

Our

REFLECTIONS

DECEMBER 2021

NEWSLETTER: HAPPENINGS, EVENTS AND ALUMNI NEWS

REJOICE! A CHILD IS BORN

As we enter the Christmas Season, we see so many images of the baby Jesus. Secular imagery of Jesus shows the infant in a manger as if that is the end of the story. What is missing is the man this infant became, and His message.

Jesus' message is a challenging one. It is not what you might expect from a tiny infant of humble origins. This year's Chapel theme reflects that challenge – "Love does no Harm" (Romans 13:9b-10a).

As a school, I have encouraged all of us to 'roll up our sleeves' and make meaningful and reflective change in the face of historical wrongs. But the examples of harm are not just from previous generations – harm has been done very recently to LGBTQ2S persons, black communities, women, and the differently abled. And, there is climate change and the harm done in the name of progress for economic gain without consideration to the environment.

Rockway needs to be an agent of change. In our Opening Chapel, I said that *"Together, we must listen well, ask questions, speak up, mobilize, and love. Love is beautiful and complicated. This call to love and action will be explored this year, both in our chapels and our classrooms. Together we will be learning and exploring how harm has been caused to others. And, we will learn how we can take responsibility, and look for ways to repair the harm."*



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IT'S BEGINNING TO LOOK A LOT LIKE...ROCKWAY!

They're BACK!

After months of silent gymnasiums and locker rooms, sports are back at Rockway. It started in September with individual cohorts taking turns using a gymnasium to play and practice with only the students in their class. In October, District 8 announced a schedule for basketball, volleyball, softball, golf, and cross-country running. Students have been eager to resume both practices and competition.

Although sports are back on, the guidelines for safe participation amid pandemic restrictions have been extensive. Every participant needs to be double-vaccinated or have a negative rapid test (twice each week) before hitting the court. Athletes do not require a mask during game time, but players on the bench, coaches, referees, and timekeepers all wear masks throughout. At the end of the game there are no handshakes, rather teams line up facing one another and applaud the other team.

Another important aspect of sporting events is also missing: fans. The squeak of running shoes and the swish of a basket can be heard from the halls of Rockway, but cheers of excitement and encouragement from the bleachers are absent. Parents and classmates are cheering, but at home thanks to live-streaming.

The players don't seem to mind the changes, however. It didn't take long to fill the team rosters as students quickly signed-up when the go-ahead was given. Sports are not just an afterthought in the life of a Rockway student. For many, sports are a place of vital learning, connection, and life-lessons, not to mention a welcome outlet of energy after a long day. Long, two and a half hour instructional periods with masks on is the current reality for this year's students.

We are a long way from returning to days of full bleachers and mask-less participation, not to mention contact sports, but for students currently enrolled at Rockway, after months of online classes and confining pandemic rules, they are just happy to be back. Go Flames!



RETURNING TO THE STAGE

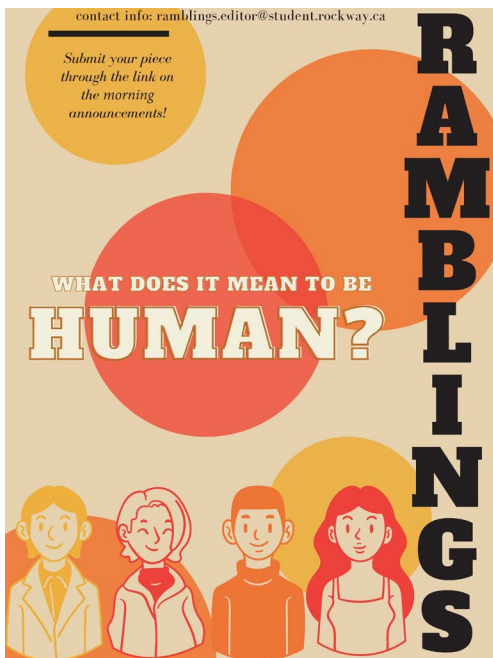
After being forced to cancel the All-School Musical production of *The Sound of Music* in March 2020 due to the impending pandemic, Rockway is excited to be returning to the stage in March 2022, with an All-School Play production of **Anne of Green Gables** (the non-musical version). Stay tuned to rockway.ca for more information in the new year.

LEFT: *Production Manager, Aaron Balzer (left) and Director, Alan Sapp (right) holding the cast scripts. Auditions will be held in December.*

Not only are student clubs back, but there are more of them!

After a 19-month hold, Clubs resumed this Fall once a contact tracing protocol could be developed for inter-cohort mixing. New clubs (or clubs that barely got started in last couple of years) include; Faith Finders, Bridging Cultures, and Robotics. Long-standing Clubs include; Gender and Sexuality Alliance, French, Lighthouse Yearbook, Ramblings, Book Club, Grade 7&8 Leadership Team, Social Concerns, and other special projects.

Of course, all of the many Music groups also meet during Club time in the schedule (read more about music on page four.



LEFT: *Ramblings*, Rockway's student newsletter, is focusing its next issue on the theme of "What does it mean to be human?" Students have been challenged to reflect on what makes us human, and respond in some way e.g. with a non-fiction piece, comic strip, visual art piece, poem, musical composition, etc.



LEFT: Our Bridging Cultures club met together out in the courtyard in late October for a poke bowl lunch.



RIGHT: Students in the French Club had their first meeting outside during their lunch hour. As the weather gets colder, they will move their meetings back to online.



LEFT: Faculty member Sara Wahl on the track, giving instructions to the entire student body plus faculty and staff. Instructions for what? You'll have to wait until JUNE for the unveiling of our next all-school video!

MUSIC TO OUR EARS

New Head of Music 'Thrilled' to Relaunch Department with New Team

For many of us, it feels like we are finally starting to emerge from our COVID-19 cocoon. This is especially true in the Music Department. As we leave the chrysalis of the last 18+ months behind, the evidence of it is still everywhere. Being in lockdown was hard on most people, and challenged our mental and physical health like never before.



It is wonderful to watch and be a part of this new emergence at Rockway. Music was hit very hard around the world during lockdown, so to have a chance to relaunch, re-invent, and rejuvenate the music program at Rockway is a daunting but exciting challenge. I am thrilled to be the new Music Department Head at Rockway and to have two other outstanding musicians to work alongside with. I have taught private lessons on all of the orchestral string instruments for almost 30 years and have been a church organist and choir director for even longer. I am a professional singer and composer as well, and will be directing the Strings program for all grades, plus the String Ensemble, Senior Choir, the Grade 7 & 8 Choir, and the Lower Voices Ensemble.



Eric Dettweiler is actually the senior member of the music staff, having been at Rockway for almost three years. He is a brilliant trumpet player, an exceptional musician, and a passionate educator. He is equally at home in multiple genres of music, and directs the band program for all grades, plus Stage Band, and the Grade 9 & 10 Choir.

Dr. Elizabeth Lepock has been teaching voice privately at Rockway for the last number of years and comes to us with a wealth of experience in voice performance and vocal pedagogy. She has a thriving vocal studio and is a regularly featured soloist with many ensembles across the region. She directs the Treble Voices Ensemble as well as provides Music Admin support.



Like most musicians, all of us juggle other jobs as well. Mr. Dettweiler and Dr. Lepock also teach in Rockway's Math and Humanities Departments, respectfully. I have a half-time Music Director position at Holy Saviour Anglican Church in Waterloo, and we all teach privately in addition to our Rockway duties. We are each looking forward to bringing our diverse musical skills and knowledge to the diverse Rockway music community and beyond, and watching the music program at Rockway thrive once again.

Jeff Enns '90, Music Department Head

WELL DONE, GOOD AND FAITHFUL SERVANT. . .

With Gratitude...

Thank you to everyone who joined us on Sunday, November 28, 2021 for the **With Gratitude Retirement Celebration** in honour of Ann L. Schultz's 30 years of faithful service at Rockway. It was a memorable event with speakers from the past and present, alongside some special music. It was an emotional afternoon that no one will soon forget.

Relive the event or view it for the first time at www.rockway.ca/withgratitude. Look for the Spring issue of Reflections for a longer reflection of the Retirement Celebration as well as Ann's impact over three decades at Rockway.



"Gratitude abounds for what has been, what is, and what is yet to come." – Ann L. Schultz '84

Prelude TO A NEW ERA



At the November 28 online celebration of Ann L. Schultz's thirty years of service to Rockway, an exciting initiative was launched. Prelude is a tribute to Ann upon her retirement, and will raise funds for Music at Rockway.

Music has always been a crucial part of Rockway, and it continues to shape the lives of students in many ways. But Music was put on hold during the lockdown.

Today, Music is undergoing a revitalization and renewal. New faculty member (see page 4 for a profile of these teachers and musicians) are bringing new ideas to a student body thirsty for musical outlets after months of hiatus.

Prelude will give the department tools to shape their plans, as well as allow for the possibility of new, permanent music classroom and performance space.

Go to rockway.ca and click on **DONATE** to pay tribute to Ann and support Music at Rockway!



ABOVE: Rockway students are ready to make music again! In addition to Lower and Upper Voice Ensembles and a String Ensemble, Stage Band has returned to Rockway!



The weather was cold but the smiles and hospitality were warm, as Rockway held its third curb-side *To Go!* dinner since the start of the lockdown.

On October 28 & 29, 2021, Rockway kitchen staff and faculty volunteers made over 500 meals, bought and enjoyed by appreciative Alumni, donors, faculty, staff, and, of course, currently enrolled students and their families.

Proceeds from the event will support Trips Week. Thanks to all who participated!



LEFT: Rockway student volunteers were on hand to help our guests pick up their Spaghetti Supper order.

RIGHT: As part of the curbside fun, we had visits from 2021 Alumni who came to say hello and pick up their yearbooks. Seen here, Ms. Schultz, left, alongside recent grads Jonathan Lam, Leon Xu, Robyn Xiang.



A MESSAGE FROM OUR INCOMING PRINCIPAL



Hello Rockway students, staff, parents, Alumni & donors!

I am very excited about my upcoming role of Principal at Rockway Mennonite Collegiate! I eagerly anticipate meeting everyone and building on the strong leadership of Ann L. Schultz who has worked tirelessly as Principal over the past 9 years.

I have spent the past 33 years in education working to help students learn and grow. If someone were to ask me to summarize all that I learned over those years it would be simply this: students need to feel they belong. They need to feel a sense of connection – to peers and to staff – in order for them to be successful in school. This means that we need to continue to work together to ensure that our learning environment is one that promotes positive relationships among students and between students, faculty and staff.

What I love about Rockway, and what drew me to this role, is that it puts relationships and a desire for belonging at its centre. Rockway seeks not only to create a sense of belonging

“...students need to feel they belong. They need to feel a sense of connection...”

for students but also extends that sense of belonging. Building on the Anabaptist values of belief in Christ, belonging in community and behaving in reconciling ways, Rockway seeks to create spaces where students can safely explore important questions about the world and their place in it. This is clearly demonstrated in this year’s Chapel theme “Love does no Harm”. I appreciated Ann’s words during the first chapel of the school year when she talked about the

harm that many in our world have experienced and how we need to “listen, ask questions, speak, mobilize and love”. This emphasis is also expressed in the words highlighted at the bottom of Rockway’s website “Build WONDER, Build RESPECT, Build BRIDGES”. These words resonate with me, and make me confident that my experiences and beliefs align with Rockway’s.

I encourage faculty, staff and students to approach me in the coming days and say hello and introduce yourself to me. I can’t wait to meet you. Parents, Alumni, and donors, I look forward to a future event in-person or online.

Elaine Ranney

MEET OUR CO-INTERIM VICE-PRINCIPALS

Rockway thanks John Moyer for his five months of service as Interim Vice-Principal, and are excited to welcome two experienced teachers into the role of Co-Interim Vice-Principal. Bryan Berg '00, has taught History, English, and Global Studies at Rockway since 2007. Mr. Berg believes strongly in integrating media literacy into his teaching, offering his students the tools to view the digital age more critically. Renée Petit-Pas is the English Department Head and has taught English at Rockway since 2018 and in 2020, she assumed the role of Curriculum Advisor. She enjoys sharing her franco-Ontarian identity with her students as well as her passion for literature and writing.

Ms. Petit-Pas and Mr. Berg will support Rockway's new Principal, Elaine Ranney, through to the end of the 2021-2022 school year while also continuing to teach.



NEW ELECTRONIC SIGN



The next time you are on campus you will undoubtedly notice a new sign. Thanks to the generosity of donors, a new electronic sign will greet you. It will have familiar messages about upcoming events, thank yous to donors and encouragement to students as they enter each phase of the school year, but now it will be even better. The new sign is a full colour LED screen that is easier to read, and easier to change. No longer will staff have to climb over snow banks to swap-out letters for a new greeting, rather Communications staff can edit the sign with a few keystrokes from their office. Because the sign is illuminated, it will be visible regardless of the season or time of day.

Look for this new addition to Rockway's entrance the next time you return to campus.



FOUNDERS' DAY – FEBRUARY 15, 2022

Rockway was founded February 1945 and classes began that Fall. Today we celebrate that beginning 77 years later with a special Chapel celebration bringing together today's students with our Alumni community. We celebrate in ways that Rockway has always celebrated – in music & song, through words, symbols, and through the coming together, regardless of the medium.

COVID has presented many challenges to our school, but one positive development was Founders' Day online which allows Alumni to connect with chapel regardless of where they are living. This annual event grows each year, so save the date (Tuesday, February 15, 2022) for our next event celebrating music!

Anneli Loepp Thiessen '13 is a PhD student at the University of Ottawa, where her research focuses on women's roles in the contemporary worship music industry. She was a committee member for the new *Voices Together* hymnal, serves as co-director of the Anabaptist Worship Network, and is director of Ontario Mennonite Music Camp. As a music educator she enjoys teaching piano students and adjudicating festivals, and her first picture book, *The ABCs of Women in Music* is coming out in January 2022. She is delighted to be returning to Rockway for this chapel!

Join us for this online event where Anneli will talk about how Rockway influenced her career path in music and worship.

Founders' Day is also a time to celebrate Rockway's past by financially supporting its future. Last year Rockway's 4000 Alumni donated over \$10,000 for everything from tuition assistance to facility improvements. This year we are focusing on Rockway's Music Program. Join your classmates at rockway.ca and help 'count in' Rockway's next exciting phase of music.



Rockway Alumni from across the decades (and across the pond!) gathered together last year for our first-ever online Founders' Day Chapel, celebrating 76 years of Rockway's mission. Join us on February 15, 2022, for more online connections!



**ROCKWAY
ALUMNI**

REMEMBERING WITH GRATITUDE, THE CLASS OF 1971

Betsy Wall, former Social Coordinator for the Class of 1971, recently wrote a post on our Rockway Alumni Facebook page, reminding Alum what it was like to be at Rockway during a time when there was a real risk of the school closing. Here is her story:

"As members of the Class of '71 we were witness to a tumultuous time in the history of our alma mater. A December 1970 "Letter to the Editor" in the K-W Record headlined, "Rockway 'waste of time'". The writer went on ... "salvaging and/or continuing this school is a waste of time and money; not raising the question whether attending Rockway, although carrying a denominational name, is an asset or liability per se."

An anonymous Rockway student countered, "(At Rockway) one is made aware of the human and social concerns existing in our world today. As one becomes aware, they begin to formulate opinions, ideas, concepts and, above all, a philosophy of life is established. One is not compelled to just 'be'. They are not allowed to remain apathetic toward present situations and ideas. Rockway's smallness allows for complete student involvement in an environment which accents concern, interest and respect for each other as individual persons. Rockway is far from being ideal but then what institution is? Everything changes, however slightly. Rockway, for the better, I think."

"You all know the rest of the story. We worked together to make "Rockway Rocks" in partnership with Riverside Brass. We talked to our friends, we went door to door, we presented in churches and stood in mall kiosks and shopping plazas. We let people know who we were and why Rockway was important. We raised \$9,500 toward a vision that Rockway would continue to exist. And it did."



Betsy ends defiantly: *"This is us."*

As we return to in-person classrooms after months of online learning, we are again reminded of the resiliency of our mission, students, families and community.

The Class of '71 is yet another example of how our Rockway Flames shine brightest in the darkest of times. Today, as then, we come together when needed most.

Thank you to the Class of '71 for saving Rockway then and to our current families and supporters for supporting Rockway today. Rockway's mission endures because of you. And because of you, another 276 students will become part of this legacy this year.





Sharon is a 2021 graduate of Rockway. Originally from Hong Kong, Sharon greatly values her time at Rockway. This is Sharon's reflection on her four years on campus:

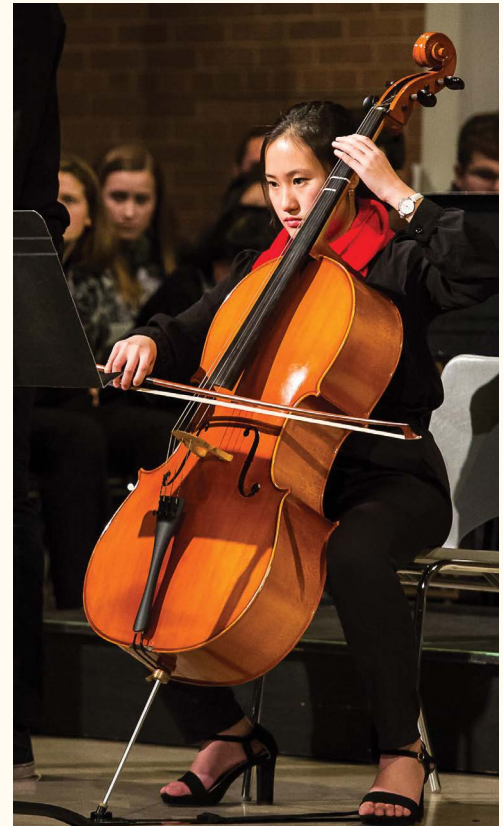
"As an International student who came to study at Rockway in Grade 9, Rockway has been a very safe environment for me to strive for self-advancement while achieving academic success. Rockway offers a variety of activities for students to engage in, such as MARS committees, sport teams, drama activities, and different all-school events. In the last few years, my participation in these groups significantly helped me develop my interests and strengthen my skills.

"Rockway regularly invites students to establish their leadership skills through opportunities like speaking at school chapels. These opportunities encouraged me to step out of my comfort zone and helped me gain confidence in many different ways.

"Studying far away from home as an international student has not been easy, but Rockway has always been very considerate of my needs and has provided me with lots of guidance and support as I adapted to a new life in Canada. One of the many ways that shows Rockway's immense care for its international students is by having an International Students Committee that organizes fun events for both international and domestic students, with the intention to bridge cultures.

"During my time at Rockway, I enjoyed participating in the annual Chinese New Year dinner, field trips to Toronto and Canada's Wonderland, as well as a fun day of snow-tubbing, where we were able to properly experience the typical Canadian winter!

While acknowledging and being considerate of my homesickness, Rockway encouraged me to immerse in the local culture by experiencing Canadian traditions and customs. This really helped me establish a sense of belonging in Rockway - it was my home-away-from-home for four years and I will miss it very much."



Sharon was actively involved in the Strings program and enjoyed making music with her friends. Here she is performing during the 2019 Christmas Concert at St. Peter's Lutheran Church.

REJOICE! A CHILD IS BORN ~ Continued from page 1

On September 30, 2021, Canada's National Day for Truth and Reconciliation, we were reminded of the harm that has come from ill-considered good intentions. The hundreds of unmarked graves near residential schools in Canada, largely operating with the involvement of Christian Churches, are a stark reminder that harm can be done in the name of love.

On this day, all faculty, staff and students visited a designated sacred space in the student lounge which housed an empty school desk, a pair of moccasins and an orange shirt. Everyone was encouraged to write their own reflective thoughts about this day on a reflective card and place it around the desk. A beautiful array of cards surrounded the desk in concentric circles, representing our desire to listen, learn, re-learn, remember and reflect in our understanding of the stories and history of our Indigenous friends and neighbours.


As you and your family celebrate the Christmas Season, I encourage you to be part of Rockway's journey this year. Let us celebrate Jesus' birth, but also His challenge to live a radical form of loving. Let us take seriously the wise words of the prophet Micah... *"do justice; love mercy and walk humbly before God."*

May the Prince of Peace grace your families this Christmas, and encourage you to renew your commitment to radical loving.

In the spirit of peace, joy, hope and love,



Ann L. Schultz '84, Principal






ROCKWAY
MENNONITE COLLEGIATE
A SMALL SCHOOL FOR A **BIG WORLD**

BOOK YOUR TOUR TODAY!

"Choosing to attend Rockway was one of the best decisions I've ever made. When the principal greeted me by name on my first day I knew I had found a special place. Rockway's strong sense of community was evident that day, and continued to be an important part of my high school experience."

Zoe Suderman – Rockway Class of 2021
Gap Year followed by Queen's University Concurrent Education/Arts

   
#RockwayResilent

admissions@rockway.ca

Charitable #: 119122091RR0001

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

STAYING CONNECTED

Visiting campus is still limited, but you can stay connected in many ways online.

Watch your email inbox, go to rockway.ca, and check out our social media announcements on Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Follow the hashtags #RockwayRenewal, #RockwayResilient and #lifeatRockway to see what's new!



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

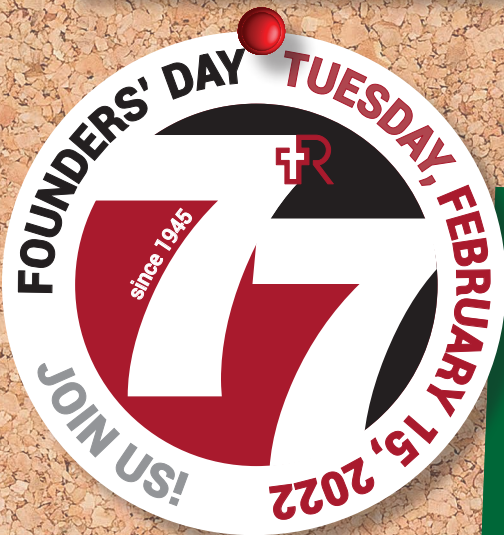
office@rockway.ca

www.rockway.ca

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#lifeatRockway



Spiritual Emphasis Week

March 23-25, 2022

GUEST SPEAKER:
Rebecca Seiling

A SMALL SCHOOL
FOR A BIG WORLD



Rockway.ca



Adapted by Joseph Robinette. From the novel by L.M. Montgomery

March 3-5, 2022

Stay tuned to rockway.ca
for more information in the new year!

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.