

RWA



NEWS

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February 2025

Words From The Admin



*Principal Tony Pita (center)
with Vice-Principal Catherine Lumsden (left) and
Vice-Principal Lynn Bourdeau (right)*

NEW YEAR WISHES

RWA would like to wish the entire RWA community peace, health, and happiness in 2025!

TYNDALE

The RWA Community came together once again to raise money for a great cause. For over 90 years, Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre has offered empowering, supportive programs and services to the community of Little Burgundy in South-West Montreal. The final amount donated to Tyndale St. Georges this year is \$9,264. It brings Royal West Academy's total since 2007 to \$142,435. This is a remarkable amount. Congratulations to everyone who participated in this great cause! Congratulations to all our homerooms!

HOLIDAY CONCERTS

December 11th: RWA hosted a concert featuring (QYWE), the English Montreal Jazz Band and RWA music students.
December 12th: was our wonderful Holiday concert featuring RWA Winds, RWA Jazz band, and Honour Band.

WINTER CONCERT

Our Winter concerts were held on January 15th and 16th and were a great success. Bravo to all who participated in these important events!

PERE NOEL A ROYAL WEST

Le 16 décembre dernier, le Père Noël a visité la classe de 4e sec. de Mme Moreau. Les chanceux élèves ont reçu un beau roman! Comme le Père Noël est aussi affecté par les coupures budgétaires, après cette lecture passionnante, les élèves retourneront le livre pour que d'autres puissent en profiter. Bonne année 2025 à tous!



TWELFTH NIGHT

On December 18th and 19th, a talented group of RWA actors put on their version of *Twelfth Night*, a romantic comedy by William Shakespeare. Two casts alternated performances over 4 show dates. Special thanks to the Light and Sound Crew and our dedicated directors, Ms. Madeleine Scovil and Ms. Suzanne Amro.

COOKIES AND MILK

On December 19th, staff members treated all students to oatmeal cookies and chocolate milk. This special treat kicked off the start of the holidays for our students and staff. Special thanks to Ms. Senior, our cafeteria manager, for baking the 900 cookies!

COURSE SELECTION 2025-2026

In January, all returning students were required to submit their course selections for the 2025-2026 school year. The Secondary I & II presentations were done by RWA Vice Principals, while the Sec 3 & 4 presentations were done by the RWA Guidance department. Every effort will be made to provide first choice options wherever possible. Courses for which there are pre-requisites (i.e.: minimum grade requirements, teacher recommendation, etc.) will only be confirmed once results are available at the close of the school year.

WELCOME 2025



RWA



NEWS

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

February 2025

SORTIE THÉÂTRE

Our secondary 5 students had their sortie Théâtre on January 29th. A good time was had by all.

ACTION AGAINST ISLAMOPHOBIA

Royal West Academy joined communities across Canada to observe the Day of Remembrance and Action against Islamophobia on January 29th. An announcement was made during homeroom that day.

INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE DAY

Royal West Academy joined communities across Canada to observe the International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 27th. Given that the 27th was an exam day, we made an announcement for International Holocaust Remembrance Day on January 22nd during homeroom.

TERM 2

Term 2 ended January 29th, we are now in our last term of the year. Parent Teacher Meetings will be held in-person on March 13th from 3:15 PM – 5:45 PM and 7:00 PM – 9:30 PM. The bookings site will be opened once report cards are issued. Priority booking will be given to students requiring a meeting with their teacher. The system will be open to all students immediately after.

SECONDARY 2 TRIP TO STONEHAM

From January 29th to the 31st, Secondary II students had their grade level trip to Stoneham, and it all went very well; our students and staff were complimented by the company Ski Evolution. Thank you to Ms. Belina, the Grade 8 trip organizer, and the chaperones on that trip, for giving of their time and energy.

Royal West Academy Foundation News

Click [here](#) to get your tickets. Don't delay, spots are limited!

ROYAL WEST ACADEMY FOUNDATION

Comedy Night Fundraiser

EMCEE	STARRING	STARRING	HEADLINER
FRANCO TADDEO	CHARLES DAGHLJAN	MARIANNE MANDRUSIAK	DAVID PRYDE

FRIDAY APRIL 25 **7:30 PM**
DOORS OPEN 6:30 PM

Tickets \$35 in advance/\$40 at the door

scan to buy tickets

Intended for audiences aged 16+

GIVING US ROOM TO LEARN TOGETHER
The Active Learning Classroom Campaign

ROYAL WEST ACADEMY
189 Av. Easton, Montreal West

Refreshments sold before the show & during intermission - Cash Only
All proceeds benefit the Active Learning Classroom Campaign



- Feb 10 - Foundation Meeting 7 pm, in person
- Feb. 12 - Invention Convention
- Feb. 13 - Science Fair
- Feb. 14 - Ped Day
- Feb. 18 - Sec. I Parent Seminar
- Feb 18 - Governing Board Meeting
- Feb. 19 - 22 - CRC Robotics Competition
- Feb. 24-27 -RWA Musical The Prom
- Feb. 24 - Report Cards Posted
- Feb. 25 - Locker Clean up
- Feb 26 - Home & School Meeting 7 pm, virtual
- Feb. 26 - Pink Shirt Day

RWA NEWS

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RWA News is published during the academic year on the school's website at www.royalwestacademy.com. Articles, comments, and suggestions may be directed to the editor at rwanews@gmail.com



RWA



NEWS

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

February 2025

Royal West Academy PPO News

The Parent Participation Organization gathered 856 signatures from members of both the RWA community and Montreal West, and these were presented to Montreal West Town Council at the meeting in mid-December and presented to the SPVM at a meeting we attended (along with other RWA representatives and local officials) with the Station 9 Commander in January. Thank you to all those who signed this petition, your voices are being heard!

On December 12, Jessica Houde-Woytiuk (Governing Board member), Joanna Duy (PPO Chair), and parent Samara Zavalkoff met with local MNA Desirée McGraw to discuss how we can work together to move the student pedestrian safety dossier forward. We are continuing to work with MNA McGraw to see what role she can play in amplifying our message.

On Monday December 16 we once again had a good turnout of parents and two RWA students at the Montreal West Town Council meeting. We were very proud of the two RWA students who stood at the microphone to share their experiences at the Ainslie intersection with Town Council. It was very impactful.

On Tuesday December 17 the PPO coordinated a student pedestrian counting blitz by parent volunteers to quantify the number of students crossing Westminster at different places and different times of the day. During morning and afternoon rush hour, 491 RWA students cross at the intersection of Ainslie and Westminster, and there are other intersections where many RWA students cross as well, notably Sherbrooke and Westminster. These numbers have been shared with the Town and the SPVM.

Just before the holiday break, we were happy to see that the Town of Montreal West erected flashing stop signs at the corner of Ainslie and Westminster. In addition, the Town is planning on applying for a significant grant from the provincial government to implement changes that should improve pedestrian safety. The SPVM has also been increasing their presence along Westminster South and handing out tickets to drivers. These are steps forward, but there is more work to be done! We look forward to continuing to work closely with the RWA Governing Board and Administration to help prioritize our students' safety.

We encourage all RWA parents who are concerned about this or any other pertinent issue to get in touch with us: RWAPPO2024@gmail.com.

A word from the RWA Governing Board

The main focus of the Royal West Governing Board this year has been the safety of the streets surrounding our school. In October, an RWA student was hit by a car crossing on the crosswalk at Ainslie and Westminster. The student mainly suffered scrapes and bruises, but the message was clear: the corner must be made safer before anything worse occurs.

Along with the student's parents, Mr. Pita, and members of the RWA Parent Participation Organization (PPO), Governing Board members met with Montreal West officials, the local MNA and the neighborhood SPVM station at Montreal West City Hall to discuss measures to improve street safety. A first step was Montreal West installing a flashing stop sign at the corner in question, as well as the application for a grant from the Quebec government for funds to improve safety in the area. Potential solutions discussed include stopping left turns from Sherbrooke onto Westminster to calm traffic, narrowing the road through the intersection, and building an *ilôt* in the middle of Westminster to aid in crossing. Quebec regulations technically limit the hiring of crossing guards only to corners serving elementary schools, but the group is looking at ways to widen that scope. The Governing Board also supported the PPO as it wrote and circulated a petition demanding that Montreal West take action to improve street safety in the area.

Apart from this major action, the Governing Board has also approved the school anti-bullying policy, the ongoing budget, the sexuality education plan, as well as various school trips. At the request of parents, the Governing Board also approved a widening of the dress code to include non-white tops and shorts for the coming year. More specific information will follow.

All parents and members of the RWA community are invited to Governing Board meetings, where there is a Question Period for non-Board members after the official business has been taken care of. The next meeting is Tuesday, February 18 at 7 PM in the school library. Questions can also be sent to the Governing Board via email at rwagb@emsb.qc.ca.



RWA



News

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

February 2025

Royal West Academy Home & School Association News



RWA CO-OP Store - 2025 Update!

The RWA School Store is in full swing for 2025, and we are thrilled to share all the exciting updates!

Currently, 45 students from all grades are actively engaged and volunteering during lunch. With the help of a dedicated parent volunteer, our students are running the cash register, folding and sorting items, stocking vending machines, creating seasonal artwork to display, and much more. It's a great way for them to contribute to the school community and gain hands-on experience.

New in Store: RWA Grey T-Shirt! We are proud to announce our latest "swag" item – the RWA grey t-shirt with the school logo! Priced at just \$15, it's the perfect gift for when your child is accepted into Royal West Academy. Imagine the joy when you present it as you announce the exciting news! The shirt can also be worn on spirit day.

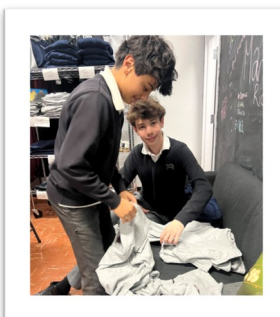
Used Uniforms – Donations Welcome! Our store continues to offer used uniforms, and we are always grateful for your donations. Every penny of profit from the store goes back into supporting important school initiatives such as the science fair, teacher appreciation events, grad bursaries, and so much more.

Upcycling Science Boards — This year, we will also be upcycling science boards! If you have any old boards from previous years, please consider donating them to the store. We will refresh them for next year's projects!

A Hub for Students - The store is more than just a place to shop—it's a community hub where students can hang out, eat lunch, chat, study, and reset for the afternoon. It is a cellphone-free environment, fostering a space for recycling, re-using, and re-creating in a group setting. The school store is all about building interpersonal relationships, entrepreneurship, team-building, and gaining a basic understanding of running a small business.

We are incredibly proud of how the store has become an integral part of student life at Royal West Academy, and we

are excited to continue growing and creating new opportunities for our students and the wider community. Thank you for supporting the RWA School Store!



Royal West Academy Musical

Royal West Academy
PRESENTS

the PROM

SCHOOL EDITION

Book & Lyrics by **CHAD BEGUELIN**
Book by **BOB MARTIN**
Music by **MATTHEW SKLAR**
Based on an original concept by **JACK VIERTEL**

Originally Produced on Broadway by **Bill Damaschke, Dori Berinstein, Jack Lane**
Original Broadway Production directed and choreographed by **Casey Nicholaw**

Feb. 24 – Students \$5	7:30 PM	Directed by Jordan Gasparik
Feb. 25 – 7:30 PM		Choreographed by Jonathan Patterson
Feb. 26 – 7:30 PM		Music Direction by Chris Barillaro
Feb. 27 – 7:30 PM		Assistant Music Direction by Eric Elliot Lee

Students \$10, Adults \$15 in advance/\$20 at the door.
Cash or cheque only!

Presented through special arrangement with and all authorized performance materials are supplied by TRW, www.theatricalrights.com



RWA



NEWS

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

February 2025

Le prénom

By: Tu D.

J'ai un prénom tout simple de deux lettres et, pour certains de mes amis, ça leur rappelle le chiffre deux en anglais. L'interprétation et la perception des noms sont différentes pour chacun, ce qui explique pourquoi, dans la pièce de théâtre *Le prénom*, le futur père Vincent a le droit de nommer son fils Adolphe même si les membres de famille ne sont pas du tout d'accord. Suite aux pièces *Peau d'âne* et *Incendies*, *Le prénom* était la dernière pièce de théâtre visionnée par les membres du Club de théâtre, un club nouvellement organisé cette année par Mme Moreau, mon prof de français. Quelle tristesse pour nous! Même si c'était la dernière pièce, nous avons pleinement profité de l'ambiance calme du théâtre Duceppe, de l'interprétation des acteurs et des blagues qui nous ont fait rire à gorge déployée. Personnellement, j'ai beaucoup apprécié cette pièce parce que la mise en scène m'a impressionnée par sa beauté exquise et son éclairage qui attirait toute mon attention et celle de mes amis. En bref, c'était une pièce extraordinaire et grâce à Mme Moreau, j'ai découvert un nouveau passe-temps culturel qui sert à améliorer mes connaissances du français et du monde. Pour ceux qui sont en 3e secondaire cette année et qui sont intéressés à regarder des pièces de théâtre en français, le Club de théâtre sera l'activité parascolaire parfaite pour vous l'année prochaine. N'oubliez pas d'inviter vos amis pour des soirées inoubliables!



Halloween at RWA: A Spooky Celebration of Fun and Giving

By: Abby P.

"Seeing everyone come together and have fun at our events is the best part of being in SLA. I love sharing the joy and contributing to fun experiences for all my peers to enjoy", Brad C., SLA co-president stated." Dubbed "*Halloweek*" by the student body, the week leading up to October 31st was brimming with excitement. This Halloween, RWA came alive with a delightful mix of thrilling events, delicious desserts, and creative costumes. The festivities included a bake sale featuring plenty of spooky yet tasty treats, the much-loved haunted hallway and finally the highly anticipated, first ever Halloween fashion show. These memorable events were planned and organized by our Student Life Association, SLA Soar. Not only did these celebrations bring the Royal West community together, but also supported a worthy cause, with all proceeds from the week donated to breast cancer research. To kick off the week, the Halloween bake sale took place Tuesday during lunchtime in the foyer. The table overflowed with tasty desserts, their delightful aroma filling the hallways. On Wednesday, the haunted hallway opened during lunch. This activity is a fan favourite amongst Royal West students and draws a lot of interest each year. I could hear screams and laughter echoing through the halls and students could not stop talking about it for the rest of the day. Several SLA members came early and stayed after school to set everything up and it was a huge success.

The grand finale of "*Halloweek*" was the "*Dress to Impress*" Fashion Show, which drew in an unexpectedly large crowd. Although initial sign ups were limited, excitement spread throughout the week, leading to a packed auditorium during lunch. While things started off very hectic due to the larger than expected crowd, everything was under control after a couple of minutes and after a brief delay, we were able to begin. Students strutted the runway in their fantastic costumes, showcasing their creativity. Standouts included the bathtub, Shrek, a trio as the Three Little Pigs and a group of Alice in Wonderland characters. Prizes were awarded to the winners who stood out of the crowd.

Overall, Halloween was a spirited and fun week at Royal West Academy that was able to benefit a meaningful cause. Can't wait to see all the winter festivities SLA has in store for the New Year!

RWA



NEWS

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

February 2025

From Past to Present: An Unforgettable Last Museum Visit

By: Gabrielle P.

From serious portraits to splatters of paint on a canvas, art has changed a lot throughout history, that's without a doubt. On November 27th, 2024, secondary 5 students in the science stream (myself included) with an art elective had the privilege to visit the Montreal Museum of Fine Arts and see their Quebec and Canadian art collection. This collection allowed for us to see how art changed throughout our history, moving towards modernism.

Taking a dive into our past, we started way back when in the exhibit, getting to see paintings that were made over 200 years ago! It was super interesting; we got to see impressionist paintings with beautiful landscapes and portraits of people who lived so long ago.

We got to draw while looking at the exhibits, giving the paintings a modern twist, which was a very fun interactive element of the trip. We then left the old fashion and rolling hills of the countryside and jumped forward in time to the early 20th century. Here we got to see many vibrant colours, new textures and a want to portray the human soul and not the person. These then transformed to bright colours on a canvas and geometric shapes as we moved along, entering the modern age and more abstract art.

One of the best parts was the activity afterwards. We were given paints and pastels and told to let our imagination run wild and try to create something that reflected the art that we saw that day. It was super fun to see what everyone came up with, even the teachers joined in! When asked about the trip, student Noa Finkelstein said, "I found it super interesting how we got to see the progression of art through time and how they kept us engaged throughout. Overall, I really enjoyed it".

At the end of the day, we got to spend a nice time downtown with friends and teachers getting to appreciate beautiful works of art that we don't always get to see.

Dance Show: The Show of the Year

By: Olivia T.

The bright lights shining on the students—the adrenaline rush that hits you when you hear the music start— that's when you know it's showtime. The Royal West Academy Dance Show isn't just an extra curricular activity (ECA); it's a tradition—and one of the most popular and exciting ECA's Royal West has to offer. This annual event brings students closer to their school

community by raising money for Dans la Rue, an organization that helps at-risk teenagers experiencing homelessness.

Beyond enticing performances, our Dance Show is about connection. Dance Show has always been such an incredible way to forge new friendships and boost school spirit. It is an ECA for all grades and many dance styles, ranging from grade specific numbers to mixed-grade dances that help unite students across different grade levels. "The Dance Show has really helped me create amazing friendships and even with grade 11 students, which I never thought possible." shared one of our 8th grade dancers.

This spectacular production is helped by our two passionate and motivated teachers: Ms. Cayer and Mr. Zigby, alongside an exceptional team of grade 10 and 11 executives. These students handle anything from practice schedules, selecting the theme of the show, and ensuring each student finds their place on the dance floor. One of our Grade 11 execs, Nancy, said: "It's a lot of work but to see the show come together makes all the hours of work, the tears, and sweat make it worth it".

Each dance is also choreographed by students that dedicate so much of their extra time and creativity to create these jaw-dropping pieces. "I've been coming to watch my daughter dance in the show for four years now and every year the dances are better than the years before, and it leaves me shook," said one of the parents. There is a wide variety of dances, ranging from upbeat hip hop to breathtaking contemporary pieces. The standout moment of the show is definitely *CREW*. This dance number unites some of our most talented dancers, and leaves the crowd in awe. Their performance is not just about the moves—but about telling an emotional story that resonates with the audience, leaving a lasting impact. Another captivating number: the Irish duet is a mesmerizing performance that sends the audience in complete and utter awe. The eye-catching costumes—the rhythmic taps of their shoes—and their spontaneous precision—sends chills through the audience.

Mark your calendars for March 21st—this is a night you won't want to miss!



RWA



NEWS

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

February 2025

Behind the Scenes

By: Emma S.

On December 18th and 19th, 2024, Ms. S. Amro and students across all grades put their own twist on Shakespeare's *Twelfth Night*. Such a fantastic adaptation would not have been possible without the help of RWA's Lights and Sound Club. The Lights and Sound Club is a team of hardworking students who have put together countless events. From musicals to assemblies, or even just fixing a classroom projector, they have always pulled through for RWA, and it was no different this time around.

Before the show, I had the amazing opportunity to go behind the scenes and see how it all comes together. Peyton M. and Louisa S., two Sec. 5 students from Lights and Sound, took me into the booth, and I can confirm—it is just as cool as it looks! Everything from the view of the stage to the control panels, and even the stools that we sat on made me feel like I was producing a movie. The crew also tried their best to give me hands-on training, but it was much more difficult than expected. I learned that even the simplest task, like handling the spotlight, requires thorough training and precision.

While the technical aspect was very exciting, what I found most interesting was the experiences of the crew members. It was very surprising to hear the creative input that *Lights and Sound* gets surrounding events like the musical and, of course, *Twelfth Night*. While putting the show together, they got to pick sound effects which fit the vibe of the play and lights representing the personality of each character. They all confirmed that seeing the final product is very rewarding, but that their job never goes without challenges. Whether it be a dead microphone or a broken light, something always happens to go wrong. Nevertheless, Peyton says, "that's what's fun about Lights and Sound." Working through the technical difficulties and pre-show nerves as a team is what makes Lights and Sound what it is—an amusing task that will surely keep you on the edge of your seat.

Talking with the team before the show made my experience of *Twelfth Night* even more enjoyable; otherwise, I would not have appreciated all the fine details that went into the performance. While the cast members brought their characters to life, the Lights and Sound Club certainly brought the stage to life. Through this production and all the other assignments they have been tasked with, the team has proved at least one thing: that not all heroes wear capes!

A Night of Talent and Tradition

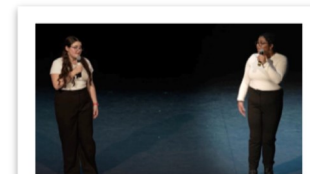
By: Laura P.

The Royal West Academy Variety Show is an annual springtime event. This year, the show will take place on April 4th, 2025 in the Performing Arts Center. This February, dozens of students will have the opportunity to audition for the show, thereby showcasing their incredible talents and creativity in front of all their family and peers. This event has become a beloved tradition, featuring a diverse range of performances—including musical acts, comedy skits, and dance routines. Students from all grade levels participate, highlighting the collaborative spirit that defines our school community. And once more, there have even been several teacher performances over the years; the students love it! As Melody M., a former performer at the Variety Show, shared, "I've performed in the RWA Variety Show every year, and I love it because it lets me share my passion for music and also be involved in the school community. I also love how it brings so many of us together. It's not just about one performance, but about seeing everyone's talent, creativity, and hard work come to life, and honestly, it's amazing!"

I can proudly say that in my 4 years at this school I have never missed the chance to see my friends and teachers perform—and I look forward to this year's show, too! The Variety Show has become an essential component of RWA's culture, uniting students from different clubs and teams to collaborate on something truly special. It offers a platform for students to step outside of their bubble and express themselves in such unique ways.

In addition to being an entertaining memorable evening, the event also serves a charitable purpose. Proceeds from ticket sales and donations will go towards supporting the charity Dans la Rue: a non-profit organization for homeless and at-risk youth in Montreal.

As the big night approaches, excitement is building amongst both the performers and the Royal West community. The Variety Show promises to be a highlight of the school year; a reflection of the hard work, creativity, and unity of our school's talented students.



RWA



NEWS

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

February 2025

Royal West Academy Takes the Wheel on Road Safety

By: Melody M.

Every day, the streets surrounding Royal West Academy are bustling with students and cars alike, becoming a cause for concern for the RWA community. Many worry that a disaster could be just around the corner.

This hit home after an RWA student was hit by a car near the school. Thankfully, he was not seriously injured, although many were not as lucky as shown by the SAAQ 2024 Road Safety Report. This is a wake-up call for everyone to look both ways. It should not have taken a near-death experience to realize it was time for change.

The most dangerous intersection near the school is at Westminster and Ainslie, due to many students crossing at all times, the high volume of traffic, and the train crossings. Oftentimes, cars don't stop at the crosswalks or stop signs—failing to see those waiting to pass. The danger is real—not just for RWA students, but for everyone.

A teacher at Royal West, Mr. J. Magee, who almost got hit by a car at the intersection of Westminster and Sherbrooke, shared how his experience was distressing and frustrating. While crossing the street, someone almost hit him while backing up to avoid the train barrier but not noticing the pedestrians walking behind them. It should not be this hazardous just to cross the road.

The RWA administration, the Governing Board, the PPO, the town of Montreal-West, and the SPVM are collectively stepping on the gas by diverging into these issues. PPO meetings are being held to see what can be done to improve road safety in Montreal-West. Principal Mr. Pita mentioned that the school has been in communication with local officials to find solutions, from getting a crossing guard to prohibiting left turns from Sherbrooke and Broughton onto Westminster.

The road to safety isn't a short one, but every step helps, and we've already begun with grants from the *Programme d'aide financière du Fonds de la sécurité routière* and the installation of flashing stop signs which will cause drivers to hit the brakes—literally. Paving the way for change may take time, but every effort brings us closer to safety. It's time to shift gears and ultimately make road safety a top priority—because no life is worth the risk.



A Night with the Grinch

By: Dimitra K.

On December 6th, 2024, Royal West Academy's very own Grad Committee hosted the first ever pajama holiday movie night! The movie had been chosen through a poll on their Instagram account to make sure as many students as possible had a say in what to watch, but the winner was *The Grinch*! This event took place in the Memorial Gym from 6:30PM-9PM and students were able to watch the movie while enjoying the comfort of their pajamas. The excitement for the movie night spread around the school very quickly, leading to an amazing ticket sale outcome.

When the clock hit 6:30PM, people were already lined up at the Memorial Gym door waiting to enter. The Grad Committee organized the sale of hot chocolate, popcorn and sugar cookies to delight all the students watching the movie and make their experience even better. In addition, SLA generously donated the leftover chips from their Junior Snowball Soirée Dance, diversifying the snack options at the movie for students' enjoyment.

At 7PM, the movie started as scheduled and finished at 9PM—and the night was an absolute success! The Grad Committee was able to collect an amazing profit, the event ran smoothly, and most importantly, the students had a fantastic time! A Grad Committee member who prefers to remain anonymous said, "Everyone had an amazing time, and thank you so much to all the students who came to make this night possible and especially memorable!"

Stay tuned for more events coming soon by following our Instagram account @rwagrad2025 or checking for our announcements on the bulletin." The Grad Committee will be hosting many fun events like these throughout the rest of the year and all students of RWA are encouraged to come to these activities and have an incredible time!



RWA



NEWS

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

February 2025

The Next Step

By: Emily H.

As the secondary 5 students know, Cegep applications are just around the corner and the stress is kicking in. They strive for high grades, aiming to give their best performances for the first two terms. Whispers in the halls of people worrying about where to apply for Cegep, hoping they make the right choice. To gain insight, I decided to track down Royal West Academy graduates and ask if they think the Cegep they chose was the best one for them.

While there are so many choices to make between the programs, courses, teachers, and ultimately the school, I narrowed it down to the important basics. All the students said RWA greatly prepared them for their post secondary studies and their current workloads. There are many options for schools, and I got the inside scoop on all there is to know.

Many people I contacted attended either John Abbot or Dawson College. These two schools offer their students many programs and activities. A student from John Abbot stated "I think it's the same as the other options [but I enjoy my program]. The science program is especially good because it's not split into health and applied, it is just pure sciences."

As I spoke to these individuals, they recounted that they have been really missing the simplicity of high school. "There's a lot more independence that I do not appreciate, such as long breaks between classes."

Another option for schools in Montreal is Dawson College. After interviewing someone who goes there, they said "Dawson programs are good but especially for people who live far from downtown wanting to branch out and make new friends." It is demonstrated that both these schools have their advantages and disadvantages but from comparing the two sources both are good options in Montreal.

Statistically, "91% of people graduating from John Abbott would go there again" and students from Dawson are "twice as likely to recommend their college compared to students at other CEGEPs".

Another option is branching out to other schools such as prep schools in the United States and elsewhere. "These schools

offer unique learning opportunities and an involving community for all their students," a source stated.

With all the schools, the choice is daunting and could be scary, but Royal West Academy has prepared all their students to the best of their abilities. Academic and social skills are learnt in the span of five years that can help all the individuals navigate their way through a big and new school. Best of luck to all secondary five students!

A new Addition to your Everyday Outfit

By: Eva B.

Attention, Secondary 5 students! Your long-awaited grad apparel is arriving this March! Something special is coming your way—it will be a cute, comfortable, and meaningful part of your journey at RWA.

After months of collaboration, brainstorming, and creativity, the grad committee—led by Ms. Gagliano—has worked immensely hard to create the perfect design, one that reflects the countless memories and strong sense of community this grade has built over the years. "We wanted the design to be something everyone could wear with pride, even after we graduate," said Emma, a member of the committee, emphasizing how the apparel is meant to be both chic and timeless.

Throughout the process, challenges were faced – such as picking logos, adjusting designs, and making sure everyone's voice was heard. "There were some disagreements, and the vote wasn't unanimous," Emma admitted, "But in the end, we compromised and made sure that everyone was happy with the result." The final design perfectly encapsulates the spirit of our class of 2025. Who's excited? I know that I am!

The apparel is set to be not only comfy, but classy. Something you'll feel proud to wear long after graduation. "This is a way of remembering Royal West and the amazing memories we've created here," Emma explained. Beyond just looking good, it's about celebrating the unique bond that has formed within our community. "It's a symbol of everything we've been through together," she added.

The committee poured their heart into creating this design, and they're confident it will be something that students can cherish for years to come. Stay tuned, as this is shaping up to be the best grad apparel yet!



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February 2025

Penny Wars: An Annual Success

By: Christopher P.

Every December for the last 25 years Royal West Academy's students and staff have been organizing a week of fundraising in support of St Georges Community Center. This includes bake sales, hot chocolate stands, raffle tickets and games such as Penny Wars. Penny Wars is a unique and incredibly successful fundraising initiative run by Mr. Bateman and his leadership and leisure studies students.

How does it work? Simple, every grade is given a bucket where they will put their donations. Each cent is valued at 1 point. All coins are positive points and bills, or "bombs", are negative points. During the first week of December, students from each grade will add coins to their grade's bucket and put bills in other grades' buckets. This spikes a friendly competition for a great cause. The winner is decided by the total amount of donations at the end of the week and the winning grade receives a half day off school later in the year, a small but celebrated prize.

This year the Royal West Academy student body managed to raise over 2,500 dollars within a span of only five days. An incredible achievement. This year I had the opportunity to interview a number of students who made donations. When asked what led them to make donations, one student said "it's for a good cause and it's really fun", others enjoyed the competitive aspect of the game and the sense of school-wide pride that Penny Wars creates. Personally, my family has come to love Penny Wars, saving change all year round for donations.

RWA's Penny Wars and other fundraisers bring the school and community spirit together, creating long lasting memories all for a great cause, I hope Penny Wars will continue to thrive and inspire our community for years to come



Tactics of the Penny Wars

By: Darshan H.

This year, the secondary five students of RWA won Penny Wars with over 100,000 points. This translates into over \$1000 worth of coins. How was this achieved? Simple: strategy. Victory was achieved via multiple tactics and ploys. Mostly though, there was just a lot of spare change. How does this happen? There are many ways. However, here are some of the more useful strategies.

Firstly: saving. By taking a quick look at history, we see that the only grade that tends to win is grade 11, with the occasional grade 7 victory. This is because they have more time to save their money for a big splash on their last year. Next, the most important strategy: patience. If they spread their assets too thin, they'll never get anywhere. By saving for a long time then collectively pooling their money for a large donation all at once, they can consistently pull off victories. This is why the infamous tradition of the wheelbarrow/cooler full of coins was created. First off, it looks cool. Secondly: by this point, they have had enough time to build up their arsenal of toonies, loonies, quarters, dimes, and nickels, which is used as a secret deposit for the secondary five donations that remain hidden until the time is right. An eye-witness account from an anonymous student simply proved the effectiveness of this strategy: "The cooler was very heavy. It took three people just to carry it down the hall".

Another very important strategy they employ is proper timing. By secretly stashing everything away, they are able to place their stash all at once, and just at the very end. By doing so, they make it so that other years don't have time to react. Although it doesn't prevent the grade 11 bucket from being bombed to the moon and back as the other grades prepare for the oncoming storm of metal, it does prevent the redoubling of efforts from seeing just how much the secondary fives end up putting in each year.

Lastly, diplomacy may play a more important role in Penny Wars than you might think. For example: Mr. Lapierre was rumored to be funding the secondary fours. With this in mind, other grades coordinated to bomb them in return. Although the rumor proved untrue, the facts speak for themselves. Diplomacy is most certainly an option when it comes to Penny Wars.

Essentially, certain strategies are almost essential when it comes to claiming victory in Penny Wars. If used in tandem, any grade could come out on top.

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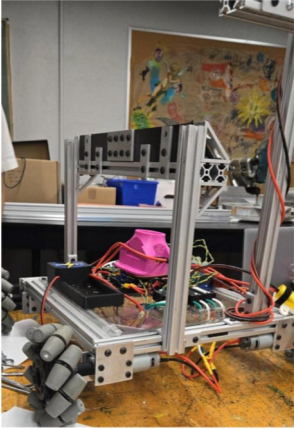
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February 2025

RWA Robotics Hard At Work As Competition Approaches

By: Ian R-H.



For the past two months, room 103 has been buzzing with activity as the Senior Robotics Team is hard at work, preparing for the upcoming competition. This year, our robot will have to place ring-shaped game pieces on posts around the playing field in order to capture stations which have been arranged in a 3 by 3 tic-tac-toe grid. Capturing a row of three of these stations will win our team bonus points at the end of the match. The design and building process has

been both fun and challenging as we have tried to make a robot that is both fast enough to capture many stations before the other teams' robots, while still being able to place the game pieces on the posts with precision.

I am very proud of the robot team's commitment. We've come into school to work on weekends and even on Ped Days, for sessions that last almost as long as a regular school day! Of course, it's not as draining as a typical day at school. The atmosphere is much more relaxed as we put on some music and work with our friends on a project that genuinely interests us. Also, since we have a lot more time during the weekend sessions than during the ones after school on Wednesdays, the bulk of the work gets done on the weekend. Without these extra sessions, our robot would definitely not be finished in time for the competition!

Speaking of which, with the competition being held in February this year instead of in April like it was last year, we will only have around 2 months after the end of the winter break to finish our robot. These 2 months will also be filled with important events that could slow the progress of our robot such as midterm exams, the Grade 11 New York Trip and Science Fair. However, our team captain, Peyton M., remains hopeful. "The competition is much sooner than last year, but I feel that we are much farther ahead this time, and I think that we have some good ideas to work on for the new year." While the months after the winter holidays will certainly be hectic, I am confident that we will be well prepared to give a solid performance at the competition.

'Rally' to Greatness

By: Malina H.

With the tryouts having just finished and the team officially formed, now is the perfect time to take a closer look at Royal West Academy's badminton program. Run by Ms. Bateman and Isaac L., each team meets twice a week for practices—with occasional third sessions when there is an upcoming game. Badminton requires a mix of passion, determination, patience, and dedication. And as someone who tried out for this year's secondary five girls' team, I can attest how serious our coaches are about this team. Let's dive into the journey of this year's secondary five girls' tryouts.

Tryouts took place in our new gym and consisted of playing a doubles games followed by singles 'king of the court' to finish it off. The doubles games encouraged friendly competition, and helped calm the nerves of players right from the start. Instead of focusing on individual scores, judges evaluated overall gameplay, keeping an eye out for exceptionalism, both as individuals and as pairs. The judges, Coach Isaac and Ms. Bateman, joined by two secondary four leadership students, observed the games to ensure a fair and thorough evaluation. After a halftime partner swap and additional doubles games, the session transitioned into singles matches. Solo games help promote more movement, as well as provide an opportunity to stand out and demonstrate individual skills as a player. No cuts were made after the first tryout, allowing everyone a second opportunity to showcase their abilities.

The second tryouts focused on simulating what an actual practice would look like. Common drills from previous years, starting with shot repetition in pairs, served as warm-ups. After rallying in pairs, players were split into singles or doubles games depending on preferences, and then we concluded the session with movement exercises. It was an intense — yet enjoyable—couple of hours! Afterwards, it was announced that the list of aspirants was going to be cut down to a total of eleven players.

Anxiously and excitedly, we waited for the third tryout, which ended up becoming a brief meeting instead, due to a gym scheduling conflict. Gathered in the hallway, Ms. Bateman gave out forms and outlined the expectations for team members. To our surprise, no further cuts were made to the team, we had all made it! We hope to see you at our games, or even as part of next year's team



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February 2025

A Moment that the Wildcats Will Never Forget

By: Jordan B.

The juvenile boys volleyball team had an amazing performance during this 2024-2025 GMAA league, with a record of 13 wins and 3 losses. Due to our endless practice hours, dedication, and hard work, we won the GMAA finals against Vincent Massey, securing our spot in the 2025 RSEQ provincials in April. Three of our team's best players had graduated last year, unfortunately weakening the team's strength at the start of the year. Their absence pushed us to strive harder in order to compensate, working towards becoming the best team yet. We were happy to welcome new players to the team from secondary three and four. The season started off a bit rocky as we worked to rebuild the team chemistry that had faded over the summer. It took countless long practices in order to get to that right place, though once we got that momentum back, we were on track to make the playoffs.

The playoffs began with the RWA Wildcats in second place, WIC in fourth, Laurier Macdonald in third, and Vincent Massey in first. As soon as we arrived, the team was definitely nervous, yet ready for the fiercely competitive games up ahead. As soon as we walked into the gym and started warming up, we were overtaken by a sense of accomplishment just for being there. We all knew that we could rely on each other to do well. Our first game was a breeze—and then we needed to wait until the other teams were done playing to determine our opponent in the finals. This is where the anticipation started feeling overwhelming; the nerves started to kick in. As the gym began filling up everyone became all that much more anxious.

Once the game time came around, we were all ready and locked in for the intense three sets ahead of us. Our coach, David, was ready for the impending game, ensuring that we were all equally focused. As soon as the game finished, I jumped into the arms of my coach and teammates in celebration of the victory we earned.

After that game, we came out on top in the third set, with a final score of 15 - 12 for us. I will never forget that feeling of accomplishment and happiness I experienced as I left that gym.

Now we are in the process of more intense, grueling training to get ready for the upcoming games and most importantly: provincials in April. There's no question that our perseverance and motivation did not go to waste as we look ahead to a victorious future for the Royal West Wildcats boys volleyball team.



Wrestling Finals: The Final countdown

By: Thomas N.

With the wrestling finals on February 13th at Howard S. Billings High School, students should be marking their calendars and cheering for their RWA peers. This is more than just a competition; it's a showcase of determination and school pride that is inside all of our wrestlers. They are looking forward to putting their hard work and talent on full display.

This year, our team has been a force to reckon with, by dominating the mats and leaving a lasting impression on their opponents. From impressive takedowns to masterful escapes, their season is nothing short of remarkable. And now, with the championship closing in—they are ready to push past their limits and bring home some medals.

Our very own coach is Mr. Chen, whose unwavering determination, leadership, and dedication has inspired the team throughout the season. He has been a driving force in our success, demonstrating resilience and school spirit and teaching our wrestlers what it means to represent RWA.

The finals is not just about the athletes; it's also about us coming together as one. This is our time to cheer, show our support, and remind our wrestlers that our whole school is behind them. Your enthusiasm can inspire wrestlers to rise to the occasion and leave everything on the mat.

As the wrestlers compete, they carry their pride with them. Their setbacks and challenges throughout the season has made our wrestlers prepared for what is coming. Every practice, every match, and all the effort put in—has led to this moment. We are ready to give it their all and represent Royal West Academy.

Mark your calendars, bring your energy, and prepare for an event not to be missed. Let's come together and cheer for our wrestlers. The mats are ready, and our wrestlers are prepared. This is our time to shine. See you at the finals!



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February 2025

Pickleball Takes Royal West By Storm!

By: Tanay P.

This year, Royal West Academy introduced an exciting new ECA: pickleball! Whether you're looking to compete or just have some fun, this fast-paced sport has something for everyone, from casual playing to competitive divisions.

The highlight of the year so far? The first-ever pickleball tournaments, which were held in fall of 2024. Students demonstrated their skills, strategy, and determination, making for some thrilling matches, organized by age category. In the end, Chelsey G., one of the many winners of matches throughout the tournament, emerged as the champion of the bantam girls singles division, and tournament MVP.

Chelsey first discovered pickleball at summer camp. When she heard that Royal West was launching a pickleball program, she knew she had to join. "I wanted to try it and make new friends in the process," she shared. "It helped me improve my hand-eye coordination, reflexes, teamwork, and sportsmanship." Alex B., the champion of the juvenile boys singles division, shared his thoughts. "I've never played pickleball before joining this ECA," he said. "My advice for beginners would be to not be afraid to make mistakes. Practice is important and soon, you'll be having a lot of fun playing with your friends."

The tournaments are not just about winning though— it brought the school community together. Players cheered for each other, and spectators enjoyed watching the fast-paced action. Whether students play casually or in the competitive league, the energy on the courts is electric.

This new ECA would not have been possible without Ms. M.-C. O'Neil and Mr. R. Aiken, who decided to share their love for pickleball with Royal West. They wanted to bring a fresh and engaging sport to our school, and it's safe to say they succeeded! "It's amazing to see how quickly students have embraced pickleball," Ms. O'Neil said. "The level of enthusiasm and sportsmanship has been incredible." With such a great start, pickleball is sure to become a crowd favourite at RWA. So, whether you're an athlete or just someone looking to try something new, grab a paddle and join the fun because pickleball is for everyone!

W-I-L-D-C-A-T-S! Wildcats! GO WILDCATS!

By: Kiana H.

The Juvenile girls' volleyball team is one of the most highly regarded and respected teams at RWA. The team has earned



its place by putting effort both on and off the court. They have many pregame rituals that help them perform their best. A great atmosphere and strong connection between players are also crucial factors that influence how the team plays, along with the support of the bench and spectators.

Off the court, preparation for games starts with a good night's rest and a healthy breakfast. Additionally, many players have their own pre-game rituals to help them boost confidence in their skills. These rituals include visualizing game play, planning specific movements, wearing the same socks for every game, or listening to a favourite song. The team also has shared traditions, particularly during finals, where they get ready together, wear ribbons in their hair, and write their numbers on their legs. These rituals are not unique to this year's girls Juvenile team, these are traditions girls volleyball teams at RWA have upheld for the past 10 years!

Trust in your teammates is a crucial factor that influences the entire team's performance on the court. For example, every point starts with a perfect pass from their libero, Jessica M., who has the trust and confidence of every player on the team. Another significant aspect during games is cheering and showing RWA school spirit. This positively impacts the players' mindsets by motivating them to perform their absolute best!

In addition to their fans, the team takes pride in having many cheers. When the server gets a point directly from their serve, they yell "A-C-E ACE!". According to Mr. Mateus, a longtime staff member involved with the volleyball program, "The atmosphere in the gym is a positive thing that motivates the girls on the court".

Although the GMAA season has concluded, the Juvenile girls will continue to play in the RSEQ, which runs until late April. They hope you come support the amazing team this new year!