 minutes! "It's amazing that the school gives us these opportunities to help us move on to provincials. I'm extremely grateful for all the support given. GO WILDCATS!" Mia Simpson said regarding her win.

Since Covid-19 continues to be a threat, there were many actions taken at the meet to satisfy government health and safety protocols. All of the participants were fully vaccinated. Also, the race was held in two parts with half of the groups running in the morning and the other half running in the afternoon. Masks were worn at all times. Runners only took off their masks when they were isolated from other competitors.

This year, for the first time, each participant in the race had an electronically programmed GPS chip in their bib with their assigned number on it. This helped with the compilation of the results from each runner by showing what time they crossed the starting line and the finishing line. In addition to winning races, many students remarked what a beautiful day it was and are looking forward to the upcoming spring HALO Race and next year's event. Congratulations to all participants!

## Tomato Canning

By Jun One Ban

### Building a community

On September 24, the students of Mr. Wilson's DIY Club worked together to make tomato sauce. It all started the day before with the tedious, yet essential, process of washing and drying the locally grown tomatoes. To maximize our efficiency, we decided to form an assembly line. Someone picked the good tomatoes,

others washed them, and the last person dried them. What seemed to be a boring, time-consuming task turned into a good time because of the light-hearted banter between friends and occasional gross-out at a mouldy tomato. I'm glad we looked them over.

The club was held in the cafeteria after school; a student was supposed to be assigned each station to cut the tomatoes, but an overwhelming number of students had shown up. The teachers—Mr. Wilson, Mr. Nemeth, Ms. Nassif, Mr. Tetreault, and Mr. Steward-Reid—decided to split the group to speed up the process. Most of the group continued to cut up the tomatoes while the rest were sent to Mr. Tetreault's room to stem basil leaves and sterilize the jars.

Once all the preparations were completed, the ingredients and equipment were brought outside. The students blended the sliced tomatoes and filled the pot to the brim with tomato juice and a hint of basil. The pot was placed on a gas burner. It boiled on low heat as the students took turns stirring the sauce. As time went on, the delightful aroma of the sweet yet slightly acidic tomato sauce became more noticeable. Students huddled eagerly around the pot to observe their wonderful sauce come to fruition.

After about 30 to 35 minutes of nonstop stirring, the sauce was finally ready to be canned. After cooling down, a group of students used a ladle and a funnel to safely pour the hot and sticky sauce into jars. The jars of tomato sauce would eventually be distributed and enjoyed by those who participated in this amazing ECA led by Mr. Wilson. Like most, I used the sauce to make a staple in Italian cuisine: pasta.



## Let's Speak Italian

By Michael Macri

Does learning a new language other than English and French interest you? Well, here at Royal West Academy you could do just that! A beginner's Italian course is an extracurricular activity offered on Wednesdays at lunch in Room 307. Ms. Liscio explores and guides students through the basics of the Italian language.

Students line up outside of Room 307 as soon as the lunch bell rings, eagerly awaiting to begin learning a language spoken by over sixty million people worldwide. During these lessons, students are introduced to the Italian language, which some say flows like music. Fun fact: Italy is home to over 34 different regional dialects spread across the many northern to southern regions of Italy. The type of Italian that is taught in this course offered at Royal West is known as proper Italian and not dialect. Some would say that Italian is known as a romance language, which is derived from the Latin used by the Romans. Ms. Liscio helps the students learn how to properly pronounce words and how to formulate basic sentences.

In this extracurricular activity, students are taught to speak properly and express themselves in Italian. They will learn common expressions and words as well as simple phrases. Knowing these different elements will allow them to converse and communicate in Italian even if only at a beginners level. For example, students will be able to introduce themselves, ask for directions and be able to order food in Italian restaurants using the skills learned with Ms. Liscio.

After this course, if they wish, like in other languages, students could better their knowledge and expand their vocabulary by reading more stories and folktales. They could also choose to learn more about Italian culture. More specifically, Italian history, traditions, festivals and more importantly, the food. So for your first lesson, "ciao" means hello or goodbye like "Ciao, hope to see you soon."

## LGBTQ+ Club

By McKenna Foxford

Royal West Academy is a very welcoming school for LGBTQ+ students. Since 2015, we have had an all-gender washroom to accommodate transgender and non-binary students. Many teachers let their students know on the first day of class to inform them if they

want to go by an alternative name or pronouns, and those teachers who don't will still respect any students that approach them about it. There is a large portion of queer students who are out and open about their identities at RWA compared to other schools, and because of this many students have collaborated with teachers to create an LGBTQ+ club.

The club is a safe space for anyone to open up about their identity and struggles, even if they are still closeted to most of the school or to their families. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, the club was run by Ms. Klisouris and two student leaders. One evening, while I was sitting in the auditorium waiting for the 2019 school musical *Hoedown* to start, I met one of the student leaders and we started talking. When my mom asked how we knew each other she simply said I was part of her "Tuesday Club" so as to not put me at any risk of being outed. The school understands that some students may not be in an accepting situation at home, and takes care not to disclose any personal information about their students' identities or their attendance in the LGBTQ+ Club to keep them safe.

We have done many fun activities in the past as well as educational ones. A couple of times we had the opportunity to use a pin-maker machine. We were told in advance, so many people came in with printed out images, but we were also supplied with markers and pencil crayons to draw our own pride flags or anything else we wanted. We also had several workshops about LGBTQ+ relationships and sex, since these subjects aren't usually covered in regular sex education classes.

The club is currently led by Ms. Di Pietro and Ms. Wineberg. In the words of Ms. Di Pietro, the club aims to create "a safe space for students to express themselves and their identities freely." We are currently working on drawing pride-related posters to hang





around the school. Sweet snacks are available every meeting and music is chosen by the club members. It is still relatively early in the school year, so expect lots more activities to come. If you're interested, come and join us in Room 210 at lunch every Monday —everyone is welcome!

## Tomato Sauce Canning

By Vasili Nelli

At the start of this school year, the DIY Club was created by Mr. Wilson to learn how to make different jarred goodies. One activity that stuck out to me was the tomato sauce canning. Tomato sauce is a staple of Italian culture, and the aim of it was to introduce their culture to our school as a way of spreading their traditions with students.

The procedure was fairly simple, even to newcomers that have never experimented with the tasks at hand. On the first day, we were assigned to separate the ripe tomatoes from the ones that weren't ready to be turned into sauce. After picking the best tomatoes, we washed and pat dried each of them to make sure that they would be clean for the next day.

Although the first day wasn't too action packed, the second day was the complete opposite. There were many stations set up; a group of students cutting up the tomatoes, a group in charge of transporting the tomatoes to the designated area, which was out in the back field where all the magic happened. There was a big machine set on a table with many students standing around observing it. A few of them were pumping tomatoes into a pipe attached to the machine which was transforming them into a nice smooth sauce. On the other end of the machine, all the skin and guts of the tomatoes were getting pushed out into another bowl. Once enough sauce was made, it was all poured into a big metal drum that was sitting on top of a burner, which would allow all the sauce to cook. That same day, all the delicious tomato sauce had finished cooking and was split amongst dozens of mason jars which would be distributed to students on a later date.

Overall, the entire process was not only very enjoyable, but also educational. I'm sure more events similar to this one will be organized by Mr. Wilson. I highly suggest you stop by and learn a new skill that you might otherwise never have tried.



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Dec 6–10	Tyndale Week
December 7	Calculus competition
December 9	Holiday Concert @ 7 PM
December 13	Home & School meeting @ 7:30 PM
Dec 13–17	MindPOP Math
December 14	RWA Foundation meeting @ 7 PM
Dec 14–17	Musical Production: <i>The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee</i>
Dec 23–Jan 5	Holidays
January 7	Variety Show @ 7 PM
January 11	Calculus competition
Jan 11–13	Winter Concert @ 7 PM
January 17	Governing Board meeting @ 7 PM
January 17	Sec I Parents Seminar @ 7 PM
January 18	Winter Carnival
January 24	Home & School meeting @ 7:30 PM
Jan 24–28	MindPOP History
January 28	Report Cards issued on Mozaik

# RWA



# News

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Royal West Academy presents a

PRODUCTION OF

The 25<sup>th</sup> Annual Putnam County  
**SPELLING BEE**

Music & Lyrics by  
**WILLIAM FINN**

Book by  
**RACHEL SHEINKIN**

Conceived by  
**REBECCA FELDMAN**

Additional Material by  
**JAY REISS**

Originally Directed on Broadway by  
**JAMES LAPINE**

Originally Produced on Broadway by  
**DAVID STONE, JAMES L. NEDERLANDER, BARBARA WHITMAN, PATRICK CATULLO**  
**BARRINGTON STAGE COMPANY, SECOND STAGE THEATRE**



Tues. Dec. 14th Student Night (\$5) 7:30pm  
Wed. Dec. 15th 7:30pm  
Thurs. Dec. 16th 7:30pm  
Fri. Dec. 17th 7:30pm

Directed by Jordan Gasparik  
Musical Direction by Chris Barillaro  
Additional Choreo by Jonathan Patterson  
Production / Faculty Advisor- Erika Kuch

**Students/Seniors \$10 Adults \$15 Cash only/At the door**  
**Vaccine Passports and masks are required to see the show.**

Presented through special arrangement with Music Theatre International (MTI). All authorized performance materials are also supplied by MTI (mtishows.com).