

RWA



NEWS

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

December 2025

WORDS FROM THE ADMIN



*Principal Tony Pita (center)
with Vice-Principal Catherine Lumsden (left) and
Vice-Principal Steven Manstavich (right)*

EMSB celebrating retirees & 25 years of service

The school board hosted a special event to honour retirees and those celebrating 25 years of service, recognizing their dedication and impact. RWA's own, Caroline Benamron, French teacher, was celebrated as a retiree, though her familiar presence in the hallways remains, as her love for students and teaching draws her back often as a substitute teacher. Her continued commitment is a testament to her passion for education.



Marching Band Rehearsals

Under the supervision of Ms. Purdy, the RWA Marching Band can be seen during some lunchtimes rehearsing in neighbouring streets.



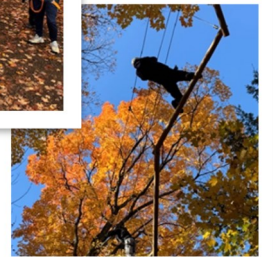
The Main Office Has Spooky Spirit

The Main Office was all decked out for Halloween, bringing a fun and festive spirit to everyone who walked in. A special thank you to the office staff for always creating such a wonderful environment for all.



Leadership Takes to the Trees

The leadership classes spent an exciting and challenging day in October in the trees at Abraska, where students strengthened their teamwork, communication skills, and willingness to step outside their comfort zones. Through adventure-based activities, they built confidence and deepened their connections with one another. A big thank you to Mr. Bateman for organizing this annual experience.



Order of Canada

We are proud to share that Dr. Mahesh Sharma, a cherished professor, mentor, and long-serving community member of the RWA Governing Board, has been appointed to the Order of Canada.

Dr. Sharma has devoted 35 years of volunteer service to RWA, shaping generations of students through his guidance, compassion, and unwavering commitment to education. He has also established numerous scholarships for graduating students in honour of his family members who were victims of Air India Flight 182, ensuring their legacy continues to inspire future scholars. This national recognition reflects not only his remarkable professional achievements, but also his profound impact on our community. We extend our warmest congratulations and deepest gratitude to Dr. Sharma.

RWA



NEWS

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

December 2025

Remembrance Day

On November 10th, Secondary V students gathered at the Montreal West Monument Cenotaph for a solemn commemorative community ceremony honoring the fallen of Montreal West. On November 11th, Secondary I-IV students gathered at assemblies to remember and reflect. Thank you to Mr. Dupuis and the student participants for the tremendous assemblies.

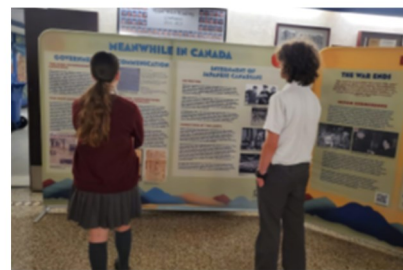


Royal West Academy Explores History This Remembrance with a Traveling Exhibit

Staff and students at Royal West Academy were invited by Ms. Jag Trehin (PDCIA) to meet members of the Royal Montreal Regiment Foundation (*Je Me Souviens*) for interactive guided tours of a special Remembrance exhibit titled: "Impossible Odds: Canadians and the Battle of Hong Kong."

This traveling exhibit gave students the opportunity to discover the story of the *Battle of Hong Kong*, Canada's (and Quebec's) first land battle of WWII. The exhibition explored the global context of events during this time, examined how the Battle of Hong Kong affected life at home in Canada, and addressed what happened to soldiers who returned after the war.

Several classes across multiple grade levels took advantage of this unique opportunity to hear these stories and engage with history during the exhibit's stay at Royal West Academy from November 5–11.



RWA



NEWS

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

December 2025

Diversity Caravan ECA: A Journey Through Cultures

On Friday, November 21, students participating in our Diversity Caravan ECA embarked on a unique cultural journey, exploring the rich traditions of both Eastern and Western faiths in a single day. The experience included visits to a Sikh Temple and an Islamic Community Center within the vibrant Southshore community.

Throughout the day, students had the opportunity to:

- Engage in guided tours of sacred spaces and learn about their significance.
- Meet community members and elders, gaining firsthand insights into their traditions and values.
- Participate in meal preparation in a community kitchen and enjoy authentic cultural dishes.
- Discover the resources and support these faith-based organizations provide to the broader community.

This immersive experience fostered understanding, respect, and appreciation for diverse cultures and beliefs, reinforcing our commitment to inclusivity and global citizenship.



Boys' Wrestling

Royal West Academy Wrestlers competed at the Quebec Open on Saturday November 8th with some great results. Alexander L. placed 5th at the 60 kg U17 Boys division while Adam S. won Gold at the 75 kg U19 Men's division.



Juvenile Boys Volleyball

The Juvenile boys' volleyball team won the GMAA championship for the 2nd year in a row. Led by their alumni coach, David Grossman, and staff organizer Mr. Pomenti, the Juvenile boys turned hours of practice into an impressive series of wins against LCCHS and Royal Vale High School in the finals on November 4th. With leadership from their captain, Alexander C., supported by setter Kayden B. and covered by libero Blake T., the Juvenile boys really showed the competition who is on top.



- Dec. 15 - 18 - Theatre ECA
- Dec. 16 - Dental Screening
- Dec. 17 - Cafeteria Holiday Lunch
- Dec. 17 - Locker Clean-up
- Dec. 19 - Holiday Accessory Day
- Dec. 22 - Jan. 2 - Holidays
- Jan. 5 - Ped Day
- Jan. 6 - 7 - Study Day
- Jan. 7 - 8 - Sec I & 2 Course Selection visits
- Jan. 14 - 15 - Winter Concerts
- Jan. 21 - RWAHSA Virtual Meeting

RWA



NEWS

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

December 2025

Royal West Academy Foundation News

Save the Date

RWA'S 2ND ANNUAL
COMEDY NIGHT

EMCEE
FRANCO TADDEO

COMEDIANS TO BE ANNOUNCED

FRIDAY, APRIL 24TH 2026
SHOWTIME 7:30PM

ROYAL WEST ACADEMY

\$40 ENTRY
INTENDED FOR AUDIENCES AGED 16+
TICKETS ON SALE SOON

Royal West Academy
FOUNDATION

WWW.RWAF.CA

Thank You...

Thanks to the incredible generosity of our families, alumni, and friends on Giving Tuesday, the Royal West Academy Foundation is closer to reaching its fundraising goal for this school year. A Giving Tuesday prize draw was held to thank our donors, and the winner has been contacted.

Every dollar donated goes directly towards classroom transformation and enhanced student learning. Four Active Learning Classrooms—modern, flexible spaces that promote collaboration, creativity, and engagement—have already been completed, with more to come.

Every contribution enriches the Royal West Academy experience and shapes the future of learning in ways that extend beyond traditional school resources.

It's never too late to show your support!
Visit rwaf.ca and give today!

Give Today!

**GIVING US
ROOM TO LEARN
TOGETHER**
The Active Learning Classroom Campaign



Happy Holidays
AND HAVE A WONDERFUL NEW YEAR!



RWA



NEWS

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

December 2025

Royal West Academy Home & School Association News



& FundScrip
RWAHSA group code: **6T4XMZ**

RWAHSA has partnered with FundScrip for a fundraiser made simple: support RWAHSA while you shop for the things you already need, and a percentage comes back to us! It's the easiest way to shop, gift, and support—all at once! Click [HERE](#) to become a supporter of RWAHSA On FundScrip.

1

Buy Gift Cards

Spend \$100, Get \$100...
buy cards at face value, get
face value at the retailers -
you lose nothing!



2

Shop As Usual

With cards from over 230
leading retailers, there's no
need to change your
shopping habits



3

Pay With Gift Cards

Pay with gift cards instead of
credit/debit/cash for your
everyday items & gifts



4

Raise Funds

Each purchase automatically
includes a donation for
your group that can quickly
add up over time



Royal West Academy PPO News

The countdown to the end of classes and the beginning of the holidays has started! Tamara Soles, PhD, Psychologist, shares with us the following: "As schedules fill and excitement rises, grounding ourselves in gratitude and family rituals helps create the calm our kids crave. These moments of connection become the memories they carry long after the holidays end.

"Following these valuable insights from Dr. Soles, we wish to dedicate our newsletter entry to expressions of gratitude. We are grateful for the triad of students, RWA and parent body. Our children are living in challenging times, and they are paving their educational journey with determination and model citizenship. We are grateful to the staff of RWA, for their engagement and commitment to the success of our children. As a PPO member states: "At RWA, our kids meet other students who are also curious and intelligent, and have a wide range of interests, which RWA encourages...As a result, our kids have made some deep and lasting friendships with fellow students - all of whom, it seems - continue to grow as grounded and well-rounded humans".

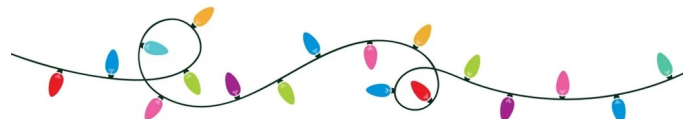
Lastly, we are grateful to the parents who have volunteered their time and pursued initiatives to benefit all RWA students. Namely, Joanna Duy (former PPO Chair and current Safety Committee Chair) and Jessica Houde-Woytiuk (EMSB commissioner, Governing Board parent/Delegate PC). Their ongoing efforts to provide RWA and the community with a crossing guard can be supported by signing the petition here: <https://www.assnat.qc.ca/en/exprimez-votre-opinion/petition/Petition-11823/index.html>

PPO has a defined mandate, yet there are countless opportunities to contribute and participate in the success of all our children. Just as every student at RWA is special and unique, we know that parents and guardians have boundless skills to contribute to our Wellness, Social and Safety committees. You are welcome to join PPO and write to us at rwappo2024@gmail.com



The Royal West Academy school store (RWA CO-OP) began in 2023. It is a totally volunteer-run enterprise, open daily at lunch, and serves as a second hand uniform shop, school supply store and swag/spirit wear boutique. It's not just a store - it's so much more! From art pencils, locks, science

boards, snacks, and more, the RWA Co-op is a space where students can volunteer, shop, recommend items, donate items, and be a part of their school store, all while raising funds for RWAHSA.



RWA



NEWS

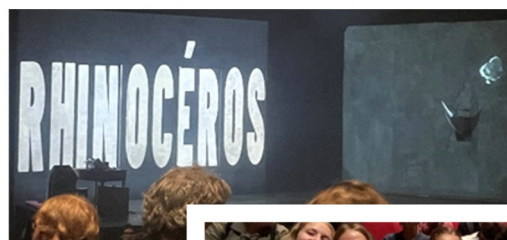
WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

Rhinocéros au théâtre!

Par : Naima H.

Ce n'est pas tous les jours qu'on peut voir des rhinocéros à Montréal, mais grâce aux sorties de théâtre organisées par Mme Moreau, nous en avons vu! Bien sûr, pas des vrais rhinocéros, mais *Rhinocéros* d'Eugène Ionesco. C'est une pièce de théâtre absurde, écrite en 1959, et c'est un commentaire social qui nous a fait beaucoup réfléchir. Les étudiants qui ont participé à cette activité ont eu la chance de voir *Rhinocéros* gratuitement au théâtre Denise-Pelletier. C'était une excellente représentation de la pièce, avec une distribution petite, mais très talentueuse et un décor très bien fait. Tous les mouvements des acteurs et des objets étaient vraiment intentionnels, et chaque décision ajoutait à l'expérience. Cette représentation incorporait très bien l'humour physique. Ce n'était pas du burlesque, c'était simplement engageant et drôle. Quelques jours après, nous nous sommes rencontrés pour discuter de la pièce. Nous avons parlé des thèmes et de ce que nous avons compris, ainsi que des choix du décor général de cette mise en scène. C'était vraiment intéressant de voir toutes les impressions variées et les interprétations des autres étudiants.

La prochaine pièce qu'on ira voir est *La Shéhérazade des pauvres* de Michel Tremblay. C'est une suite de l'histoire d'Hosanna, pièce sortie en 1973. C'est une opportunité fantastique pour ceux qui veulent en apprendre davantage sur le théâtre québécois, pour ceux qui veulent être exposés davantage à la scène artistique montréalaise ou pour ceux qui veulent simplement passer une soirée agréable avec des amis. Merci beaucoup à Mme Moreau d'avoir organisé cette activité!

**Blacksmithing at Royal West Academy**

By: River B.

Last Friday, November 28th, Royal West Academy students aged 16 and up participated in their first blacksmithing workshop. It was a small group of six students, who all took the time out of their pedagogical day to come down to the Old Port and go to the [Forges de Montreal](#). The Forges is a non-profit organization with the goal of preserving traditional blacksmithing practices in the wake of its virtual disappearance from today's modernist society, and offering many different programs for beginners and intermediates alike. *The Forges* is equipped with five coal-fired forges and one gas powered, as well as 6 fully equipped stations with anvils, various hammers, and every other tool you could need. The students learned how to make an intricate decorative hook out of a single bar of metal and a nail to hang the hook. They each returned with their creations at the end of the day! In the coming months, they will be going back for two more workshops, leaving them with some very cool objects, stories, and skills that few people have the opportunity to experience today.



RWA NEWS

Editor Kelly Arfin-Gurevitch (RWA parent)
Junior Assistant Editor Emma Q. (Sec V student)
Junior Assistant Editor Anastasia M. (Sec IV student)
Junior Assistant Editor Clara C. (Sec IV student)
Junior Assistant Editor Juliet K. K. (Sec IV student)
Junior Assistant Editor Kristen N. (Sec IV student)
Staff Advisor Ms. Catherine Lumsden (Vice-Principal)

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

December 2025

Diversity Caravan: Where Culture Meets Curiosity

By: Fiona C.-M.

At Royal West, learning doesn't always stay in the classroom—and Diversity Caravan proves that sometimes the best way to understand the world is to step right into it. This unique activity gives students the chance to explore different cultures and faiths in Montreal through hands-on, real-world experiences that go far beyond textbooks and worksheets. Started in 2017 by Ms. Trehin, she shared how similar outings inspired her during her undergraduate studies at York and Concordia University. "Those experiences brought everything we were learning in class to life," she explains. Over the years, Diversity Caravan has developed into a program that fosters real connection and understanding, offering students several meaningful opportunities. The goal is simple yet powerful: help students move past stereotypes and appreciate all people who live alongside us in our communities. As Ms. Trehin puts it, "these experiences help bring people closer together while recognizing and appreciating our similarities. So much is similar across cultures and faiths!"

The outings take place on pedagogical days. So far, we have visited Kahnawake in September, where students had the opportunity to: visit an active longhouse with some storytelling and art from community elders, participate in a Lacrosse workshop, and a medicine walk in nature. The outing in November included stops at a Sikh temple and an Islamic Community Center in the South Shore—an unforgettable day of learning, sharing, and discovery. In just one day, students toured sacred spaces, met community members, helped with meal preparation, and got to taste cultural dishes at the Sikh temple. It's not every school activity that lets you learn, taste, and build deeper cultural understanding all at once, and that's what really makes it stand out!

The best part? This activity is accessible to all. There's no cost for students, and they can earn community, culture, or environment credits while sharing in experiences that truly stick with them.

What makes Diversity Caravan special isn't just where it takes you, but what you take away from it. Students come back with a better understanding and appreciation of various traditions, beliefs, and most importantly of each other. It challenges assumptions we may have based on stereotypes and previous biases and celebrates diversity as something to admire rather than fear.

At a school that takes pride in global awareness and strong

community spirit, Diversity Caravan is more than just a day out of classes. It shows that some of the most meaningful learning happens when we step outside of our comfort zones together. At Royal West Academy, this is more than a day out of school—it's a step toward a more connected world.



Celebrating Culture at Royal West Academy

By: Bianca M.

In our school, culture plays an important role. Luckily, I had the chance to interview the one and only Ms. Cayer, a beloved CCQ teacher, who has witnessed how our school encourages individuality.

When I asked her about RWA's view on different cultures, she said, "we have a very welcoming community at Royal West", where everyone can find a safe place to be themselves. The feeling of community is so much bigger than just one classroom. From the second you get in the building, you can see students from different backgrounds working together, laughing in the halls, and doing the same extracurricular activities.

Ms. Cayer explained that the school has a lot of activities to celebrate culture. She specifically mentioned events like Latin Heritage Day, organized by the Spanish class, and Black History Month in February, when presentations and activities are put together to educate the RWA community. These events help students feel proud of their heritage and teach others about different traditions in a fun and respectful way. In CCQ and other classes, students often explore cultures through projects, art, and discussions. The secondary four students learn about celebrations from around the world, while secondary five students focus on Indigenous cultures in Canada. Ms. Cayer believes that these lessons are important because they demonstrate that culture is not just a textbook topic, but it's something we experience daily with our families and friends. For her, everything ties back to one key idea: respect. She said, "Respect is very important at our school," and she feels the school really does provide students with a safe environment where their voices are heard, especially when they are worried or uncomfortable.



RWA



NEWS

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

December 2025

One Sees More Talent than RWA Theater Can Hold!

By Kathie W.

"Though she be but little, she is fierce!"

This famous quote from William Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* easily describes the energy of the RWA Theater Club rehearsals of the past 3 months! Although love potions and mismatched relationships sound chaotic, the cast have been hustling and bustling with excitement as they perfect their roles to bring Shakespeare's enchanting story to life!

The RWA Theater is an ECA, organized by Ms. Suzanne Amro, where students from Secondary I to V interested in acting in a Shakespeare play, audition for a role. This year's production, if you haven't guessed already, is *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. So many students auditioned that they had to be separated into different casts, and then the magic begins! The performers meet for rehearsals after school on Mondays, Wednesdays, Thursdays, and sometimes even on Saturdays and Sundays. Students also have the wonderful opportunity to work with a professional theater actor, Ms. Madeleine Scovil, whose expertise helps improve their presentation and deepen their understanding of Shakespearean theater. While others may prefer to stay in bed during the weekend, these actors are eager to come to school early in the morning to work on their lines and choreography so they can perform at their best.



I have had the pleasure of attending two rehearsals, and let me tell you, these performers are dedicated. It's almost like they have taken a love potion to fall in love with performing such a difficult, but iconic play!

Unlike the Musical, where the actors are mic-ed up and surrounded with melodies all the time, the Shakespeare actors are rarely accompanied by music, creating a more exposed atmosphere. Naima H., a student with the lead role of Helena, comments: "Performing in Shakespeare plays has made every other presentation less intimidating." I truly admire the ones on stage who not only have the courage to stand before a large crowd, but also have the commitment to memorize the long passages written by Shakespeare.

Come experience the RWA Theater's performance of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* running from December 15 to 18 from seven to nine pm! These students have worked so hard on bringing their characters to life while maintaining their high academic standards. You'll be amazed at how they can turn a haywire of a love story into a comedic and charming romance!

The Variety Show: A Night For Stars to Shine

By: Lara V.

The crowd pools in, the lights dim and... action! The 2025 Variety Show is up and running! RWA students can do it all—from academic excellence to enchanting hundreds with their various talents. The annual Variety Show is the perfect opportunity for students to shine and showcase their passions and incredible talents. Many waited in anticipation on November 14th, sitting excitedly in the Performing Arts Center. Soon they were greeted by friendly and charismatic hosts Joy K. and Emylia R., who set the show in motion.

The audience was absolutely blown away by the amount of courage each of those performers had to let the world indulge in their hard work. As a performer in the show, I saw and experienced firsthand how much preparation went on behind the scenes by the staff and helpers involved, namely Ms. Sheila Macleod, Mr. Adam Wiltzer, Light and Sound members, SLA (Student Life Association) members and many more, as well as the practice and effort put in by each performer. It was truly a team effort to bring together such a seamless and thoroughly thought-out show.

Each performer gave their all on stage through singing, dancing, comedy and even poetry. What is truly remarkable is that no two performances are similar, hence the Variety Show's name! Keira G., who came to watch her friends perform, added that "Every time [she's] just so amazed by the amount of courage [the performers] have and how good everyone is!"

The night was filled with ballads, bangers, energy and laughter. It is one of the only times during the year I get to perform and I know how fulfilling it is to know our passions and efforts are appreciated by others. The Variety show is an absolute staple and a must-watch at Royal West Academy!

The 2025 Variety Show was a huge success, with proceeds of almost \$2,000 donated to charity. As all the performers gathered on stage to take their final bow, applause, joy and inspiration filled the room.



RWA



NEWS

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

December 2025

A Reaction Guaranteed in Organic Chemistry Club

By: Alexander M.

The Organic Chemistry Club has become a steady catalyst for curiosity in the Science pathway for Secondary V. From September to January at Royal West Academy, students are offered a deeper look into the molecular world that shapes everyday life. Mr. James Magee attracts members to participate in insightful lectures on Tuesdays after school, covering beginner CEGEP-level Organic Chemistry (O. Chem.) as an academic booster long before encountering the challenging topics in CEGEP Sciences. "I like teaching it because I can go more in depth than Secondary III Science, and it's more fun to teach advanced ideas. It's also low pressure, with no tests or quizzes," Mr. James Magee states.

Much of the club's learning takes place through detailed discussions, curious questions, and collaborative problem-solving through diverse tasks. We spend our weekly meetings identifying, drawing, naming, and building chemical compounds with molecular model kits and various diagrams. We go beyond the standard curriculum – while nomenclature and molecular structures may sound familiar in Science or Chemistry classes, O. Chem. is an entirely new system that explores the behavior of carbon structures specifically. It's a great "opportunity to get ahead in your scientific knowledge. It's especially fun to attend the club with friends" club member Jaival S. mentions.

Academics aside, the club thrives on the energy and bonds of its members. Between profound conversations and focused study, our tightly knit group blends intellectual rigor with genuine camaraderie. In a school year full of academic pressure, the club offers a place where curious, motivated minds can connect, grow, and reflect on the weekly lectures.

After all, in a group built on bonds (both covalent and social), it's no surprise that our chemistry is strong. Kathie W. says "not only have I learned so much, but it has opened a new door on what I may want to do in the future. It's bittersweet knowing that there are only two sessions left". She mentions that the time goes by quickly, so don't let the next electrophile pass you by. If you are passionate about chemistry, and more so the magic of how molecules shape 3D space around us, join Organic Chemistry Club in Secondary V at the beginning of the school year! Come see how electrifying learning can be.

RWA Launches MUN Club

By: Emma Q.

If you ever wanted to step into the shoes of a future leader, the newly created Model UN club is here for you at RWA! This new club, hosted Fridays after school, founded this fall by secondary IV student Beatrice R., is open to students from all grade levels! It's the perfect opportunity for students who are eager to learn about various social issues and practice public speaking!

When asked about what inspired her to start MUN Club, Beatrice explained, "After watching last year's sec 5 MUN debate, I knew for certain that MUN was not just an activity that I and many others would be content watching once a year until Secondary 5. In addition to this, I received much encouragement from Mme. Belina when discussing the possibility of such a club. These moments really set in motion the chain of actions that [led] to the creation of the Club." But what is Model UN? Model UN is a simulation of the real world's United Nations, an international organization dedicated to helping promote cooperation among countries, and initiating change to help address global issues, such as human rights concerns, environmental crises, and world peace. Students are encouraged to work together to come up with solutions to problems that are currently going on in the world, by collaborating with one another, researching, debating, and problem-solving, just like real UN delegates.

Despite the club being new, the Model UN Club of RWA is already setting its sights on Dawson College's MUN beginner level conference. Eight students from Royal West Academy will be participating, each representing a different country. We will be joining hundreds of participants from other schools from all over Montreal in the General Assembly committee, where the topic of discussion will be "The Gender Health Gap: Confronting Global Disparities in the Recognition and Treatment of Women's Health". Luckily, RWA MUN has had a very good relationship with Dawson College's MUN. Their team sends former RWA Alumni to coach, guide, and encourage the team about twice a month, helping them learn new strategies, and plan for future conferences. According to Beatrice, "Preparation for this conference begins next Friday, and will continue until January 16th, so we have a lot of work ahead of us!"

Thanks to teachers like Ms. Cayer and the events and projects throughout the year, RWA is much more than just a school; it is a place where students can express their identities, learn about others, and feel a sense of belonging.



RWA



NEWS

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

December 2025

A Tradition Reborn: Prefects Leading with Purpose at RWA

By: Mila C.

At the end of the last school year, Prof. D. Colannino, English and Psychology teacher for the senior grades, eagerly brought back the Prefects group, much like you see in the Harry Potter movies. The Prefects existed at RWA for many years up until Covid-19, when the Student Life Association took over their responsibilities. The Prefects are students in secondary III - V who assist the administration in ensuring events run smoothly, such as picture days, assemblies, vaccinations, open house, and most importantly, the graduation ceremony, where we handle the awards and distribution of gowns. Prefects also have the responsibility of taking attendance for teachers who are need a hand in homeroom.

Beyond these tasks, we are expected to model responsible behavior, catch up on classes missed due to volunteering, and uphold school rules, while setting a positive example for other students. Teacher recommendations are required to ensure that those selected meet these expectations. When it was first introduced, we were only a group of seven students, and our first task was the graduation ceremony. Despite starting as a small group, graduation was ultimately a big success thanks to the guidance we had received beforehand. Prefecting so far has taught me how to be more responsible, empathetic, and patient. I have been able to connect with people across all grades and inspired students to join the group. I find that building relationships with the administration and teachers is really important in order to feel more connected as a school community and establish trust among each other. Since four of the original prefects, including myself, are now in Secondary V, we knew we had to recruit new people to help out with this year's graduation and also have more support throughout the year without giving up too much class time. The group now consists of 17 dedicated students who share the goal of making the school environment a more welcoming space and representing the school's core values.

By stepping in during busy moments and helping events run smoothly, we're learning how meaningful these small acts of leadership are and how much stronger our school community feels when students and staff support each other. Overall, I have not only gained practical skills, but I have also learned how collaboration and dedication are so important in doing any task, all things that will be useful for years to come.

Beekeeping Club's Activities: What's All the Buzz About?

By: Lydia G.

Buzz, buzz, buzz! During the warmer seasons, RWA's diligent honeybees were on a roll to collect nectar to store it in the specially placed hive on our balcony. Now, it is time for one of our extracurricular programs, dedicated to our winged residents, to collect the ambrosial honey.

Running throughout the year, the Beekeeping Club, led by Mr. F. Girardin, introduces students from Secondary I to V to engaging, hands-on activities that teach them about honeybees and their importance to our environment. Members even get to enjoy our all-natural honey, which is sweeter than any sweetener!

Students who join in 2025 will participate in a mesmerising honey extraction workshop. They will experience the process by spinning rows of honeycombs in a churner to let the honey spill out, and eating some of the fresh honeycomb. I can attest that it was 'un-bee-lievably' delectable. Also, they will be taught in detail about the processes bees use to create honey and how they aid in the pollination of flora. At the end of the workshop, students will each receive a jar of the honey to increase their appreciation for and connection to our buzzy pollinators!

Furthermore, there are more positives about this experience: the honeycombs being supplied from local beekeepers will encourage our local economy. Mr. Girardin states that in order to help our neighbouring community, "most of the supplies [are] local, anything we [buy is] local." From this, the students can acknowledge the significance of bees when it comes to our environment and economy.

On top of that enriching experience, members will have space to flex their creativity with the beehive painting activity. The Beekeeping Club will paint the beehive with special chalk-based, bee-safe paint so that, when it is taken out for the summer, it will have artistic touches of RWA's very own students. Later on, when it's time to sell the honey harvested from the decorated hives, students will label the jars and share the joy of savouring our mouth-watering honey with others.

Don't you want to "bee" a part of this meaningful ECA community that delights your senses and boosts your environmental awareness? Go join the Beekeeping Club!



RWA



NEWS

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

December 2025

A New and Original Class Project

By: Zachary A.

Throughout the autumn at Royal West Academy, Mr. Michael Wilson's Secondary V English class had three classes to create a stop-motion film inspired by Shakespeare's *King Lear*. The entire class took part in the creation of this film, where its goals were to create something that captured the main themes of the play while also having fun, and both of those objectives were definitely accomplished.

The video can be described as follows: It starts with King Lear's castle, which, due to a raging storm, progressively worsens in condition until it has fully fallen apart. Once that takes place, wild animals representing the different major characters of King Lear emerge, and the audio finally shouts "*Where is your lustre now?*", a powerful quote from the play. This quote and the video as a whole are meant to symbolize how a human without society or nurture is equivalent to a wild animal.

There were three main roles students had during the creation process. The first one was the creative team, who created the concept for the film and organized how everything was made. Next were the labourers, who traced and cut out the different elements of the set (trees, raindrops, etc.). Last but not least, the skilled drawers were the ones who drew the castle and the animals. These, along with some secondary roles, had all of us students taking part in one way or another.

While the entire process was quite smooth, there were definitely some concerns regarding the time constraints. As only three classes were given to complete the film, the drawers were pressed to complete their part in time. When I asked the artists about it, they answered that "we all agree that three classes is very little time to actually do everything, however because of that time crunch, it gives us the motivation to work together and divide the tasks properly." Additionally, the time constraints didn't take away from any of the fun of creating the film. When asked, Connor R. said "it's very fun, it reminds me of elementary school. I find it's a nice change to a regular class, where instead of doing regular English class things we're all working on a project and drawing."

As a whole, the project was a success, and Mr. Wilson should repeat this project in future years.

Rolling into Focus

By: Kara H.

When RWA students walk into Ms. Jody Cayer's room, it's clear that it's not your ordinary classroom. Wave farewell to those stiff chairs and bulky desks; in Ms. Cayer's class, comfort, accessibility, and individual support are prioritized. Circular rolling tables fill the space, designed for group engagement and conversation. Cozy bean bags are scattered around the room, because sometimes the best ideas come when you're basically horizontal, and all the chairs are rocking-style, allowing for slight mobility for those who need movement or struggle with focus during long periods.

This classroom wasn't just designed with aesthetics in mind, it was an active effort to create a safe and accommodating learning environment. Ms. Cayer said that she adopted this adaptive seating arrangement after reflecting on her students' different working styles. She disliked the idea of anyone being confined to one chair the entire school year; even as a teacher she finds it restrictive to work in the same spot all day.

In classes such as CCQ (Culture and Citizenship in Quebec) and history, Ms. Cayer says that "the one thing [she] noticed is that it really encouraged class discussion". As one of her students, I can definitely back this up. I have never been part of a class with such a positive discussion environment, with students actively making valuable contributions and most importantly, feeling free to speak openly and truthfully as a certain level of comfort is provided through the atmosphere. Of course, every silver lining has a cloud. "Testing days can be tricky", Ms. Cayer admits. "When everyone's supposed to be working independently, sometimes I have to get creative with it." She expresses how she'd love to see more teachers implementing adaptive seating throughout the school. While she acknowledges it's definitely more advantageous for certain subjects, especially those that encourage discussion and debate, such as the languages, CCQ Contemporary World, and History, she says that "it could still work for [other subjects], it all depends on how you adapt to it". But overall, she confirmed that with her classes being closer than ever, breaking down barriers of awkwardness, and simply adding an aspect of comfort to her classroom, all these positives outweigh the small inconveniences, proving that at Royal West Academy learning doesn't have to be stiff, rigid, or boring; it can actually move with you!



RWA



NEWS

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

December 2025

Penny Wars: A Competition for a Good Cause

By: Alexa I.

During the first week of December, RWA's long-standing Penny Wars fundraising initiative took place. The goal is to gather donations for the Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre, a non-profit organisation that supports the residents of Little Burgundy, a community that faces difficulties such as poverty, racism, and gentrification. In order to raise as much money as possible, RWA turned the fundraiser into a competition many years ago, and Penny Wars was born.

The rules of Penny Wars are as follows. There are five buckets, one for each of the five grades. Any coins placed in a grade's bucket accumulate points, which are calculated according to the number of cents. Five cent is equal to five points. Bills, however, are called "bombs." Placing a bill in another grade's bucket subtracts the number of cents in the bill from that grade's total points. For example, placing a five-dollar bill in another grade's bucket reduces that grade's points by 500! It's a great way to 'sabotage' the team that's in the lead. The grade with the most points at the end of the week wins an early dismissal in February!

Coins and cash are accumulated in the buckets at lunch throughout the week. I'm in Secondary V, and I knew that bills were accumulating in my grade's bucket, placed mostly by Secondary I students, who were determined to win. By Thursday, my grade was at around -9000 points! However, unbeknownst to the other grades, the Secondary V students had been accumulating coins in Ms. Cayer's classroom throughout the week. Given that she teaches the entire Secondary V grade, it makes a lot of cents that she was rooting for us to win. On the Friday of that week, the Secondary V students headed down to the buckets on the first floor in the west wing. The Secondary V students in Honour Band, which I am part of, led the way while playing and marching to "The Imperial March" from *Star Wars*. "Although I could have attended an English remediation, I do not regret playing for this event since I knew it was for a greater cause," says Kathie W. Two buckets and a briefcase full of coins were poured into the Secondary V bucket, filling it almost to the brim. That's when the penny dropped for all non-Secondary V students. Despite their efforts to sabotage us, we were still going to win. RWA raised approximately \$4,650 for the Tyndale St-Georges Community Centre just from Penny wars. December is a time of generosity and community spirit, and helping those in need was certainly worth every penny.

How Our Moments Become Memories

By: Rhea T.

Yearbook Club is here to capture your year! During chaotic and speedy school days, we collect your fondest memories and experiences through the quick flash of a camera. At the end of every Royal West Academy school year, Secondary IV students get the chance to become part of the next year's yearbook club. Thanks to the guidance of RWA teacher Ms. Jessica Fogel, the selected team will get the opportunity to work together and create something that will forever be part of the school's legacy, all while learning new skills and improving preexisting aptitudes. There are many tasks to be allocated to the members of this group. Among them is designing the yearbook cover and the pages within the book, and taking many pictures of events and activities around the school.

The cover of the book is the part thing to be submitted in the production process, and definitely one of the most important aspects of the yearbook. It provides the first glance of our school's appearance to students and others, including to those who will come to RWA in the future. Equally as important is everything inside the book. At every flip of a page, people's moments and lives are displayed all together, and form a reflection of the student body as a whole.

This is done with active picture taking throughout the year. We record your achievements, memories, and growth, all for you to see when you receive your very own book.

Every year, groups compete to become the following year's yearbook team. Next year could be your chance to make new memories, while encapsulating those of others. Whether you are someone interested in the arts or sciences, this extra curricular activity is one made for all, with its aspects that require a lot of creative thinking. It is one that demands determined effort and organization. Collectively working on this creation provides an incredible bonding experience for you and your friends during what is considered by some to be a difficult year. By being part of this club, you improve your collaboration and time management skills, learn how to deal with task division and even conflict resolution. Ms. Fogel says that "yearbook takes pictures of what makes Royal West Academy special, and highlights the good". The year passes by in a flash! Why not be part of the group responsible for documenting every good moment within it?



RWA



NEWS

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

December 2025

Barbados, Beaches, and Basketball

By: Antonio Jeffrey A.

The Juvenile Boys Basketball team might soon have to change their name from the Wildcats to the Pirates as they head out to the Caribbean for a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity as they experience the beautiful country of Barbados! This eight-day trip, which has been in the works since December 2024, will take place during the first week of April.

This is the first time any basketball team in RWA history has ever gone on a trip this large in scale, and we want to honour the captains who made it possible for our dreams to become reality: Coaches Paul Wascaz, Wanita Jones, and Mark Bayne, along with Principal Mr. Tony Pita. They deserve the most credit and appreciation from all of us on the JBB team, for without all of them, it would not have been possible.

The trip will be very relaxing with beach and jungle visits, plus excursions and adventures, and team-bonding activities, but it won't be all smooth sailing—we must continue to demonstrate the hard work and passion we have put into the basketball nets and hardwood for the sport we all love. We will be competing and striving to do our best in a highly regarded and competitive basketball tournament during this trip, where the ultimate goal is to bring home a banner and trophy. In the words of Coach Paul: "We're going to Barbados to have a good time on beaches, but we're also going to make sure we leave our skin and sweat on that basketball floor, and show everyone who RWA is!"

A trip this big comes with a hefty price tag, which is where we will need the help of all our fellow Wildcats at RWA! We plan to fundraise as much as we can with various initiatives, such as food and bake sales, special dinners, and more! Stay up-to-date with the JBB Wildcats to keep track of all our many planned activities! Even just showing up at our games is a great way to help and support us!



RWA Juvi Boys Volleyball For the Win

By: Quinn A.-F.

After a long season where the team competed in the D3 Juvenile Boys league (the highest level in high school), the Royal West Academy Juvenile Boys Volleyball team came out victorious in the finals, which took place on November 4, 2025 at Lasalle Community Comprehensive High School. Entering the playoffs third in the league, they beat LCCHS to get to the final game against Royal Vale Academy. Royal West Academy secured the first set with strong serves and consistent defensive play. After warming up during the first set, Royal Vale responded by taking the second, forcing the match into a third, which would determine the winner. The RWA team came out on top, beating them 15 to 12. It was a hard fight but won due to consistency and determination that was built throughout the season through trial and error on the court and in practice.

Practice happens at least twice a week for the team, often outside of school, and lasting two to four hours. The bench's energy was also crucial to the team's victory, as each point (whether their point or their opponents') was met by overwhelming and loud support from teammates.

This win allowed them to capture a spot in the RSEQ provincials, which will take place in April 2026. This will be the second year in a row that the team will go to provincials. Leading the team once again was star player Alexander C., who earned the MVP award for the second year in a row due to his outstanding athleticism and reliable performance throughout the season. The team's success would not have happened without their coaches Mr. Marco Pomenti and David Grossman. Grossman coached them last season as well and was once a player on the team during his time as a student at RWA. Having gone to provincials with his team then, Grossman now brings his experience to them and to Dawson College, where he plays as their setter. David said after they won that he was "very proud". The team now sets its sights on the Lac-Saint-Louis league.