

RWA



NEWS

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March 2026

WORDS FROM THE ADMIN



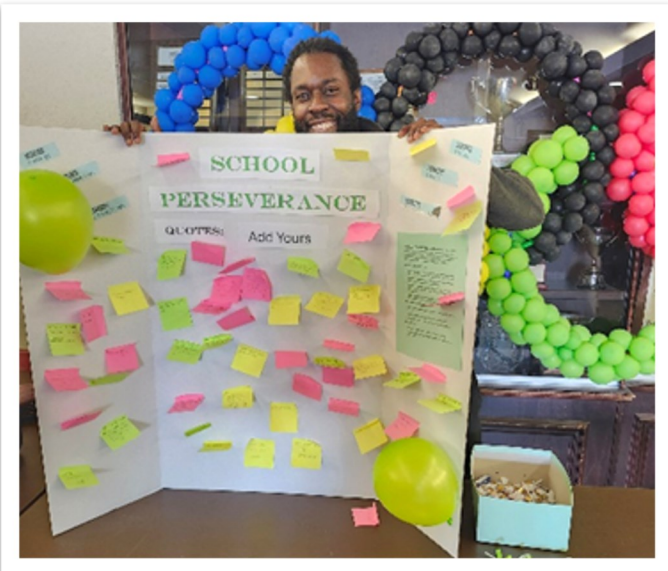
Principal David Lee (center)
with Interim Vice-Principal Nicholas Rafael (left) and
Vice-Principal Steven Manstavich (right)

As the beautiful, warmer spring weather begins to approach and we've had a restful break, we wish students a warm return for the final portion of our year.

Term 3 is exceptionally important, and we hope that staff and students are excited to put their best foot forward to kick off the term! We continue to hope this year will bring everyone health, joy, prosperity and success!

RWA Perseverance Week

Our Enthusiastic Behavior Techs. promoting perseverance to students with positive messages and music in the foyer to uplift students spirits.



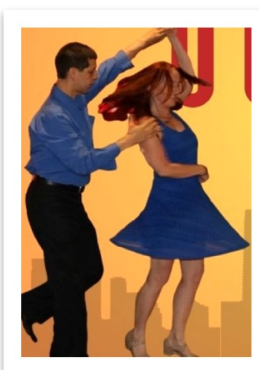
RWA Winter Olympics

Royal West Academy students went above and beyond this year to encourage our Team Canada Olympians with team Canada outfits, sports streaming live on televisions, viewing parties, posters and Olympic ring balloons.



Poetry

English Language Arts class displays Blackout Poetry by Secondary Five students, Inspired by Tommy Orange's novel *There There*.



Dance

On Wednesday February 25th, Royal West Spanish students had a surprise visit from studio Dance Conmigo.

With Salsa music playing, the Leadership room was transformed into a festive space as students quickly learned basic dance steps and graduated to turns and spins by the end of the class!

WELCOME Spring



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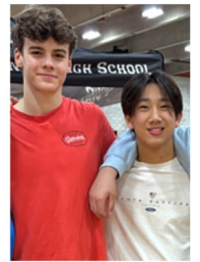
Science Fair

This year's science fair was a great success. 375 students displayed 172 projects in total, with 8 projects selected to be displayed at the Montreal Regional Science Fair in May.



Wrestling

Bella Flanz was Royal West' lone Gold Medalist at the GMAA/RSEQ Championships held on Thursday February 12th at PCHS. In other news, Alexander L.P.S. and Adam S. were pre-selected to attend the Canadian National Wrestling Championships as part of Team Quebec, which will be held in Grand Prairie, Alberta at the end of April. For anyone who wants to come out and try the sport, we are still having recreational practices for both the boys and the girls. Come and see Mr. Chen for more details.



Track and field

Once again, RWA had another great season of Indoor Track and Field. Students are excited for what the outdoor season will bring in May!



New York Trip

From February 3rd to 7th, Secondary five students had their annual Grad Trip to NYC. Students visited Central Park, the Brooklyn Bridge, Times Square, and many other iconic attractions. At night students had the chance to see the Knicks, Islanders, and a variety of Broadway shows. It was an amazing trip, and our ears are still ringing from bus karaoke.



Musical

A shoutout goes out to our Musical Performers who "broke many legs" with outstanding performances in this year's production of HADESTOWN. We are so very proud of the cast and crew of this year's musical! All four show nights were fabulous and fully attended!

"If no one takes too much there will always be enough."- *Orpheus* (words to live by!)



Basketball

Our basketball teams brought home two silver medals this year with record breaking teams from both categories.



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Royal West Academy Foundation News

We have 2 exciting events coming up:

Dessert Concert - March 27th: Fabulous performances by RWA ensembles followed by delicious dessert!

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DESSERT Concert

Benefiting
Royal West Academy
FOUNDATION

FRIDAY, MARCH 27, 2026 - 7:00 PM

\$15/ADULT, \$10/STUDENTS & SENIORS
Tickets on sale through the Music Department and at the door
Complimentary Dessert Served After The Show

FEATURING:
HONOUR BAND
JAZZ BAND
RWA WINDS
& MORE!

rwaf.ca

The 2nd RWA Foundation Annual Comedy Night - April 24th: A hilarious lineup, pre-show entertainment, a bake sale, and more!

Royal West Academy
FOUNDATION

2ND ANNUAL COMEDY NIGHT!

EMCEE FRANCO TADDEO
STARRING VIVETH K
STARRING JOHN COYROCOIS
HEADLINER JOEY ELIAS

FRIDAY, APRIL 24TH, 2026
SHOWTIME 7:30PM
DOORS OPEN 6:30PM

Click [HERE](#) or scan to buy tickets

ROYAL WEST ACADEMY
189 Av. Easton, Montreal West

\$40 ENTRY
INTENDED FOR AUDIENCES AGED 16+
All proceeds benefit the Active Learning Classroom Campaign

GIVING US ROOM TO LEARN TOGETHER
The Active Learning Classroom Campaign



STUDENTS AND PARENTS WELCOME

RWA BOOK FAIR!

Get all your SUMMER READING books & more!
May 6: 8 am-8pm & May 7: 8 am-1pm

RWA Memorial Gym • Bake Sale
All proceeds go to the RWA Library

ROYAL WEST ACADEMY

Book Fair BABAR

RWA NEWS

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Royal West Academy Governing Board News

For the second year in a row, the RWA Governing Board has had to direct its attention to the problematic traffic situation at the corner of Westminster and Ainslie, after two more RWA students were hit by a car on February 16. Alongside the extremely dedicated parents on the Parents Participation Organization, GB immediately began reaching out to the Mayor of Montreal West, the local SPVM commander, the local MNA, and the EMSB, to again work on solutions. A demonstration was held at this within days of the incident, drawing out dozens of RWA parents and Mo West citizens to raise awareness of the danger at that intersection, gaining much media attention.

It is no stretch to say that we were deeply disappointed to have to revive this file after the accidents in 2024 involving multiple students. Following those earlier accidents, the PPO, with GB support, had begun circulating a petition demanding the Quebec government be more flexible with its regulations and allow a crossing guard to be posted at the intersection in question. Under the current regulations, high schools are not eligible for crossing guards. That petition was deposited at the Quebec National Assembly the day of the demonstration.

On the bright side, new faces at Montreal West City Hall were very receptive to our outreach. A meeting was held on March 16 with representatives of all stakeholders to go over possible actions. The city was already working with an engineer to securitize the section of Westminster closer to the train tracks and reduce driver frustration in the area; they are also going to hire another engineer to focus specifically on the Ainslie intersection. The city is also looking into enhancing the safety signage in the area. The EMSB commissioner is contacting other municipalities to see how their volunteer systems work for protecting pedestrians at crossings. Notions of parent or citizen volunteers, or even private crossing guards, to watch over the intersection were also discussed, although questions of legal liability must be addressed. The area MNA will be bringing our concerns to the Ministers of Education, Transport and Public Safety. Follow-up meetings of our group are planned to continue working on every possible measure to fix this problem.

Apart from this major issue, GB has also welcomed in our new principal, Mr. David Lee, and we wish him well. We also wish our former principal, Mr. Tony Pita, great success in his new role in the EMSB and we thank him whole-heartedly for his many, many years of deep devotion to the success of RWA. It is no exaggeration to say he shaped this school.

The next meetings of GB are Tuesday, March 24, Monday, April 20, Tuesday, May 19, and Wednesday, June 10, always starting at 7 PM. Parents are welcome to attend and there is a public question period as a standing item on the agenda.

Eric Lamoureux,
Chair, RWA Governing Board

Royal West Academy Parent Participation Organization News

Updates from the Safety Subcommittee of the RWA PPO Rally at Ainslie and Westminster

On Feb 24, approximately 30-40 parents, students and local residents attended a rally in support of increased safety at the corner of Ainslie and Westminster. Thank you to all those who braved the extreme cold that morning!

Presentation of Crossing Guard Petition: National Assembly

Also on Feb 24, two Royal West parents, Jessica Houde-Woytiuk and Joanna Duy, were present at the National Assembly for MNA Desiree McGraw's presentation of the petition in support of changing SAAQ rules to allow crossing guards at high schools. The petition garnered almost 3500 signatures and the CAQ government will shortly be deciding on whether or not to follow up on the petition.

Meeting of Stakeholders

On March 16, there was a meeting of stakeholders to discuss the safety issues at Ainslie and Westminster. The Montreal West Mayor and Councilor for Public Security were in attendance, as well as the local SPVM Commander, EMSB Commissioner Paola Samuels as well as Chair Joe Ortona, MNA Désirée McGraw, as well as RWA representatives Principal David Lee, Chair of Governing Board Eric Lamoureux, Governing Board member and EMSB Commissioner Jessica Houde-Woytiuk, and PPO Safety Subcommittee Chair Joanna Duy. All stakeholders reviewed what they had been doing to improve safety at this intersection – the Town was quick to install two new stop signs, and the SPVM continue to monitor that area of Westminster frequently. Town officials talked about how the upcoming pilot project near the level crossing (due to start after school ends) may make crossing at Ainslie safer, and they also shared that they will engage a traffic engineer to look at the intersection of Ainslie and Westminster and how to make it safer for pedestrians; they are also awaiting the arrival of a pedestrian sign for one side of the intersection. Possible short-term interventions (from now until summer) were also discussed, and a list of action items for different stakeholders was compiled.



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Royal West Academy Home & School Association News



Click [HERE](#) to help 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!

The Royal West Academy school store (RWA CO-OP) began in 2023. It is a fully 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, suggest items, donate items, and be a part of their school store, all while raising funds for RWAHSA.



The Coldest Night Of The Year

By: Emmanuelle E.-K.

At first, I thought I was just entering a public speaking competition on a Canada-wide scale. The theme, "Canadian Issues" seemed simple to research. My usual stage fright disappeared after learning about the seriousness of a pressing issue, the plight of women and children in the streets of Canada. Allow me to share the important topic that I committed to speak for: The challenges faced by women's shelters in Canada and the effects of their underfinancing.

As a finalist in the competition, I felt a duty to pursue this cause. The facts that I discovered drove me to seek from my peers and friends at Royal West Academy much needed support for an important cause. During the course of my investigation I met with Sally Richmond, Executive Director of Logifem, who introduced me to their annual fundraiser event "Coldest Night of the Year".

This event takes place in communities across Canada, where participants walk 2 km or 5 km to raise money for local charities that support vulnerable populations. The 5 km walk is designed to help participants imagine the physical and emotional hardships of women and children experiencing homelessness, walking through the cold night with nowhere to stay. In our community, the walk supports Logifem, a nonprofit organization that provides housing and support services for women and children in need.

With help from my staff advisor, Miss Di Pietro, I spearheaded Royal West Academy's team to participate in the "Coldest Night of the Year" walk. Our team, composed of 18 incredibly dedicated walkers, worked tirelessly baking, organizing, and spreading awareness about the importance of supporting women's shelters. Throughout the month of February, our group held several bake sales in the school's foyer and during the Science Fair.

The walk took place on Saturday, February 28th Saturday. It was rewarding to witness 270 walkers all come together for such an important cause. Thanks to the generosity of our community, we exceeded our original goal of \$200 by 531%, totaling to \$1,062 being raised to support women and families through Logifem!

I am extremely proud of my team for their dedication, generosity, and spirit they showed throughout our fundraiser. Seeing our community answer this call to action and support women's shelters was truly inspiring. I'm incredibly grateful to everyone who contributed, and I can't wait to lead as team captain again next year and continue supporting this important cause.



- Mar. 27 - Dessert Concert
- Mar. 27 - RWA Spirit Day
- Mar. 29 - 31 - Montreal Regional science Fair
- Mar. 30 - Apr. 1 - Sec 2 Dental Sealant
- Apr. 1 - 9 - Francais Sec 2 révision officielle pour l'examen ministériel
- Apr. 2 - 12 - Caribbean Basketball Trip
- Apr. 3 - Holiday
- Apr. 6 - Holiday



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Behind the Scenes at RWA: Meeting Our New Principal

By: Sabrina B.

A principal's office is often seen as a place that students only visit when something's gone wrong. But behind the office door at Royal West Academy is someone that views the school as a place full of energy, opportunity and community.

Royal West Academy recently welcomed a new principal, Mr. David Lee. Before coming to RWA, Mr. Lee spent ten years working in school administration, as a vice principal at Rosemount High School, and most recently as principal at Merton Elementary School. Elementary and high school leadership has some differences, especially in how students are approached, as their needs, challenges and achievements differ. However, there are also many similarities, such as budgeting, staffing, and managing a school as a whole. Mr. Lee explained that the transition to principal of RWA was quite smooth, not only because of his experience in high school education, but also because of our school's welcoming environment and strong, supportive staff.

Since starting at RWA, Mr. Lee described RWA students as studious, hardworking, and respectful, and that creates an excellent environment for learning. One thing that surprised Mr. Lee was how active and dedicated the RWA community is. "Royal West Academy is a school that never sleeps," he said, noting that both students and teachers put in extra time and effort, even during weekends and pedagogical days, to support learning and extracurricular activities.

Moving forward, one of Mr. Lee's main goals is to continue developing well-rounded students. While academic success is important, he emphasized that education should also include experiences outside the classroom. He suggested that more outdoor education clubs, volunteering and community service trips would allow our students to explore interests beyond academics.

Creating a strong school community is also a priority for Mr. Lee. He believes a positive environment is built through mutual respect, kindness and acceptance of differences between both students and staff. Mr. Lee also believes in ensuring that student voices are heard. He highlighted some of the ways our school has already taken initiative to achieve this, through clubs like the Student Leadership Association,

and our students' representation on the school governing board.

At a school known for its rigorous academic expectations, Mr. Lee also emphasizes the importance of balance. Supporting mental health is important, with programs that help students manage stress and their well-being.

For Royal West Academy's new principal, success in a school is simple: students feel motivated to come to school, feel supported while they're there, and leave proud of what they accomplished. Mr. Lee hopes RWA can continue to be a place where every student can excel in their own way.

New Vice Principal Runs In!

By Leili L.

It's a new year and a new chapter for Mr. N. Rafael, a well-known and well-loved teacher at Royal West Academy who has recently taken on the role of interim vice principal. For years, Mr. Rafael has been an English and art teacher and is known for his creativity, his leadership, his dedication to his students, and his involvement in countless extracurricular activities, from track and field, cross country running, to swim team. Whether it be cross country running, track and field, or swim team, he has always been ready to take part in the lively school activities at RWA.

Now that Mr. Rafael has taken on this role, the question most people have is what made him open to taking on a position in administration given his love of teaching. Upon being asked to serve as interim vice principal, Mr. Rafael said he felt honoured to be trusted to serve the school in this capacity. Recognizing there was need, he "stepped up and stepped in". "How do I say that expression?" he asked, looking for the right words "I locked in!".

Mr. Rafael describes his days as an administrator as more unpredictable than his time in the class, which is definitely an adjustment. He explained how the job does come with some challenges, such as adjusting to the lack of a fixed schedule, as well as requiring that he spends more time enforcing the rules of the school than before. One thing he has realized since moving into administration, is that students sometimes have the wrong perception of administrators. While they may



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appear strict, he explained, they are simply doing their job and trying to support the school.

When asked about his favourite and least favourite parts of his new role, Mr. Rafael said that giving detentions is *not* something he enjoys, although that has not stopped him from giving out a bunch of them! On the other hand, he loves being able to walk around the school, visit classrooms, and talk with students more often than he could when he was teaching in a classroom. The role also helps him “get his steps in.”, he joked. Part of his vision as vice principal is to ensure that students at RWA have the safest environment possible to grow, learn, and succeed

Another major impact of this role has been the limitations on Mr. Rafael’s ability to run as many extracurricular activities as he once did while he focuses on helping the school run smoothly on a daily basis.

Even with the changes that come with his new position, Mr. Rafael is enjoying this experience. As he puts it, “I think it’s nice sometimes in life to have a little bit of change.” With a new chapter beginning for both Mr. Rafael and the school, the RWA community is eager to see what the future holds!

Bonjour To a Fresh Start

By: Elodie S.

Imagine this: starting a new job in a different country, thousands of miles away from home. Sounds scary, right? Well, this is exactly what our very own teacher, Mme Marianne Perrais, did. Mme Perrais arrived in Montreal two weeks before school started, moving from France to Quebec. I had the pleasure of talking to her, and I think what she has to say will interest you.

Mme Perrais made it very clear that school here is different from school in France. She explained that RWA has many more opportunities for students. It offers hundreds of extracurricular activities, whereas most schools in France do not. In addition, RWA provides academic paths, which offer a variety of classes that allow students to choose ones that align with their interests. Where Mme Perrais used to work, students did not have this opportunity.

I was very surprised by this and asked her how else France was different from here. She replied that it was mostly the atmosphere that was different. She gave me an example of how people over here wait for the bus in a line, whereas in France, it’s more common for people to all try to get in first. She described people in Montreal as kind and lively. From her perspective, people here are a lot friendlier and tend to look out for each other. This is definitely exemplified at RWA.

Throughout my four years at this school, I have been shown so much support and kindness from not just my peers, but my teachers and administrators as well. The effort this school puts into fostering these values is evident, even by someone who has only been teaching here for six months!

“Coming to Montreal to teach was a personal challenge”, Mme Perrais explained, reflecting on leaving behind her family and friends, and coming to work somewhere completely new. It is never easy to pack up and go somewhere where you don’t know anyone, but she found the silver lining. She tested herself in a way most people would be too scared to do. Upon arriving here, she did all the touristic things. She went to La Ronde, ate poutine, and toured the Old Port of Montreal.

As she continues living here and teaching at RWA, she is setting new goals for herself in the future. “I would like to teach in Australia, if I ever get the chance”. While ambitious, this goal proves how well this trip has served her.

In a short period of time, she has found her place within our school community. Just over 200 days ago, RWA opened its doors to a new teacher, and in that time, Mme Perrais has developed a sense of belonging here. In the coming months ahead, there is no doubt she will continue to make even more meaningful memories here.



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RWA Values Onstage: An Alumnus' Story

By: Alica M.

Creative. Kind. Engaged. Interested. These are among the ideal traits of any Royal West Academy student. They are qualities epitomized in our school's assemblies, classes, and extracurricular activities. They are attributes valued in the core of everything RWA stands for. They are also exactly how RWA class of 2012 graduate Adrian Smith remembers not only the youth he grew up with in RWA's theater program, but the students he now encounters in theatre.

In the midst of his third year working at the Segal Centre for Performing Arts as the director of their Broadway & Beyond program, Smith has spent ample time working with teens, and emphasizes the importance of "[meeting] young people in the places they're choosing to be." As an audition-only extra-curricular for high schoolers, Broadway & Beyond attracts passionate, dedicated students devoted to performance, and Smith is unwavering in his determination in "making sure that [the experience] is fun."

Smith's own realization that theatre could, in fact, be fun came at a young age, when he was cast as Snoopy in his elementary school's production of *You're A Good Man, Charlie Brown*. In high school, he took drama classes and performed in *Chicago*, *Twelfth Night*, and various other productions, crossing paths with longtime RWA choreographer Jonathan Patterson, with whom Smith has gone on to collaborate throughout his career in the arts. It was Patterson who would eventually invite him to work at the Segal Centre, after they reconnected while working at The Lyric Theatre following Smith's high school graduation. "I learned a lot from him," Smith says of Patterson, having worked as the latter's assistant for a number of years. "I was very lucky."

Before earning his current position at the Segal Centre as a director, Smith filled various roles within the industries of theatre and film, working as a stage manager, usher, boom operator, and production assistant. "I think a lot of people are scared of working in the arts because they don't see it as a legitimate profession. But if there's a piece of art that you think is worth making, you can carve that out for yourself in a way that isn't always possible in other fields," Smith explains. "There are so many amazing, viable options in theatre besides [acting]. It takes a village to put a show together."

Assembling said village can be a challenge, but Smith credits RWA's focus on group work for teaching him how to "build the right team for the right project." He also highlights the

school's concentration on analytic and critical competency, commenting on the necessity of media literacy (an ability highly valued in RWA's drama and film courses). "The skills [learned in high school theatre programs] are required in pretty much any job you're going to do," Smith says. "You learn to create something greater than the sum of its parts, and you also get to work with incredible people who can challenge your ideas and make them better."

This outlook is precisely what Smith inspires in his students today. The creativity, kindness, engagement, and interest taught at our school are noticeably reflected in his own approach to teaching. Thus, while current RWA students demonstrate these values, Smith proves that RWA alumni personify them, and pay them forward.



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A Biology Adventure Of A Lifetime

By: Jacqueleen D.

The biology students of 2026 are buzzing with excitement as their upcoming trip to New Brunswick is getting closer. Over the course of four days, students will have the opportunity to take part in a variety of different activities. Throughout this time, students will be doing hands-on marine research such as well as several excursions to see wildlife, various labs and a tour of the Huntsman Center Aquarium. These activities aren't just to see the fauna of marine biology. Seaweeds and plankton are a different branch that will be incorporated and explored in greater depth, allowing students to better understand the entire ecosystem around us. On the final day, presentations will be given by the students, sharing the knowledge they've gathered throughout this experience.

While the over 10 hour drive is lengthy, it plays a big part in the overall experience. It gives students time to make new friends, strengthen relationships, create new memories and enjoy the beautiful scenery all around. Music playing, teens having fun and talking encourages a very social atmosphere.

Many different types of marine organisms such as starfish, sea cucumbers, crabs, seaweeds, and more, will be observed in a careful manner to help students gain a deeper appreciation for our aquatic world. Through these observations, students will get the opportunity to see how different species interact within the aquatic environment, showing once again that all forms of life play a huge role in Earth's ecosystem.

This school outing isn't just about biology. There is so much more to it. It's about making new friends, creating memories, and learning how to contribute to the wellbeing of our planet, allowing us to harmonize with our extraordinary Earth.



Winter Concert at Royal West Academy

By: Charles S.

This January, RWA held its annual Winter Concert, bringing together all the school bands for an evening that showed their hard work and progress. As a performer in both Senior Music and Honour Band, I experienced the concert from the stage as well as from the audience during the matinee performance.

The lead-up to the concert included many rehearsals. The matinee allowed performers to hear each ensemble and get a sense of all the musical pieces. By the evening, the atmosphere shifted from rehearsal focus to performance excitement, with friends, family, and members of the school community filling the auditorium.

While the audience saw confident performances, much of the success came from what happened backstage. According to music teacher Ms. Ginette Purdy, the most meaningful moments are behind the scenes. "I was proudest of what happened backstage, the focus and commitment to doing well," she said. Ms. Purdy pointed out students' punctuality, cooperation, and careful tuning as important reasons that the concert ran smoothly.

The program included a variety of musical styles that reflected what students have been learning in class. One highlight of the evening was *Chasing Sunlight*, performed by the Honour Band. Ms. Purdy chose the piece because it requires maturity and strong listening skills, and the ensemble met that challenge with confidence.



For many students, the Winter Band Concert was an important moment in the school year. Weeks of rehearsals and preparation led to one shared performance. Standing on stage, it was clear how much effort each group had put in. The evening highlighted not only musical growth, but also teamwork and school pride within the RWA community.

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Brain Bee: Where Minds Start Buzzing!

By: Elizabeth C.

While reading RWA News, have you ever wondered how your brain is able to interpret all these words and transform them into thoughts? This question lies at the heart of neuroscience, an area of study explored by RWA's Brain Bee club. First introduced to our school a year ago by RWA alumnus Sophie I. and RWA teacher Ms. Laura Kissin, Brain Bee is a student-led club dedicated to passionate and hardworking students who want to learn more about the brain. This year, the club was taken over by Jaival S., the 2025 Montreal Brain Bee competition's first-place winner. "Neuroscience is one of the most complex fields of study that has ever been created," he explained. "We are literally studying how different aspects of our consciousness make us us."

Every week, Brain Bee members meet together to review the material read from the Open Neuroscience Initiative textbook. "Brain Bee is a great way to learn a lot while having fun", said returning club member, Ciara M. "It feels nice to have a small, inclusive community where we can all work together and study the material." Students who wish to participate in this club are able to enter the Montreal Brain Bee competition, which will take place in April, where students are not only testing their knowledge, they are also able to visit intriguing labs, attend speaker meetings, and miss a whole day of school! Even if you don't win the competition, you get to take part in an extraordinary experience that'll never be forgotten.

Brain Bee highlights the dedication of the RWA community: reading and studying a CEGEP-level while managing school work! These students not only show eager curiosity towards the brain, but they are also able to balance priorities and organize their own schedules. Our commitment to Brain Bee represents the hard work and perseverance that RWA students possess.

Make sure to *Bee* on the lookout. Joining this club in the future will introduce you to the fascinating world of brain sciences and a new, engaging perspective on learning. Bee ready to explore the mind, neuron by neuron!



When Life gets Blurry, Adjust the Lens!

By: Brook L.

A picture is worth a thousand words—if not more! Personally, all of the storage on my phone is being taken up by photos, which says a lot! At the RWA Photography Club, everyone with camera rolls like mine have the chance to get together once a cycle to simply "click".

One of the best things about this club is the chance to share the moments we capture with other appreciating eyes. "There's a good community at Photography Club," says Beatrice R., and I couldn't agree more. This club is full of students who express themselves through their photography and are open to others' creativity. We want all students to share whatever picture they take—even if it's not always what we expect. As Mr. H. Jason Chen states, "I really like it when the kids post their pictures. Some of it is utterly ridiculous and some of it is beautiful".

It's impossible to feel judged in that room and part of that reason is due to the club's founder, Mr. Chen. When he first arrived at RWA, he was shocked to see there was no photography club. "Photography has always been one of my biggest passions," he explained, which compelled him to start the club, where students could discover new talents and passions within this medium.

Joining a club may be intimidating, especially when more experienced students are involved. This club provides separate groups for juniors and seniors, ensuring everyone is comfortable to share their artistic side. The goal of the club is to allow students to express themselves without feeling the need to add a filter.

We want the authentic side of the photos and the person behind it too. "The monthly challenges give me an excuse to go out more with my camera", mentions Zack C. This group gives students the chance to develop their skill, and learn to appreciate the world around them.

It truly has improved my experience at RWA and the way I see things too. As Beatrice explains, "Photography Club makes life more cinematic", and I agree.

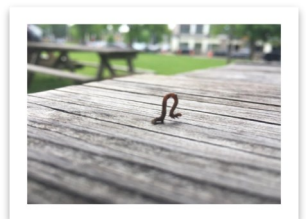


Photo by Clara A.

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Lunchtime!

By: Clara C.

When the bell rings, hundreds of hungry students from RWA pour outside in search of a good meal, rain or shine. Many students take advantage of the excellent lunch services offered at school and hurry to find a place in the long cafeteria line. Others choose to bring their lunch, knowing brought lunch is better than bought lunch. Then there are the many students who walk down to Westminster, where there is a hub of numerous tasty lunch options. Students from many other schools are not as lucky as we are to have such a variety of food options with great service, and so close-by.

Westminster has some sit-down full-service restaurants, such as Burger de Ville, Restaurant I AM PHO, Randy's Bistro, and Sushi Shop, but students tend to prefer the cheaper, faster, and more accessible options, like Atelier Zamara and Les Délices Lafrenaie. Although teens enjoy all of these options, you are most likely to find long lines outside of Chicago Pizza, Montreal Chinese Crepes and Dumplings, and the Onigiri Shop. Chicago Pizza and Montreal Chinese Dumplings and Crepes have even created special menu items for students only, available only during school days. At Chicago Pizza, you can purchase a slice of pizza for 4\$, and at Montreal Chinese Crepes and Dumplings, you can get a full meal for just 6\$! This place really stands out from other restaurants for its food, atmosphere, and service. Their student special includes fried rice, vegetables, a spring roll, and 5 (sometimes 6 if you're lucky) dumplings, all served piping hot. This meal is especially enjoyable and extremely comforting during the colder months, making the harsh weather slightly more bearable. The dumplings are also made fast, so if you ever have a busy lunch period and forget to pack a lunch, this shop is a great option. They have also recently added a chicken bowl to their menu, which is also a student menu item, although I never get to try it, because it's always sold out! The shop offers a very enjoyable atmosphere enjoyed by students and adults alike. A soft bell announces your arrival into the shop, and you are immediately greeted with a divine aroma.

All in all, RWA students are blessed with so many lunchtime food options, and even if you are not a student, all of these restaurants offer great service and food, so go check them out the next time you're on Westminster and feeling peckish!

More Than Just a Snack: A Thriving Tradition

By: Masha A.

If you walk through the second-floor west wing during Wednesday recess, you might notice something different: a warm, spicy aroma in the air and a long line of excited students waiting for samosas. This vegetarian pastry is filled with potatoes, peas, seasoning, and wrapped in dough, then fried until it is crispy. It melts in your mouth, while leaving a hint of spice behind. This flavorful snack has become a highlight of many people's week. Samosas have been an RWA tradition for years and they continue to grow in popularity. This common street food from South Asia brings students together. It showcases different cultures and allows us to appreciate the diversity within our school community.

Since 2009, Ms. Katharine Cukier has been organizing the sales as a part of Social Justice Club's fundraising efforts. Although samosas seem like just a tasty treat, in one recess alone they can raise up to \$200! Over the years, samosa sales and other fundraisers raised about \$40,000 for the Montreal-based charity Makupo. That money helped build two wells, a science lab for a high school, and contributed to the construction of a medical clinic in Malawi, Africa. Additional profits have supported organizations such as Doctors Without Borders and the Montreal Native Women's Shelter. Recently, some of the profits have helped fund extracurricular activities, such as the school musical.

While Ms. Cukier has retired, this has not stopped her from continuing to give back and stay connected to the RWA community. She still delivers samosas to the school, reflecting her dedication and strong desire to help others. It has also become an important activity she shares with her son, who has developmental disabilities, as it challenges him and helps him grow.

At RWA, samosas have become more than a snack. They are a school tradition, and for many students, the tastiest way to contribute to fundraising. At their core, they represent unity and generosity, while making Wednesdays more exciting. Whether buying one samosa for \$2 or three samosas for \$5, each purchase makes a meaningful difference. As Ms. Cukier says, "It's important for those of us in the RWA community who have so much to help those who are struggling."



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Discovering Purpose at Welcome Hall Mission

By: Devina N.

There I was, standing beside a mound of vegetables, in an industrial room with tears streaming down my face. We had registered to help at a charity organization, and were now standing in a pile of fallen onion peels, crying. We weren't "peeling" emotional; however, you could say the onions had really brought us to tears. For Montrealers who are facing homelessness or financial hardships, Welcome Hall Mission stands as a powerful source of support and hope. As one of our city's largest community organizations, the Mission offers a range of services designed to help individuals rebuild their lives. Services include warm, nutritious meals and access to subsidized groceries at WHM's Market. This year they provided 438,000 meals and over 100,000 grocery store visits. With the backing of dedicated volunteers, generous donors, and community partners, WHM changes lives.

On February 26, RWA student volunteers went to lend a hand at WHM. First, we toured the establishment, including the new housing facility, whose recent opening represents a significant achievement. The complex has helped over 200 homeless individuals find permanent housing in the last year. According to Board Chairman, Mr. C. Morgan, "The speed and determination with which this project came to life is a testament to what is possible when purpose meets passion." This sentiment was echoed throughout our entire experience. Next, we explored the operations behind the food distribution, including the food donations, the warehouses, and the market itself. Finally, and most importantly, dressed in hairnets and aprons, we rolled up our sleeves and assisted in portioning onions and potatoes and packaging hygiene products, all of which would later be sold. After hours of sorting, counting, and bagging, we realized that those who do this for a living deserve more credit. We all agreed we'd never look at a sack of potatoes the same way again.

This experience highlights our school's commitment to building a strong sense of responsibility and dedication to helping others. At RWA we don't just focus on academics, we emphasize a holistic life, a part of which comes from helping others. By taking part in these experiences, students help cultivate a sense of community, while making a lasting impact, and uplifting those less fortunate.

Ski you next year! A fun-filled day for the books

By: Kaya C.

Royal West Academy's Winter Carnival is an annual tradition that gives students the opportunity to take part in a variety of activities. Choices include tubing, cabane à sucre, and in-school activities, but the crowd favourite every year is skiing and snowboarding at Mont Blanc Ski Hill, and for a good reason. With snow crunching under our boots, skis clicking together, and a whole day ahead of us, this fun-packed day on the mountain allows students a break from routine. It is the perfect mix of adventure, scenery, exercise, and camaraderie, and this year's ski day was a truly memorable one.

This exciting day started at 7:30 am, when we left RWA with our equipment and helmets in hand. A full day of skiing cost only \$27.60, and I'm always amazed at the effort our school puts in to ensure fun is accessible to all students. The drive was smooth and we arrived on the hill at around 9:15 am. We very quickly got our tickets, bundled up, and hit the runs, thanks to the efficient organization from our teachers.

The hills were quiet, and it felt like we had them to ourselves! The sunlight made the snow sparkle, while the cold pumped through our veins, energizing us. The mountain was bright and alive, and looking out over the snow-covered slope, I knew I was where I was meant to be.

The terrain was smooth, with little ice, and blue skies above. As Secondary IV student Viva G. shared, "I spent most of the day at the snow park trying the jumps and rails; the students had a lot of freedom to do as they please." Everyone was able to move around independently, explore different areas, and try a variety of runs.

When it was time for a break, students came inside to recharge and share some moments of laughter and warmth with friends before getting back on the slopes. A few hours later, we were ready to head back to school for 4:45 pm.

Winter Carnival Day skiing isn't just a fun break from classes, it's a chance to connect with peers, enjoy the outdoors and show some school spirit. I know I'll be returning next year, as this day creates memories that stick with you long after the snow melts!



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The Dive of Victory: RWA Wildcats Shine

By: Sparsh S.

February 19, 2026 may have been another regular day at school for most students, but for 22 members of the Royal West Academy swim team, this date represented the culmination of months of arduous weekly training and intense preliminary races. That day, we dove into the Côte-Saint-Luc indoor pool to join nearly 200 other swimmers coming from 23 other schools, against whom we competed at the GMAA Championship Meet.

From the moment we arrived, the atmosphere was charged with the competitive spirit and excitement of all swimmers. The deck was filled with the roar of cheering voices. Yet when we mounted onto the diving blocks, we were shrouded by the silence brought upon us by a sense of overwhelming agitation and eager anticipation. As stated by Arsham M., an RWA swimmer, "Our eyes were oblivious to everything that was happening around us." All we saw was the cool water in front; its ripples gradually subsiding from the last heat of swimmers that raced.

Once the buzzer rang however, this tense buildup broke apart in a split second. Our minds were cleared of all thoughts as we spun our arms and kicked our legs, driving ourselves forward one stroke after another.

As more and more races were happening, our hard work was proving to be fruitful. Kieran S. and William B. earned gold in the 50 m butterfly and 50 m Breaststroke events. The Cadet Boys 200 m medley relay, consisting of Arsham M., Kieran S., William B., and Simon K., was also the first to touch the wall, with a time just 1.5 seconds shy of the GMAA record. Silver medals were awarded to Liam O. and Kieran S. in the 100 m Freestyle races, as well as to our Bantam Boys 200 m medley relay team, composed of Malcolm H., Sebastian M., Aaryan S., and Liam O., and our Cadet Girls 200 m medley relay team, made up of Avery M., Paige F., Lila H., and Lucy C. Our bronze medalists were Lucy C. in the 100 m freestyle event, Kieran S. in the 100 m individual medley, and Justin R. in the 50 m backstroke race. Ribbons were awarded to teammates, who placed fourth, fifth and sixth place. This year's swim team season has proven just how successful and determined they are, reflected not just their individual achievements but dedication as a team!



More Than a Medal

By: Kiera S.

Even though there was no gold swinging from our necks, we held our heads high as the final buzzer sounded. With our supportive coach to my right and amazing teammates to my left, I knew the Wildcats had won something far more valuable than any medal.

After an outstanding season for the Royal West Academy juvenile girls basketball team, the Wildcats proved that teamwork, determination, and court-side chemistry take a team far. During the regular season, we didn't just play well—we ran the court. We finished with 11 wins and zero losses, leaving every opposing team scrambling to keep up. As Nora A. posted on the team's Instagram, the "Wildcats went 11 for 11 in the regular season!!" showing how proud we were of this accomplishment.

From our very first game—when we were still getting to know each other—to the final buzzer, the Wildcats showed serious game. Whether it was Sienna T.'s impressively accurate three-pointers or Olivia Y.'s incredible rebounding, the RWA juvenile girls never missed a beat (or a basket). But what truly made our team special wasn't the scoreboard; it was the energy we brought every single day. Although our team was made up of students from three grades, everyone worked well together, creating an environment that felt exciting and fun! Whether it was an ordinary practice, warming up before a big game, or cheering from the bench, there was never a moment where I didn't enjoy being part of the team.

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A big thanks goes to our coach, Mr. Robert Aiken, who made this season possible. After the 2023–2024 season was canceled due to lack of a coach, Mr. Aiken stepped up for the next two seasons, and hopefully a third for 2026–2027! He is so encouraging, always looking to help each player improve, leaving a lasting impact on the team.

Even though we may have lost that final game, the Wildcats did not lose what mattered most: the friendships, memories, and support we built this season will last far longer than any scoreboard result. And if you ask me, that's a slam dunk.

RWA Wildcats Strike Gold at Claude Robillard

By: William B.

On February 10th and 11th, history was made as hundreds of athletes participated in the GMAA indoor track and field meet at Complex Claude Robillard. Among 13 teams from across Montreal, RWA excelled, winning the Juvenile Girls banner and receiving many medals. For those who couldn't attend, here are some highlights.

Upon arrival, we were welcomed by a cheering crowd and positive vibes from every athlete around us. We could hear the heavy breathing of warm-up drills, and inspirational words from various coaches providing some last-minute advice. The encouraging atmosphere was overwhelming, due to beloved coaches, teammates, and friends.

Standing behind the start line, everything changed; the echoes of our own thoughts drowned out the cheering, our focus on the challenges in front of us. Gordie S., a fellow team runner, said, "Our ears silenced out the shouts around us, and suddenly all that mattered was the sound of the starting gun".

A total of 22 medals were earned throughout the two days of competition. On February 10th, during the girls' meet, 12 medals were distributed to six athletes. Five gold medals were won: Asia A.'s 60m hurdles and high jump, as well as Alice T's 200 m, 400 m, and 800 m. Two silver medals were won; Mathilda K.'s 3000 m and Alice's 60 m. Finally, five bronze medals were won: Maia B.'s shot put, Holly M.'s triple jump, Anabella L.'s 1500 m, Asia's 60 m, and 200 m. The girls' team also won two other relay medals, further showcasing the

team's success across multiple age groups and events: a bronze in the 4x200m cadet relay and a silver in the 4x200m juvenile relay.

The next day was the boys' meet, which was a great success as well, with the team winning a total of eight medals in the cadet and juvenile categories. Five gold medals were won: Archie E.'s 2000m and 1200m, Noah B.'s shotput, and my own 3000m and 1500m. Two silver medals were also won: Noah B.'s high jump and Lucas L.'s triple jump. Finally, one bronze medal was won by Lucas B. in his 1200m.

Many ribbons were received by athletes placing in fourth, fifth, or sixth place, demonstrating how successful this year's indoor track and field has been for our school.

Special thanks go to our coaches, Ms. Sadia Di Pietro and Mr. Nicholas Rafael, who worked with us at every practice and ensured that we never gave up; that the only way to achieve the improbable was to push beyond our limits and make the impossible possible.

