

Our

REFLECTIONS

SPRING 2022

NEWSLETTER: HAPPENINGS, EVENTS AND ALUMNI NEWS



Clarence showing students what ingredients are in the smudge bowl.

CONNECTING TO THE LAND, CONNECTING TO EACH OTHER

Spiritual Emphasis Week – March 22-24, 2022

Rockway recognizes that students, faculty and staff benefit from opportunities to explore important conversations, and particularly ones that relate to students' spirituality and personal journey.

This is what inspires Rockway's annual Spiritual Emphasis Week during chapel – a week where students are challenged to dig more deeply into a relevant topic. This year, the conversation focused on **relationships to land and First Peoples**.

Leading us in these conversations were two guest speakers – **Clarence M. Cachagee** and **Rebecca Seiling**. Together, they spoke

~ Continued on page 2

What's Inside?

- A Message from Elaine: PAGES 3-5
- Rockway Founders' Day Chapel: PAGES 6-8
- With Gratitude: PAGES 9-11
- Rockway Remembers: PAGE 14
- Spring to Go: PAGE 15
- Staying Connected: BACK PAGE

CONNECTING TO THE LAND, CONNECTING TO EACH OTHER ~ Continued from page 1

to students virtually through three video chapel addresses: *Stewardship vs Ownership*, *Sitting with the Truth*, and *Two-Eyed Seeing and Allyship*.

The entire Rockway community was able to participate in a smudging ceremony (see photo on pg. 1) introduced by Clarence and assisted by Rebecca.

Clarence says, *"It is said that Mother Earth has all the medicines for every disease there is. Indigenous Peoples of Turtle Island are land-based people. We have received many of our teachings from the animals. Our creation stories are about Mother Earth and how we came to be. It is said that you can go anywhere on Turtle Island and find the medicine you need. Understanding land-based philosophies helps us become better connected and feed our spirits."*

Clarence currently works as an Aboriginal Services Coordinator at Conestoga College and is the visionary behind Crow Shield Lodge which is a place for reconciliation, teaching and healing.

Rebecca wears several work hats: running nature programs with the City of Kitchener, facilitating professional development for teachers through Child and Nature Alliance of Canada, and working with Mennonite Central Committee's Indigenous Neighbours program.

Rebecca's connection to land comes from growing up on two farms: her grandparents' in St. Jacobs, and her family's in Elora. She loves spending time outdoors, and she is passionate about connecting people to the land around them. To her, each season and space is full of wonder – when we have eyes to see.

Elaine Ranney, Principal opened the week by introducing everyone to Crow Shield Lodge – a land based education centre that helps promote reconciliation with indigenous people. Elaine concluded the series by challenging the Rockway community, *"Let us continue our learning and understanding of the experiences of indigenous peoples and let us seek reconciliation. Let us take seriously Clarence's words, 'We are the land, and the land is us.'"*



To watch each chapel address, visit rockway.ca

Rebecca Seiling (right) assists while Clarence (above) explains the significance of smudging ceremonies to a group of students and teachers.



A MESSAGE FROM ELAINE

At the time that I write this, it has been eight weeks since I began solo as the new Principal of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate. It is remarkable to me how much I have learned about this wonderful school in such a short time.

I identified three priorities as a starting point.

My FIRST PRIORITY was to get to know everyone.

I spend the first part of most days welcoming students to school in the morning and visiting a few classrooms in an attempt to learn everyone's name – a very challenging thing to do during a time when everyone is wearing a mask! Students have been generous and forgiving in my attempts to recall names.

I conducted one-on-one visits with all faculty and staff and have appreciated hearing about how they came to work at Rockway and their experiences here.

During the last week of January, we hosted six "Meet & Greets" for parents. Sixty-one parents attended and asked many great questions about my priorities and impressions of Rockway.

It was heartening to hear so many parents talk about the impact that Rockway has had on their child(ren).

I have also had the pleasure to meet a number of donors of Rockway. Most enjoyable has been hearing about their experiences of Rockway – some as far back as the first graduating class! Once again, I have been struck by the consistent reflections on Rockway's warm and welcoming environment.



Elaine meeting a current Grade 10 student on our first day back to in-person learning in January.



Elaine greeting students on the first day of in-person learning, January 17, 2022.

Learning about Rockway's culture and the "Rockway Experience" has been an important **SECOND PRIORITY**.

While I have been here only a short time, it has become clear to me how profound the Rockway Experience has been for those who have attended. As I have been getting to know faculty and staff, I have been asking them about our tagline "A Small School for a Big World". I have been curious to hear what that means to them.

Many have said:

- "We are a small school, but everything we do is big."
- "Our smallness allows us to get to know one another well and show care, but we are not insular. We tackle big questions."
- "We help prepare students to engage with a big world."
- "We seek to prepare them to be active in a global community."

A SMALL SCHOOL
FOR A **BIG WORLD**

Listening to the reflections of faculty and staff, it's clear that Rockway's commitment to creating responsible, globally-minded, compassionate and reflective learners is strong within these walls.

“

It was heartening to hear so many parents talk about the impact that Rockway has had on their child(ren).

While visiting with them, I have also been asking faculty and staff what they think is special and unique about Rockway – what is worth preserving? The theme of **community** emerged in virtually all of my conversations. One faculty member said: *"Everybody here cares and pays attention. Each student is seen and known."*

These words and phrases help describe Rockway's unique culture, founded on our Anabaptist values.

One of my most important jobs is to ensure that Rockway's unique culture can be experienced by many students in the future. Cultures can shift. Cultures can be influenced positively or negatively depending on the actions of those within its walls. How can we collectively ensure that the "Rockway Experience" of community and caring is there for future generations? This question leads to a discussion about our **Strategic Plan: LEADing into the Future 2021-2025**.

Implementation of the Strategic Plan has been my THIRD PRIORITY.

The Administrative Team has been charged with mobilization of Rockway's new Strategic Plan.

The plan has:

- 4 strategic priorities
- 17 goals
- 64 key deliverables/strategies

As a first step, we have created a Strategic Plan Implementation Team (SPIT) that will have responsibility for leading the implementation of the plan. The team includes representatives from the faculty and administration. The team will prioritize strategies, identify champions for each goal area and/or deliverable, establish timelines and seek measures of success. SPIT has had its first meeting and is in the process of prioritizing efforts.

I continue to be amazed at the warmth and openness of the people who call Rockway home.

When I had been at Rockway only a few days, my husband asked me how things were going. I quickly replied: *"I feel like I have been there for a long time. I feel like I knew these people before I arrived."* I believe I felt this way because everyone was so open, welcoming and authentic.

It is a true pleasure and a joy to work here.



To review our Strategic Plan, visit rockway.ca



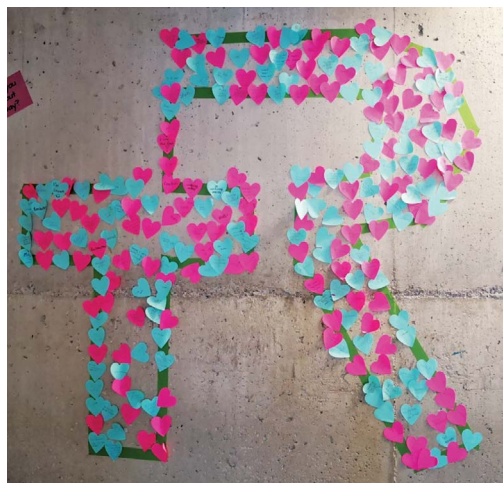
Elaine has jumped right into the spirit of things at Rockway! In our "Twin Day Spirit Day", Elaine and her assistant, Laurie, twinned – can you tell who is who?

ROCKWAY FOUNDERS' DAY CHAPEL

This year marked Rockway's 77th birthday. We were unable to gather as a large group to celebrate Rockway Founders' Day, but that did not prevent the community spirit of Rockway from shining through! Rockway students, alumni, parents, faculty and staff were invited to *Join Us!* in celebrating Founders' Day in a variety of ways.

In the morning, students and teachers watched the pre-recorded Chapel in their classrooms, while staff met together over Zoom to do the same. All were given delicious Rockway cookies, in individually packaged and labelled bags, prepared by our Food Services team, to enjoy during their viewing (see *photo, right*).

During their lunch break, and, as a continuation from Valentine's Day, students were invited to write on a sticky note, what they loved most about Rockway. The sticky notes were then posted inside a big Rockway R located in the main foyer.



Some of their responses included, "The Teachers!", "Cookies", "The Diversity", "I'm known", "All School Video", and "Rockway cares for our community".



As part of the festivities, Student Council also set up a photo booth and handed out delicious hot chocolate.



Thanks to our amazing alumni who took the time to join us online!

At the same time that students, faculty and staff were celebrating, alumni and parents (both former and current) were participating in a Founders' Day Chapel Zoom call (see above).

They watched the Founders' Day Chapel together and enjoyed breakout rooms where they were able to reminisce, and hear about what is currently happening at Rockway.



*Our guest speaker,
alumna Anneli Loepp Thiessen '13*

Having an online Zoom Chapel meant that alumni could attend from as far away as Pennsylvania and Alberta. Thank you to all who were able to join us.


At the beginning of the Founders' Day Chapel, Elaine Ranney, Rockway's new principal, warmly thanked everyone for joining and expressed joy at bringing everyone together in, what was, the closest we could come to a reunion at that time. Some highlights from the Chapel included an inspiring message from Rockway alumna, Anneli Loepp Thiessen '13, (photo left) and two performances by the Senior Choir (photo next page) from the new *Voices Together* hymnal. The performances were especially meaningful as Anneli was a committee member

~ Continued on page 8



for *Voices Together*, and the Senior Choir had only just started singing together again at the beginning of February after two years apart! Those who missed seeing the Founders' Day Chapel can find it on our Founders' Day webpage: www.rockway.ca/foundersday

Brent Charette, Interim Director of Advancement, reminded us that current students, alumni, parents, faculty, staff, donors are all part of the Rockway community. *"Founders' Day isn't only about remembering the past, it's about celebrating a shared history which joins us together as a community."*







ROCKWAY
Mennonite Collegiate
A SMALL SCHOOL FOR A BIG WORLD

BOOK YOUR TOUR TODAY!

"Rockway gave me the space to excel academically, participate in sports and the arts, and provided me opportunities to develop leadership skills. During my six years from Grades 7 to 12, Rockway's staff and students cultivated a sense of belonging and encouragement, providing me with the skills to confidently move forward in my life."

Malina Narayansingh – Class of 2021
Western University, Bachelor of Science – Kinesiology

   
#RockwayResilent

admissions@rockway.ca

Charitable #: 119122091RR0001

Rockway Mennonite Collegiate | 110 Doon Road | Kitchener | ON | N2G 3C8
www.rockway.ca | 519.743.5209



With Gratitude...

A CELEBRATION OF ANN L. SCHULTZ AND HER 30 YEARS AT ROCKWAY

A constant theme of Ann L. Schultz's '84 tenure as Principal of Rockway was gratitude. Ann frequently spoke and wrote of her own gratitude for students, faculty, staff, alumni, donors, and volunteers. As the school's leader, she also spoke of the gratitude that each of these groups had for one another, unifying and connecting each important aspect of this community.

In music, repetition is important. Repetition holds a piece of music together, giving it form and shape. During Ann's time as Principal, gratitude was a theme that held our communal song together.



The "With Gratitude" Choir. Their feature piece "The Call" was written by Jeff for Ann in 1999. When the planning committee asked Ann what piece of music would be a meaningful reflection of her time at Rockway, she named this piece.

It was fitting, therefore, that Ann's November 28, 2021 retirement celebration was called 'With Gratitude'. And the sentiment flowed back and forth throughout the afternoon.

Former colleagues Murray Hiebert, Terry Schellenberg, and Dennis Wikerd, current colleagues Karen Martin Schiedel and Sara Wahl, alumni Justin Martin '97 and Jenny Enns Modolo '97, and family members Steve Pfisterer, Kaylen Pfisterer '05 and Elizabeth Pfisterer '15

all expressed their gratitude for Ann. They covered each of the many relationships Ann has had with Rockway: student, teacher, Music Department Head, Principal, and parent of two alumni.

The afternoon was peppered with music. Former Music Department colleagues David Dirks '83 and Jen Hoffman-Bailey started the afternoon with prelude music. Between each speaker, a "With Gratitude Choir" formed by Jeff Enns '90, current Music Department Head and featuring alumni alongside current students and staff, sang original works, meaningful to Ann (see photo above).

Ann spoke last, using the metaphor of a musical prelude to describe her 30-year story with Rockway. *"The structure of a musical Prelude is really an introduction to another piece of music, most often, followed by a fugue. The prelude is quite free flowing, filled*



As their tribute, former students Jenny Enns Modolo '97 and Justin Martin '97 wrote and performed a medley that told the story of Ann's time at Rockway, to the tunes of songs from musicals Ann produced during her years in the Music Department.

~ Continued on page 10



Ann holding and describing a small bowl of stones that sat on her desk everyday; each one engraved with a significant word that inspired her work.

WITH GRATITUDE ~ Continued from page 9

with rhythmic and melodic motifs, and presents the opportunity for some improvisation too. Over the last few weeks, I have been reflecting on my tenure as a Prelude composition...a story filled with motifs and improvisation, as well as an introduction to something else that is coming and will be exciting too...this will be Rockway's next "Prelude," and it will be beautifully created and composed through the leadership of Rockway's incoming Principal, Elaine Ranney, and supported through the collective efforts of Rockway's Board, Faculty and Staff, Supporters of Rockway, and of course, Rockway students!"

She reminisced about her years as Music Department Head which extended from 1997-

2012. "I was able to realize so much of what called me to music in the first place...the distinct privilege to inspire youth to sing the music of the masters, the music of the church, and the music of today... the opportunity to share my music education philosophy which was to integrate body, mind and soul into the music process, and foremostly, impress on my students, that they were messengers of very important messages. I spent a lot of time during rehearsals, connecting the importance of the interplay of text and tune and inspiring them to sing from the heart."

Upon starting as Principal in 2013, Ann reflected that, "The mandate was great, and accepting the call was daunting, yet my love, passion and vision for the school was ready to be launched...which included: honouring the past (i.e. Uphold the mission statement), celebrating the present and making bold and courageous changes for the future, with the overall goal of ensuring Rockway would be sustainable for many years to come."

Ann talked about what we collectively accomplished together, "At times, our journey together hasn't been harmonic. In fact, at times it was downright dissonant. Yet, through the support of Rockway's Board, a strong and resilient faculty and staff, and the support of Rockway supporters, we persevered. Just as Rockway's founding visionaries found their way to create Rockway at the end of WWII amid many adversities and challenges, we, too, have found ways to keep Rockway's flame burning, honouring Rockway's mission, vision and values on this journey of challenge and change."

"Rockway's financial picture is healthy, enrollment continues to grow, the donor base and alumni engagement is increasing, program is thriving, faculty and staff are committed to Rockway's mission, vision and values, parents and students are engaged, Rockway's Board of Directors is committed and dedicated and Rockway's next Principal comes with excitement, experience and clear alignment with who Rockway is. I believe Rockway is in good hands and platformed to continue on its journey...the next Prelude is ready to be composed!"

Ann's final words were a call to action, "I **challenge** you to keep the Rockway identity alive and vibrant; be aware of the changing times, yet stay clear on why Rockway was founded, and the importance of keeping its mission alive. Integrating sound academic learning with growth in character and faith

was important in 1945, it remains important in 2021, and it needs to ground Rockway for the future. Knowing this and being clear on this, will guide your work and keep Rockway on stable ground, and will ensure it will continue to educate, form faith and build character for many more years to come."

Mark Diller Harder, Chair of the Planning Committee, concluded the afternoon celebration expressing gratitude to Ann for her 30 years of service by saying, on behalf of all of us, "Well done, my good and faithful servant!"



Rockway's Board Chair, Betty Pries, announced during the retirement celebration that alumni, past and present students and families, friends, faculty and staff were invited to send in a tribute, memory and/or photo to be compiled in a tribute book reflecting Ann's 30-year career. The book was given to Ann in March 2022. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this very special gift!



(right) Alumna Claire Grant '99 bringing Ann a gift. Claire says, "Madame Schultz always made me 'feel seen' ."



(above) The entire student body made a video celebrating Ms. Schultz. The video concludes with an image of all 2021-2022 students, faculty and staff waving to Ann and thanking her.

You can still view the celebration! Visit: www.rockway.ca/withgratitude

Of course, the celebrations went beyond November 28, 2021. For weeks, Rockway's students, faculty, staff, donors, and alumni celebrated Ann's many contributions over 30 years.

You can learn more about Prelude on the following page and our [website](#).

PRELUDE

Ann L. Schultz asked that in lieu of a gift on the occasion of her retirement as Rockway's Principal, donations be made to Rockway's Music program. As a musician, Music Head, and initiator of Rockway's first musical, Ann knows the importance of a rich music program.

Prelude: A Music Fund in Honour of Ann L. Schultz was created.

Unsurprisingly, the Rockway community stepped up! To date, over 130 donations totalling \$48,000 have been received. The fund, as the name suggests, is just the beginning. *Prelude will be the beginning of a larger campaign to support music with additional resources and new classroom and performance space.*

After two years without choral music, Rockway's Senior Choir resumed practices and performances this past February. In the December 2021 Reflections, we featured the new Music Department faculty members (*Music to Our Ears: New Head of Music 'Thrilled' to Relaunch Department with New Team*). We are grateful that they have been able to continue the tradition of choral music and four-part harmony.



THANK YOU, CHRISTINE!

Christine Rier, who has been on a personal leave of absence from her role as Director of Advancement at Rockway since September 2021, will not be returning to Rockway at the end of her leave in May.

Christine worked at Rockway for five years and in that short time, made significant contributions to the sustainability of the Rockway Experience. We are thankful that she established Founders' Day – a celebratory chapel and online day which provided opportunity for students, faculty, staff, families, alumni and supporters to celebrate Rockway's beginning and its future. Christine also envisioned and led the very successful *Lead us Onward*, three million dollar campaign, to lead Rockway students "onward to bright futures". Those funds were used for the much needed renovation in our basement, for which our students and faculty will be forever grateful!

We appreciate Christine's dedication to Rockway, #fortheloveofRockway she instilled in those she connected with, and for the vision and leadership she brought to the Rockway Team. We wish her all the best.

ROCKWAY ROCKS!

The story (Reflections, December 2021) of the student movement in 1971 to save the school touched a lot of people. The 'Rockway Rocks' that were sold as a fundraiser highlighted that the Rockway community has always been financially supported by alumni and community members.

Led by the Class of '71, the entire student body took part in this campaign.

That same spirit continues today. During the 2021 Food Drive, Rockway's student body raised a remarkable \$29,000 for House of Friendship. Many thanks to all who have supported Rockway in so many ways.

ROCKWAY'S FOOD DRIVE TRADITION CONTINUES

Written by current Student Council Co-Pres, Sharon Gil.

This year, Rockway's Student Council hosted our Annual Food Drive for the House of Friendship. Our goal was to raise \$21,000, and through the efforts of many, we were able to surpass that and raise \$29,279.50! Unfortunately, we were not able to collect cans like we normally do, but we still had so much fun!



There were many fundraising events for students to raise money and build community, including:

- Toonie toss – students were able to donate their toonies while competing for a grand prize. *(pictured left)*
- Pie in the Face – where staff and students bid on who could pie student council members and teachers in the face. An honourable mention are the students who spent \$200 to pie Mr. Balzer in the face! *(pictured below)*

To end off a fantastic food drive, we had a tape-to-the-wall event. Grades came together to buy enough duct tape to keep a student council member on the wall, and though the Grade 11 & 12s raised over \$1,000 in this event, it was the Grade 7 & 8s who won!

Rockway rocked this year's food drive and helped so many families in need.

GO ROCKWAY!





ROCKWAY ALUMNI



ALUMNI BABY T-SHIRTS

*Is there a new addition
to your family?*

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Help us stay connected with you by updating your contact information with us. Email your updates to Kristen at alumni@rockway.ca. She would love to hear from you.

Make sure to follow us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter to see what is happening at the school and how you can get involved.

We would also love to hear how you are doing and what you are up to. We welcome submissions for Alumni Updates to be featured in Reflections or on the Alumni Facebook page.

Let us know and we'll send a size 2T t-shirt to the future Rockway graduate at the beginning of 2023.

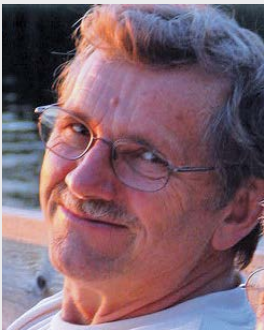
Email the following information to Kristen at alumni@rockway.ca

- Name(s) of the parent(s)
- Name of the baby
- Date of birth
- Mailing address to send the t-shirt

Once you get the t-shirt, we'd love to see a photo of the future grad wearing their shirt.

Alumni are our future and we can't wait to meet them!

ROCKWAY REMEMBERS...



John Harder (1935-2022) was one of Rockway's longstanding and beloved teachers. He came to Rockway in the late 70s, hired by William Kruger, as an English teacher. In addition to teaching senior English, John was instrumental in the Drama program, spearheading the Grade 11 play for many years. John had a deep respect for faith-based education and brought strong critical thinking skills to the classroom and the faculty table. Ann L. Schultz, a student at the time, shared that she has fond memories of rigorous discussions in the English classroom, where he pushed his students to think widely and deeply about the themes in the novels he taught and the poetry he presented. As a colleague, John was very

supportive of new teachers who joined faculty during his tenure. He retired in the 90s, and Charles (Chuck) Kruger then assumed the English Department Head position.

We are grateful for John's many years of faithful service, and we offer prayers of condolence for his family.

Robert Witmer (1929-2021) was a member of the first graduating class of Rockway in 1948. While at Rockway, Robert served on the Student Council, was Chairman of the Devotional Committee, Editor of *Lighthouse*, and sang in the mixed, and male quartets. After high school, Robert felt called to the mission field and in 1956, after finishing seminary, went to serve in Paris, France with Mennonite Board of Missions along with his wife Lois. In 1984, their mission work led them to northwestern Quebec where they ministered for 10 years to the church in Rouyn-Noranda. Robert and Lois returned to Waterloo Region in 1995 and have been active members of the community since.



JOIN US FOR...



IT'S BACK! PICK UP A **TASTE OF SPRING...TO GO**,
TO ENJOY AT HOME WITH YOUR FAMILY.
THE MEAL WAS SUCH A HIT LAST YEAR,
THAT WE'RE BRINGING BACK THE SAME HOMEMADE
SWEET & SOUR CHICKEN WITH RICE (*vegetarian option available*).

MENU

- Spring Salad (*romaine lettuce, mandarin oranges, raisins and sunflower seeds with dressing on the side*).
- Sweet & Sour Chicken with Rice (*This is a GF and DF meal and is packed with veggies*)
 - Vegetarian/Vegan Option: Sweet & Sour Tofu with Rice (*packed with veggies*)
 - Meringue cookies for dessert (*vegan option available*)

ORDERING

Meals will be available to order in advance in the following portions:
Sweet & Sour Chicken (or vegetarian/vegan) Dinner for ONE - \$15 (HST included)
Sweet & Sour Chicken (or vegetarian/vegan) Dinner for FOUR - \$55 (HST included)

Order your **A Taste of Spring...To Go!**
online at www.rockway.ca by **Friday, May 6, 2022 • 4:00 pm**. Only advance orders will be taken.

CURB-SIDE PICK UP
Friday, May 13, 2022, 3:45-5:45 pm

ENJOY!

- Connect with your family for **A Taste of Spring...To Go!**
- Consider sharing your supper online with family and friends near and far. If you're Alumni, connect with fellow Alumni and/or your Class.
- Be sure to send us your **A Taste of Spring...To Go!** photos to share online ([twitter](#), [FB](#) and [Instagram](#))

PROCEEDS
WILL GO TOWARDS
TUITION
ASSISTANCE.

STAYING CONNECTED

Please stay connected with us by watching your email and visiting our website (rockway.ca) for all the latest news and updates about events, and by liking, sharing and following us on social media.

As the province opens up, Rockway will open our doors once again. It has been a long time since we have had guests in our hallways, classrooms, gymnasiums, and the Assembly Area. In the coming weeks, we hope to invite all of you to in-person events. Stay tuned!

Thank you for your continued support.



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:

Rockway Mennonite Collegiate

110 Doon Road
Kitchener, Ontario
N2G 3C8

T: 519-743-5209
F: 519-743-5935

office@rockway.ca
www.rockway.ca

Principal: Elaine Ranney

Charitable Number: 119122091RR0001



#lifeatRockway

SAVE THE DATE...



MAY 13, 2022
Order yours by
Friday, May 6 @ 4pm!

ROCKWAY MENNONITE COLLEGIATE'S

27TH Annual

GOLF CLASSIC

Stay tuned to rockway.ca
for more information.

GRADUATION 2022

- **GRADE 8:**
Thursday, June 23, 2022
- **GRADE 12:**
Saturday, June 25, 2022

Details to follow.

save the date...

Spring concert

Tuesday, May 17, 2022

Stay tuned to rockway.ca
for more information.

Reflections is a publication of Rockway Mennonite Collegiate. Please let us know if you prefer to receive your copy by mail or email. Contact us at advancement@rockway.ca or 519-743-5209 x3011. Thank you.