

Our

REFLECTIONS

FALL 2023

NEWSLETTER: HAPPENINGS, EVENTS AND ALUMNI NEWS



EXCITEMENT IS IN THE AIR

The excitement of coming back to school is in the air. The familiar sounds you expect to hear after a long summer break fill the Rockway halls; the shuffling of feet, lockers opening and closing, the sharing of summer tales, students comparing schedules; a new academic year sparks energy, enthusiasm and passion.

We are so lucky to experience a yearly cycle in education with the chance to begin anew. Every September we have the chance to reflect on the year that passed and take time to appreciate what lies ahead.

Preparations for this school year have been incredibly smooth, now that our new Admin team members have had a year's experience at Rockway. No longer new to the school, along with faculty and staff, we were able to hit the ground running in the final weeks of August, to ensure that all was in place for our students on the first day.

We are grateful to our facilities staff who have been working diligently all summer to clean, repair and rejuvenate our spaces. Floors are gleaming, many walls are freshly painted and rooms are in order. One notable upgrade, our old science room has been refurbished and will become robotics central for our grade 7 and 8 classes this fall. These are just a few of many examples of the work completed by our dedicated facilities team.

We anticipate a great year with many events and opportunities that bring us together as a community. Our hope is that you are able to join us for **Connections Homecoming Night** on Friday, October 20 for our traditional Spaghetti Supper and Alumni Sports Challenge. Rockway was also given the opportunity to host the 2023 OFSAA Senior Boys Volleyball Championships and will host games November 23-25. We hope to see you in the stands cheering on our senior boys!

~ Elaine Ranney, Principal

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PRESENTING THE GRADUATING CLASS OF 2023



CONGRATULATIONS TO THIS YEAR'S AWARD WINNERS

- **Abundance Canada Spirit of Generosity Award**
– Lynda Hansen
- **Benjamin Eby / Salome Bauman Award** – Naomi Joy, Mikayla Neufeld
- **Bridging Cultures Award** – Jeffrey Sung
- **Dennis Wikerd French Language Award** – Miranda Davison
- **English Award** – Vanessa Schattman
- **Governor General's Award** – Miranda Davison
- **Leaders of Tomorrow Award** – Naomi Joy, Mikayla Neufeld
- **Lieutenant Governor's Community Volunteer Award**
– Miryam Bender
- **Lobe Cross Cultural & Service Award** – Simeon Hatlem
- **Math & Science Academic Achievement Award**
– Miranda Davison
- **Peter Hallman Athletics Leadership Award**
– Nathaniel Unrau-Woelk
- **The Waterloo Region Record's Standout Student Award**
– Morgen Schmidt, Owen Unrau
- **Rockway Diploma Award** – Owen VanderMeer
- **Valedictorian Award** – Naomi Joy
- **Visual Arts Award** – Morgen Schmidt, Tucker Fortier
- **William Kruger Music Award** – Willem Hedrick



The Rockway flame is passed between graduates as they officially become Rockway alumni.

Friends and family celebrated with Rockway Grads at a traditional graduation ceremony followed by our Grad Banquet. Rockway alumnus, Felipe Gonzalia Diaz '07, gave an encouraging Graduation Address to our graduates and Naomi Joy '23 moved everyone with her heartfelt Valedictorian Address. Congratulations graduates!

CHAPEL THEME 2023-2024

In this year's chapel program, we want to explore three key questions that help us think about our purpose in the world: *Who am I? What is unique about me? How do I live this out in the world?*

Another way to ask these questions is to reflect on the idea of "calling". Calling is an interesting word; author and teacher Chris Steadman describes it this way:

A calling blossoms when you see a need in the world that aligns with your passions, and you dive into addressing it head first.

This year we'll explore this idea through the lens of the prophet Micah. Micah asks his community *"...what does [God] require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God?" (Micah 6:8).*

Micah is getting at the very core of what it means to live in God's way; to choose to ground the purpose of our lives in ways that bring goodness and wholeness to everyone.

For Christians, this is the way of Jesus, and it's both personal, and political. It's seeing who we are and our purpose in new ways, and it's about how we live out our lives in our community and our world. For Anabaptist Mennonites, this way is grounded in a spirit of reconciliation.

In our chapels this year, we are invited to consider our everyday lives through this lens. We can ask this question of calling whether we're atheist, religious, or somewhere in between. And the more we do this, the more we understand who we are and what we are – and grow into our unique purpose in the world.



FOOD, FAMILY AND FUN



The 1st annual **Family Picnic & Outdoor Movie Night** was held on Friday, June 16 with over 300 people in attendance. The weather was perfect and we could not have asked for better conditions to host this first-time event! Guests enjoyed carnival games, a dunk tank (where members of our Admin Team took turns in the "hot seat"), bottomless snacks and drinks, a delicious family-style BBQ and an ice cream truck. Our evening culminated with an outdoor movie. Leading up to the event, students, families, faculty and staff participated in a poll to select the movie, and based on our popular vote, *The Lorax* was selected. We hope you can join us next year on **Friday, June 14, 2024!**

LET IT GO...

Written by Alan K. Sapp, Director

There is so much to celebrate about Rockway's 2023 production of Disney's *FROZEN JR.*! I want to take some time to focus on the very large group of students, faculty and staff that made this production possible.

In terms of numbers, there were 42 students in the cast and 60 who worked

on various crews...that's basically one third of the school population. There were 15 teachers who were directly involved in the show, and at least a dozen staff who were also directly involved. You can understand the reason why we produce a musical every 3 years, instead of every year or even every other year. It is a lot of work and involves so many people.



The cast and crew of Rockway's production of *FROZEN JR.* (photo by Jason Panda, @KWPanda)



(photo by Jason Panda, @KWPanda)

Let me highlight some of the people involved in the production.

I want to start with my choreographers, Eliza Mills '15 and Abigail Sapp '17. In spite of being in "Seussical" together, there is a three-year span between them, and so they didn't have much interaction during their school years. In our last four musicals, our choreographer has been Jenee Gowing... both Abigail and Eliza worked with Jenee. Jenee wasn't available for this show, so what a great time to have two of her proteges take over. The two of them got along famously and complemented each other so well. The students were very fortunate to have had the chance to work with them.

Another individual who helped bring this show to life was Margaret Andres, and her team of sewers. Margaret guided us into a

vision of the costumes in the show very carefully and with much attention to each character. The result was professional level costumes, and they were stunning to see on stage.

There is a magic that happens, especially in a musical, when the costumes and the choreography work in harmony as well as they did in this production. It is hard to single out one particular number; they were all so strong.

It has been said that if a director casts a show well, 90% of their work is accomplished. I would say that this production is an excellent example of that saying. I was blessed to have such a strong and committed cast of students. They brought this story to life!

Finally, let me say what really captured me when I first listened to the music and story of *FROZEN JR.* When I heard "Let it Go" and listened to Elsa's story, for me the story became about mental health. We all know what a struggle it has been for many people, students especially, to deal with the isolation of COVID-19. That song and Elsa's story, became about releasing impossible expectations and mantras, and claiming her true and authentic identity. And, alongside her is her best friend, her sister, who never gives up on her and, ultimately, offers herself as a sacrifice.

What a beautiful and timeless story...

THE VILLAGE

*Written by Rockway International Student, Mavis,
at the end of the 2022-2023 school year.*

“The Village” is a house owned by Rockway teacher Jo Scott where she is hosting three students from Hong Kong and China. There are many lovely things that happen there. There are students from different places living together and it’s a great experience. We do some special activities during festivals. Also, we are all around each other most of the time. Those warm things are wonderful.



Students living together from different places is a wonderful experience. First, our home languages are different. Jo, who is our host mom, speaks English. The eldest student, Bella, speaks Mandarin. Giselle and I both speak Cantonese. However, we speak our common language while we are having a conversation and it’s so lovely that people from different places speak in one language. Additionally, we each share our own culture with each other. In Hong Kong and China, we use chopsticks to have meals and we brought some chopsticks from Hong Kong; we taught Jo how to use them, although she doesn’t use them well. Jo also makes us some dinner that Canadians usually eat, and we all enjoy it. That makes us know more about different cultures. Furthermore, we did not know each other before, and it’s sweet that we became friends and family with people who are not from our country. So, people from different places living together is a good experience to learn different languages and cultures.

During festivals we do some special activities together. We ate hot pot and mooncake at the Mid-Autumn Festival which we usually do in Hong Kong and we also set off fireworks and lanterns. It was fun and definitely a new thing for Jo. Besides this, at Halloween, we wore our Halloween costumes and went trick or treating around our neighbourhood. We also bought and handed out Halloween candy and chocolates to the kids and we got a few bags of candy after that. Moreover, before the big Canadian festival of Christmas, we went to the Benjamin Tree Farm to get our Christmas tree, and on the way there Jo bought us special Christmas drinks from Starbucks. Also, we all sat on the couch and watched some Christmas movies together, like *Elf*. Therefore, we did many different activities together during different festivals and this created warmth.

We are all around each other most of the time. First, we all go to the same school. Jo is a teacher there and the three of us are students. So basically, we always see each other at school and in some classes; we are classmates. In addition, we usually have dinner together every day. We usually chat while we are having our dinner. We talk about how we are doing, some funny things at school, what did we learn today. It’s a chance to know more about each other. Furthermore, we always share happiness, and help and support each other. When we are sick, Jo will ask us what we need and get it for us. When I have a basketball game, Bella will come to watch and support me and Jo is the coach of our team, so she’s always supporting me. When Bella got a university offer, Jo took us to get ice cream and celebrate it. Hence, we always share our happiness, take care of and support each other.

All in all, there are many lovely and sweet things that happen in “The Village”. People come from different places and live together. It’s an amazing experience for us. We do many different activities to celebrate the festivals and we are always around each other to give help and support, and share our happiness together. There is so much warmth and love there.

If you are interested in becoming a homestay host, contact Jill Sauer at homestay@rockway.ca.

CHIPPING IN 'FORE' ROCKWAY STUDENTS



Grey Silo Golf Club in Waterloo was the perfect host for the 28th edition of Rockway's Annual Golf Classic. The tournament was held on Monday, May 29 and everyone in attendance was treated to a fantastic day on the course. The weather was incredible (perhaps a bit too hot for some) and the course was in amazing shape.

We want to send out a big thank you to everyone who signed up to play. *We had over 80 people register for the tournament, a record number of participants, and together we raised over \$26,000 towards Tuition Assistance* – a program that helps make the Rockway Experience more accessible to people in our community.

Thank you to all of our sponsors for their generous support! With their help, we were able to introduce some new games and in-round competitions that not only helped generate a lot of fun on the course, but provided some new opportunities for people to win prizes.



Scott Bruinsma, Nick Martin '99, Dan Shantz '04 and Chris Steingart '99. Congratulations to our winning team and everyone who won prizes!

Please be sure and add next year's tournament date to your calendar, **Monday, May 27, 2024** and stay tuned 'fore' more information.

The competition was fierce and our three-time defending champions did everything they could to keep their hands on the trophy but, in the end (thanks to a tie-breaker), we crowned a new winning foursome:

ALUMNI BABY T-SHIRTS

Is there a new addition to your family? Let us know and we'll send a size 2T t-shirt for the future Rockway graduate!

Email Kristen at alumni@rockway.ca with the date of birth, names of the baby and parents, and mailing address.

When you receive your t-shirt, we'd love for you to share a photo of you and/or the future alumni!



Duane Heide '89 shared this picture of his sons, and new Rockway alumni, *Kieran '23* and *Noah '23* with their baby t-shirts.

ALUMNI MEMORIES

“AUF DEUTSCH, BITTE”



These simple words from Mrs. (Frau) Rosemarie Tossell, my German teacher at Rockway, often still play in my head, nearly ten years after being taught them. At a recent week-long design workshop in Berlin, Germany, I found myself pleasantly surprised by my ability to loosely converse in the local language at market halls, restaurants, and even with other German graduate students. Mrs. Tossell would often push us to speak *auf Deutsch, bitte* (in German, please) even if it was uncomfortable, instilling a focus on effort over perfection. It wasn't always easy, but we got to see our learning pay off on Rockway's France Germany trip in 2014, ordering, bartering, and conversing in German. In reflecting on my time at Rockway, it's clear that the people are what make the teaching engaging and memorable. Just as the awesome math and physics teachers I had (Rob Klassen, Steve Pfisterer, Neveen Antoun, among others) bolstered my interest in an engineering career, it was Frau Tossell's approach to teaching German that made it fun – we all made many great memories both in the classroom and packing into a van and driving through Germany.

~ Connor Huxman '15

Connor is working towards his PhD in Mechanical Engineering at Penn State University. He is developing and pursuing the commercialization of a new orthopaedic implant technology for treating long bone fractures. He was in Germany in March 2023 for a Design Thinking workshop, working with a global team to learn and propose new solutions for innovation problems within the United Nations.

Do you have a memory or story to contribute? Send your Rockway Memories to Kristen at alumni@rockway.ca.

WHERE ARE ROCKWAY ALUMNI NOW?

Each red dot shows the current location of Rockway graduates. There are over 80 locations across the world! Don't see a dot where you are? Send an email to alumni@rockway.ca to update your contact information. Come see the enlarged map on the Alumni Bulletin Board on **Connections Homecoming Night!**



STAY CONNECTED – GET INVOLVED

Stay connected and get involved by watching your email and visiting our website (rockway.ca) for all the latest news and updates about events. Stay engaged by liking, sharing and following us on YouTube, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.



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 peace-making and service to God and all creation.

Stay Connected

We'd love to hear from you!
You can connect with us at:

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#LifeatRockway

Upcoming Events

Visit rockway.ca for more information and then Join us!

Rockway Sr. Choir

at Steinmann Mennonite Church
– November 12, 2023

Rockway's AGM

Annual General Meeting (Online)
– November 22, 2023, 7:30 pm
(email AGM@rockway.ca for the Zoom link)

OFSAA (Sr. Boys VB)

Senior Boys Volleyball at Rockway
– November 23-25, 2023

Christmas Concert

at First United Church, Waterloo
– Tuesday, December 5, 7:30 pm

Founders' Day Chapel

Founders' Day Chapel, Soup Supper, and Alumni Sports Challenge
– Thursday, February 15, 2024
(watch for more info in the Winter Reflections)

Save the Date!
CONNECTIONS
HOMECOMING NIGHT
2023
Friday, October 20

SPAGHETTI SUPPER | 5:00-7:00 pm
ALUMNI SPORTS CHALLENGE | 7:15-9:30 pm
Email alumni@rockway.ca to join the alumni team!

ROCKWAY
MENNONITE COLLEGIATE
A SMALL SCHOOL FOR A BIG WORLD

Join us!

DISCOVER ROCKWAY

Thursday, November 9, 2023 | 7 pm

Register today at rockway.ca

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