

# Our

# REFLECTIONS

SPRING 2020

NEWSLETTER: NEWS, EVENTS AND ALUMNI UPDATES



## BUILDING RESILIENCY TOGETHER

When the Coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic closed Rockway, we reminded ourselves that our school was created in the shadow of World War II; Rockway's mission of faithful education has prevailed for 75 years, promoting peace and preparing graduates for whatever lies ahead in our global community.

In the face of the crisis, we were determined to carry on Rockway's mission. This was a time to model and teach resiliency.

Faculty and staff quickly got to work, with the support of our community. Shortly after March Break, faculty began classes and supporting students online. Staff began working remotely to take care of the school and plan ahead. We have since surveyed students and families to update our online learning.

*"Rockway has done a remarkable job of resuming classes online... minimizing the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on its students. Way to go, Rockway!"* Cam and Deb Shapansky, Rockway Parents since 2016.

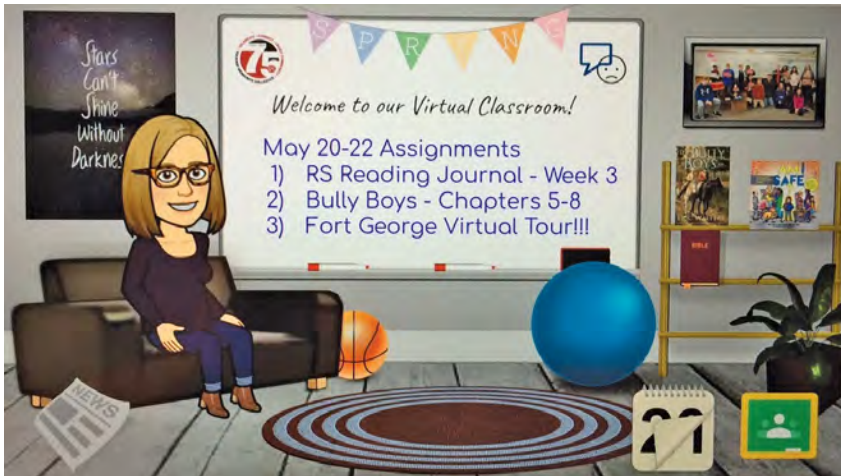
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**Rockway**  
MENNONITE COLLEGIATE

# BUILDING RESILIENCY IN RESPONSE TO COVID-19



Meet Rebecca Penfold (2000) and her virtual classroom. Because students were not able to participate in Rockway's annual Trips Week, she also included a virtual tour of Fort George!

Faculty have modified all of their lesson plans for online classes, in addition to learning to navigate lots of new technology.

It is definitely not school as usual!

Students are without classrooms, their daily routines, extracurricular activities, and are unable to be with their school community. They have also had to learn how to study from home. There are the practical challenges of Wi-Fi and computer equipment (Rockway has made Chromebooks available). And there are the emotional challenges of feeling overwhelmed and stressed—sometimes it's hard just to show up (faculty have reached out to students individually and our Resource team is providing extra support where needed).

It has been a steep learning curve for faculty and students, but together with parents, they are figuring out the challenges of our new virtual reality:

*"I had an online video chat with my Grade 9 Computer class. In the end, EVERYONE showed up and was on the call (one student was missing at first, but another student phoned him to remind him to sign on). We were in our Ethics unit, and the class proceeded to have an incredibly thoughtful and mature discussion for AN HOUR about several complex ethical dilemmas, with everyone participating at some point."*

~ Aaron Balzer, Education Assistant

*"They [teachers] sent out emails, posted videos and further explanation notes which were awesome considering the situation we're in at the moment."* ~ Rockway student

As we approach the end of the schoolyear, Rockway's priority remains to take care of students and provide them with the best possible education. Faculty and staff are planning for all teaching scenarios this fall; classroom learning, online distance learning or a combination of both. We are moving ahead with a **Rockway COVID-19 Response** plan that includes adding video conferencing capability to classrooms to allow us to transition smoothly between teaching scenarios. Stay tuned to [www.rockway.ca](http://www.rockway.ca) for more updates and to learn how you can help.

In the meantime, we will celebrate a very special 're-imagined' Grade 8 Graduation in June. Later in the month we will mark Grade 12 students' important rite of passage, with their formal graduation ceremonies taking place at a later date.

When asked what they would say to encourage a classmate who had a hard week, one student replied: *"Stay positive and never give up even if you find something difficult. Life isn't always going to be easy and we need to learn how to encounter challenges in order to make ourselves stronger!"*





L-R: Ann L. Schultz, '84, Rockway Principal; David Martin, Executive Minister, Mennonite Church Eastern Canada (MCEC); Betty Pries, Rockway Board Chair; Arli Klassen, MCEC Moderator.

## SUPPORTING FAITH, EDUCATION AND DIVERSITY

Seventy-five years ago on February 15, 1945, delegates of the Mennonite Conference of Ontario (now part of Mennonite Church Eastern Canada) approved the creation of a Mennonite high school in Kitchener. At Rockway's Founders' Day Chapel, David Martin, Executive Minister, MCEC, announced a grant of \$250,000 to the school on behalf of MCEC's member congregations. It builds on their earlier Diversity grant to Rockway.

Previously, Mary Groh, '49, and daughter of Rockway's first Principal, Harold Groh, had inspired MCEC to respond to her support with the Diversity Grant for tuition assistance for students from new Canadian MCEC congregations. This collaboration led to several young people being able to study at Rockway.

MCEC's latest grant will fulfill the promise of a Rockway education to these students, enabling them to complete their highschool studies. Any remaining grant funds will provide tuition assistance for future students.

**75** *candles*   
FOR **75 YEARS**

Inspired by Mary and MCEC's grant, Rockway has launched a year-long fundraising campaign, **75 candles FOR 75 YEARS**, to raise an additional \$270,000 in tuition assistance for students from MCEC congregations, who are facing financial barriers to studying at Rockway.

100% of donations are invested in a special fund and will be withdrawn as needed. Each candle represents the average amount of annual tuition assistance awarded per eligible MCEC student (\$3,600). **Join others who have sponsored all or part of a candle by donating online at [www.rockway.ca](http://www.rockway.ca) or by sending an e-transfer to [accountant@rockway.ca](mailto:accountant@rockway.ca).** Thank you for keeping the flames of faith, Mennonite education and diversity burning bright!



## **WILLIAM 'BILL' KRUGER: REMEMBERING A PASSIONATE ADVOCATE FOR MENNONITE EDUCATION**

On January 7, 2020, William 'Bill' Kruger, former Rockway Principal (1972-82, 1983-89) passed away. Bill was a tireless and ardent advocate for Mennonite education. As a lifelong educator and pastor, he served in Mennonite communities in Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and Ontario. He was equally devoted to his wife, Helen, and their family, and *'was known and loved for his abilities to connect with anyone, to mentor and inspire, to hold an audience for long theological and historical talks, to playfully lighten the mood, to sing in a beautiful operatic tenor voice, and so much more...'* Bill's legacy will live on. Donations received in his honour are designated to the William Kruger Scholarship Award for leadership and excellence in music.

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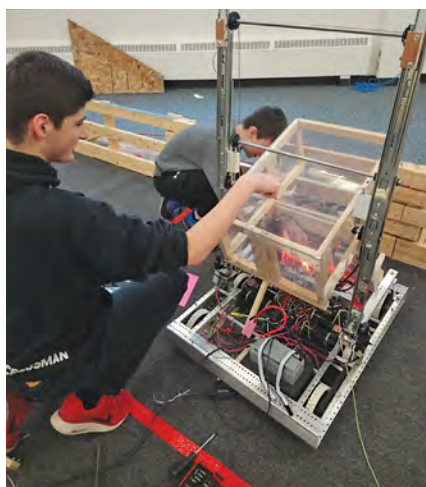


## **THREE CHEERS FOR VICE PRINCIPAL, MARK MODOLO!**

With public education facing so many challenges, Vice Principal, Mr. Modolo feels called to return to his work there, where he hopes to reach and support underserved students. He will continue at Rockway until this summer.

Thank you, Mr. Modolo, for inspiring us to reach out to our community and for teaching students to share their Christ-centred values beyond Rockway's walls. Within Rockway, thank you for your wisdom, leadership, caring approach, and sense of humour. We wish you and your family the very best. Be sure to visit to defend your ping-pong championship!

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## **SUCCESS BY DESIGN AND TEAMWORK**

Thanks to the enthusiastic leadership of faculty member, Candace Robbins, Rockway launched a Robotics extracurricular opportunity this year. Despite having to rebuild their robot in a day, the team persevered and won their first ever First Robotics Competition! They also won the Rookie Inspiration award! Thanks to donors and the volunteers (Dan Balzerson, 2007; Tin To "Ivan" Chan, 2009; Jeremie Jollivet; and Dave Willms – Rockway parent), who supported Team 8089 in their inaugural season. Visit Rockway's Facebook page for 8089 season one video highlights. Follow future Robotics adventures at

[www.instagram.com/8089.rockway/](https://www.instagram.com/8089.rockway/)





## FOUNDERS' DAY CHAPEL: A JOYFUL CELEBRATION OF SONG

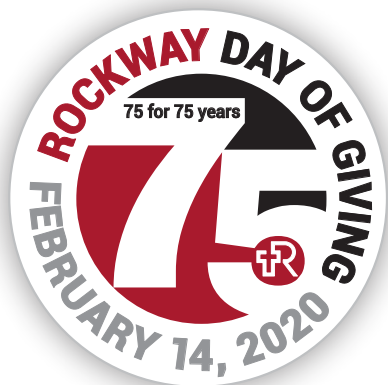
Thank you to the more than 500 people who took part in an afternoon in celebration of Rockway's 75 years of faithful education and Alumni. Guest Speaker, Sarah Johnson, 2003, asked, *'What does it mean to be a Mennonite school in a diverse and evolving global environment?'* We answered with Colossians 3:14, *'Above all, clothe yourselves with love, which binds everything together in perfect harmony'*. We sang in celebration (all Rockway choirs and an Alumni & Friends choir, above) amidst lots of stories, Alumni videos, archival displays, birthday cake, and confetti!







## HAPPY 75<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY, ROCKWAY!



## THE CELEBRATION CONTINUED ONLINE

On Friday, February 14, 2020, we took Founders' Day online and connected for Rockway's Day of Giving to support our school and share lots of Alumni memories and stories, all 'For the Love of Rockway.' We even opened the Rockway vault to unlock some vintage videos – oh, the hairstyles! Visit our Facebook page for all of the highlights and fashions. Thank you for joining us online and raising over \$10,000 for Rockway's mission.



"Growing up in a liberal Mennonite environment where the comings and goings of young people doing voluntary service work, and mature adults giving liberally of their time to their neighbours and community service projects, all appeared so right," recalls Zac Wikerd, Class of 2006. The pursuit of medicine was a natural extension of his experience.



## CONGRATULATIONS!

- **Jonathan Moyer, 2007**,  
new Neighbourhood Centre  
Supervisor with House of  
Friendship
- **Leah Reesor-Keller, 2003**,  
recently appointed as the  
next Executive Minister  
with Mennonite Church  
Eastern Canada

Send your Alumni updates  
to Andrew at  
[alumni@rockway.ca](mailto:alumni@rockway.ca)

## SERVING IN A COVID-19 HOTSPOT

Today, Zac Wikerd, 2006, is working in New York City as a medicine fellow specializing in Gerontology at a large hospital. He has been sharing his experience in written updates that are both frightening and uplifting.

*Update #1: "My initial impression was how tense the hospital was. Everyone is walking on egg-shells waiting for the surge. It appears that on Friday, we have hit the surge phase."*

Next Zac describes how the entire hospital was transformed to care for the influx of Coronavirus patients. Some weeks, as many as 80% of his patients were suffering from COVID-19.

*Update #2: "This week has been one of the most emotionally challenging weeks I've experienced in my training. My residency elsewhere prepared me well for the long hours and patient volume associated with a pandemic, but the emotional toll this virus has placed on us as physicians is new territory. I find the majority of my day is spent speaking with families back to back and mapping out what is important in the context of this aggressive, and likely deadly virus. Unfortunately, my patient population has been hit hard..."*

After the first death in their geriatric practice, the team of Geriatricians did a team check-in as part of their self-care. Zac reflected: "As Geriatricians, we make peace with death. We strive to help our patients live out their best lives, and when the time comes, die with dignity..."

Zac's update also shows his awe and regard for the efforts undertaken by his health care professional colleagues to quickly adapt, learn and serve in the face of 'daily changes'.

*Update #3: "A third week has passed. Thankfully, I will be rotating off Inpatient Service. Quite honestly I've reached my emotional limit. Although I love hospital medicine, the Geriatric Service has mostly become a Palliative Service."*

Through it all two things stand out in Zac's reflections. He is constantly striving to build his knowledge of the Coronavirus and decipher how it presents in his patients.

And he remains grateful. He is grateful for: his mom and friends making facemasks; the surprise delivery of cake and a home cooked meal; and, the kind thoughts and words of encouragement from many. To this, Rockway adds our own words of gratitude. Thank you, Zac. Be well.



## ALUMNI CREATIVELY GIVING BACK

Dennis Catana, 2012, writes, "Rockway, and specifically Karen Scott Booth, Visual Art Department Head, has been one of the biggest influences on my life.

*At Rockway, I was able to limitlessly apply my creativity: a minimalist Sistine Chapel bubble gum work the size of the gym wall? Eight-foot tall lips made out of skittles? Pinup-style Mennonites?*

*These are the works I created during my time at Rockway, and that inspired my full-time pursuit of Art & Design.*

*I'm glad to be giving back as a guest artist, collaborating on the outdoor art installation with a group of young Rockway artists led by Annalee Bender and Jeff Chen.*

*The sculpture is part of an Alumni Garden, a space for students to feel a sense of harmony, with its flowing fountain and powerful abstract sculpture (see right, the design maquette).*

*I felt that being involved in its creation is a way to thank Rockway, for shaping who I've become today, and inspire the future generation of creatives in the same way." Thank you, Dennis!*



"I use this self-portrait on my website.

*I've decided not to show my face, since I've always wanted the art I create and its messages to be a priority, leaving no bias in who created it."*

## ALUMNI 75<sup>TH</sup> QUILT EXHIBITION

### CALLING ALL ALUMNI!

We are hosting an exhibition of Alumni quilts, curated by Alumna Judi Gascho-Jutzi, '72, in honour of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate's 75<sup>th</sup> year.

We are looking for 15-20 quilts (depending on their size) to be displayed in our Silo from the end of this summer until summer 2021.

**We specifically would like quilts from Alumni collections that have a connection with Rockway and/or bed quilts and wall hangings made by Alumni.**

Please contact Andrew at: [alumni@rockway.ca](mailto:alumni@rockway.ca) or 519-342-0007 x3601 with your questions and submissions.







## FLAMES ROUND UP

Kudos to our Junior Girls and Senior Girls (pictured above right, after practice) Volleyball teams, who made it to the CWOSSA championships in March. Well done!

Congratulations to all of our wrestlers who won gold, two silver and a bronze to qualify for CWOSSA. Special shout-out to Emily Moffat (centre), who went on to win GOLD at CWOSSA and Silver at the OFSAA championships!



## ENVIRATHON SERVATHON 2020: 'BEE' WELL AND SHARE SOME GOOD

On Monday, May 4, 2020, our entire school, along with Rockway Alumni and volunteers from Presenting Partner, Kindred Credit Union, were looking forward to lending a helping hand at several local organizations.

Instead, we encouraged our school and community to 'Bee' Well and Share Some Good, helping out however you could during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Kindred led by example, redirecting their Envirathon Servathon sponsorship to Rockway's tuition assistance to support students and families.

If you would like to continue the tradition of supporting Rockway's Envirathon Servathon, you can donate to the ongoing revitalization of Rockway's outdoor spaces. Donate online at [www.canadahelps.org](http://www.canadahelps.org) or by e-transfer to [accountant@rockway.ca](mailto:accountant@rockway.ca). Thank you for maintaining and improving Rockway's facilities and campus.

## ROGER STOVER: GUIDED BY FAITH ON AND OFF THE COURT



Roger Stover, former Rockway Athletics Director and beloved teacher and coach, passed away on Thursday, May 7, 2020.

He taught at Rockway for thirty years and was known for his gentle, kind spirit by all who knew him.

Hired in 1968, Roger founded Rockway's Athletics program. He brought out the best in all athletes, generating team spirit, with his unique ability to bridge faith and sport.

*"I had Roger as a teacher, coach, and peer. He was always patient with me as a student. He was always more concerned with big picture issues than with the smaller day-to-day things. We always knew he cared*

*deeply for us as people first and athletes second. I will never forget one experience at OFSAA. He cracked open his briefcase, and there, beside his To Do clipboard, was his Bible. It struck me as to how important his faith was to his actions, taking the time for Bible study at an OFSAA tournament. That image has stayed with me. It's been an inspiration for me in my life."*

*~ Ray Boehm, '84, Rockway's Athletics Director.*

Rockway remembers Roger with grateful hearts for his many years of faithful service. Our thoughts and prayers are with his wife Daphne, and his two sons and their families.



75 *tees*   
FCR 75 YEARS

Due to the Coronavirus (COVID-19) outbreak, we had to cancel our 2020 Rockway Golf Classic. **The Golf Classic is our biggest fundraiser for tuition assistance, usually raising over \$30,000 each year.** Presently, 66 students rely on tuition assistance.

**You can help** by joining others who have 'hit the link instead of the links' and donated over \$10,000 so far. Support students and families with your online donation at [www.rockway.ca](http://www.rockway.ca); or e-transfer to [accountant@rockway.ca](mailto:accountant@rockway.ca) (please mention 'Rockway Golf Classic/Tuition Assistance'). **Thank you for 'chipping in fore' brighter futures.**



## A LASTING GIFT TO ROCKWAY

As a former Board Chair of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate (2001 - 2005), Margaret Janzen was a tremendous advocate for the school and held a special place in her heart for Rockway.

*"Marg's self-confidence and insight into the workings of the Board were matched by the breadth of her vision for what a school like Rockway could offer students, the church and the broader community. Marg's dry wit and wonderfully disarming humour, together with her capacity to be transparently honest, laid bare the heart of many questions we faced. Her deep commitment to the well-being of her three children, Liz, Ben and Rebecca, all Rockway students, never got in the way of her care and vision for the whole. I count it my deep privilege to have known and worked with Marg. Her leadership and support were a gift to Rockway."*

~ Terry Schellenberg, former Rockway Principal



Prior to her death in spring of 2018, 'Marg' shared with her spouse, Arnold, and her children, her final wishes, namely that a special gift be made to Rockway in her name. Her family did just that, arranging a meaningful donation in honour of Marg. We are grateful for this gift and Marg's legacy, both of which are helping to sustain the school she so loved. As Rockway turns 75, we invite you to talk with your family and trusted advisors about your wishes and legacy. Contact us at 519-743-5209 x3011 or [advancement@rockway.ca](mailto:advancement@rockway.ca) if you would like to discuss including Rockway in your conversations.

## FAITH. FAMILY. FRIENDS.

Elaine Cressman (far right) passed away in the fall of 2019, leaving a legacy of volunteerism and support for Rockway. Elaine lived with a life focused on faith, family and friends.



At her memorial, Elaine's children and grandchildren, including many Rockway Alumni, shared stories and gifts from Elaine's time at Rockway's Thrift Shop. After the Thrift Shop opened in May of 1973, Elaine soon joined the Women's Committee and later led it until 1985. She volunteered with Miriam Snider Cressman, '50, second from right, who also left a legacy of volunteer service at Rockway. Elaine's family remembered how she also welcomed many Rockway students as boarders. Her family wrote, *"Elaine always put others before herself. She will be remembered for her kindness, compassion, sensitivity and creativity."* They also noted, Elaine's was a life well-lived. We couldn't agree more, or be more grateful.



### OUR MISSION

As a Christian educational community within the Anabaptist Mennonite tradition, Rockway Mennonite Collegiate integrates sound academic learning with growth in character and faith, together with a passion for peacemaking and service to God and all creation.



# THANK YOU! For being there during this challenging time.

## We will see you as soon as possible!

Although being apart is difficult, we want to keep everyone safe and well.

For the latest Rockway COVID-19 cancellations, postponements, and updates e.g. *The Sound of Music*, Ultimate Rockway Picnic and 2020 Graduation Ceremonies, please visit and regularly return to our web site: [www.rockway.ca](http://www.rockway.ca)



## EMAIL US TODAY!



"In this uncertain and difficult time of COVID-19 isolation, I am more grateful than ever that my daughters attend Rockway. They feel supported and engaged while continuing their education."

Monica Loberto, Rockway Parent since 2014  
Samantha - Class of 2024 | Emily - Class of 2020



[admissions@rockway.ca](mailto:admissions@rockway.ca)



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For more information about our school and mission:

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#lifeatRockway

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