

Our

REFLECTIONS

WINTER 2022

NEWSLETTER: HAPPENINGS, EVENTS AND ALUMNI NEWS

A CHRISTMAS GREETING

Christmas is an exciting time of year. We can get caught up in the sparkle of it all – the decorations, the many events and the anticipation of presents under the tree and the sounds of the season. *As we sing familiar carols, we wonder, what other voices are we listening for this Christmas?*

Carol Penner, a Mennonite Pastor who is currently teaching theology at Conrad Grebel University College, asks this question in her poem, *Voices this Christmas*.

Rockway is a Mennonite school grounded in Anabaptist values that compel us to consider much more beyond the sparkle of Christmas. We are trying to hear God's invitation to transformation – transformation of self and transformation of our world.

In our chapel program, our Religious Studies courses, our conversations with students, and in our daily problem-solving and conflict resolution, we seek to respond to the call of Christ to be peacemakers and of service to God and all creation.

As we approach Christmas, let us all listen for and hear the voice of Jesus calling. And may we experience joy, peace, and warm connection with others this Christmas.



Voices this Christmas (excerpts)

*There's a lot of voices speaking
all at once, at high volume
as we listen for God's voice
this Christmas.*

*Marketers trumpeting,
drawing our attention
to all that we lack,
claiming only they can save us.*

*Social media buzzing
with the world's gossip.*

*News announcers reporting
the bad news from everywhere.
And then there are our own
inner voices reminding us
insistently of all we have failed
to accomplish.*

*Words clatter all around us,
and we wonder if, this Christmas,
we will have ears to hear
the message of angels?*

*This Christmas will we hear
the bold words of the angels
"A child is born this day, the Messiah,
Christ the Lord."*

*Like a mother who can hear
her baby crying through any crowd,
give us all ears to hear
the voice calling to us,
the voice of Jesus this Christmas.*

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CHANGES TO THE ROCKWAY TEAM



Stacey VanderMeer, Librarian and Archivist

Stacey VanderMeer, Director of Admissions, will become Rockway's new full-time Librarian and Archivist. Stacey holds a Master of Library and Information Science degree from Western and has spent a decade working in libraries. She is passionate about supporting students and teachers and envisions a library space to which students are drawn and where they feel comfortable and engaged. We are grateful to AJ Snider for his outstanding efforts in managing the library since the fall of 2019. AJ will be moving back to the Resource Room full-time.

Sheri Wideman, Director of Admissions

Our new Director of Admissions will be longstanding, current faculty member, Sheri Wideman. Sheri's outstanding academic background, strong connections within the community and her passion for Rockway will shine through as she connects with prospective families. Alongside Jill Sauer, our International Student Program Manager, Sheri will also assume responsibility for International Student Recruitment.

We wish Stacey and Sheri well as they assume their new roles in February 2023.



GROH FAMILY REUNION

Following 3 years of not meeting in person, the six siblings of Harold and Cora Groh, along with twenty-eight other family members, spent two days together the last weekend of September. Harold Groh was Rockway's first Principal and the extended Groh family has continued to stay connected to Rockway in various ways including as teachers, students, and supporters.



Pictured left to right are: Mary Groh ('49), who taught at Rockway in the late '50's; Ruth Wiens ('52); Deborah Groh ('65); David Groh ('48), and Elizabeth Rudy ('54) who taught music at Rockway for one year. Elizabeth is the widow of Glen Rudy who was the music teacher from 1957-1962. Missing from the photo is John Groh ('59).

ROCKWAY'S 5 PRIORITIES

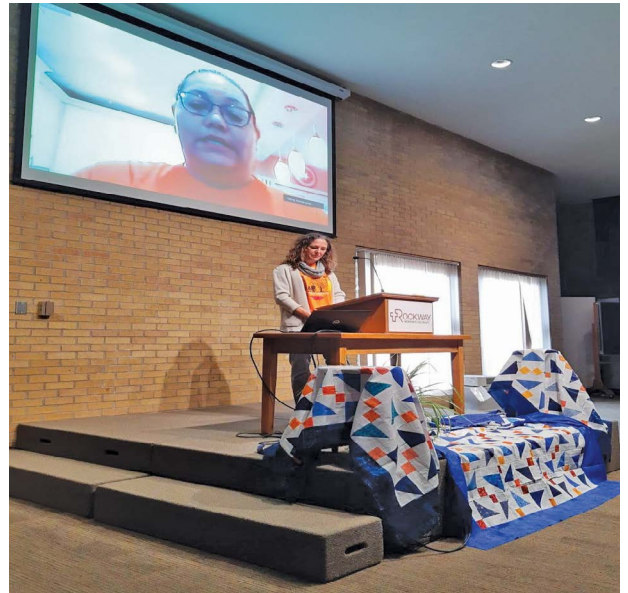
It has been an incredibly energizing and exciting start to the year at Rockway with a renewed sense of purpose and direction. This can be seen through the development of our 5 Priorities; one of which is *Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples*. As a community, we know that Reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples will take time and will involve building new and nurturing existing relationships with Indigenous Peoples in our community. Building on our time with Clarence Cachagee from Crow Shield Lodge during Spiritual Emphasis Week *last* year, we invited some incredible speakers to contribute to our two Chapels during *Truth and Reconciliation Week* *this* year.

The first speaker was *Vanessa Genier from Missianbie First Nation*, who joined us virtually from Timmins where she runs her organization called *Quilts for Survivors*. This conversation was hosted by the *Indigenous Neighbours* program through Mennonite Central Committee Ontario. Vanessa shared about residential schools and how meaningful it is for survivors to receive a quilt from her organization that helps them on their healing journey. Our students then had the opportunity to help work on one of the quilts from *Quilts for Survivors* in our foyer. It was an opportunity to listen, learn and engage in a small, but meaningful action. It was a powerful day of learning and connection.

Our second chapel during Truth and Reconciliation Week centered on the voices of Indigenous youth. We were privileged to be able to host *Alexis Gordon and Marley Crawford* to speak to us about what it means to them to be an Indigenous youth. Through



Guest speakers, Alexis and Marley, shared in Chapel about what it means to them to be an Indigenous youth.



Vanessa Genier of Missianbie First Nation joined us virtually from Timmins to share about her organization, Quilts for Survivors.



Students help work on one of the quilts from Quilts for Survivors.

an interview-style conversation, our community was able to listen to their perspectives on what reconciliation means to them and what it looks like for schools, in particular, to engage in reconciliation work. It was deeply meaningful for the students of Rockway to connect with the voices of Indigenous students and to be able to relate to them as young people.

As an organization, we are committed to continue to move this area of emphasis forward. Stay tuned for opportunities to get involved in some of this ongoing work throughout the year at Rockway.

“VERY GOOD” AND OTHER COMPASSIONATE TRUTHS

Sara Erb shared three key messages during Chapel when she visited Rockway during Spiritual Emphasis Week in October.

You are LOVED by a compassionate God.

Sara shared how, in Genesis 1, God created the day and the night.

But what about dawn and dusk?

God separated the land from the sea.

But what about marshes and bogs?

God created the birds of the air and the fish of the sea.

But what about penguins?

Penguins are birds, but don't fly.

They aren't fish, but can swim.

Penguins seem somewhere in between.

Genesis 1 names the extreme ends or the opposites within creation – including everything in between – and naming it all **Good**. God sees creation, the world, and every single one of us, as very good.

You are SEEN by a compassionate God.

Not only are we loved, but we are seen by God. We are not lost or forgotten – no matter what our situation. Sara explored the story of Zaccheus, the tax collector, through different viewpoints – through the eyes of the crowd, the eyes of Zaccheus, and through the eyes of Jesus. The story highlights the truth that everyone is seen and loved by God, and no one is as lost as they think they are.

You are TRANSFORMED by a compassionate God.

Sara reminds us that we are continually invited to shift our perspective of the way we see ourselves and others. Rather than asking “What's wrong with them, or me?” more compassionate questions would be:

What's happened here?

What's the bigger picture?

What am I curious about?

When Jesus encounters the woman at the well, he doesn't make judgements about why she is out getting water when everyone is gone. Rather, he sees this woman as a child of God, and responds to her with openness and curiosity. He offers her living water, the promises of God without any conditions or expectations on her.

Sara's benediction at the end of each chapel summarized her key messages (adapted from the words of Jesus, by Thema Bryant).

Come to me all who are weary and I will give you rest.

I love you more than you love yourself.

I know you more than you know yourself.

I won't give up on you.

Come to me all who are weary and I will give you rest.

Amen.



Rockway welcomed Sara Erb, Faith Formation Pastor at Steinmann Mennonite Church, as our guest speaker for Spiritual Emphasis Week



COMMUNITY BUILDING RETREATS

This fall, our grade 7, 8 and 9 students all had the opportunity to go on community-building retreats!

Our grade 7 and 8 classes each enjoyed a day-trip at Hidden Acres Mennonite Camp. Students were challenged through rock climbing, nine square and archery. They excelled in the team-building activities and group challenges; learning to work with each other. The grade 8's unfortunately got the worst of the two weather days, but that didn't stop them from making connections and building friendships.

The grade 9 class made the most of their one-day retreat at Country Side Camp. They participated in small group activities in which they solved puzzles, learned to communicate with each other and, most importantly, met everyone and learned their names! They had loads of free time and they also learned the traditional Mennonite game of Dutch Blitz! The day came to an end with a big group game and a closing campfire. All in all, it was another successful year of connecting and building friendships that will hopefully last through their high school years.

Thanks to all the faculty and staff who made these trips possible!



INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS' RETREAT

The international students and international staff team spent 2 days at Silver Lake Mennonite Camp from October 5-6. Taking full advantage of the gorgeous weather, the students enjoyed rock climbing, fire building, group initiative tasks, hiking, and a walk to Sauble Beach where they enjoyed dinner while watching the sunset.

For many of the students, this was their first time being in a camp environment and sleeping in a sleeping bag!

New friendships were created and great memories were made as they shared this special time together. They are already looking forward to this retreat next year!

CONNECTIONS HOMECOMING 2022

On Friday, October 28, we invited students, families, alumni and friends back to Rockway for **Connections Homecoming Night**. It was a fun evening of great food and athletic competition. The event featured our famous Spaghetti Supper and Alumni Sports Challenge.



The photo booth was very popular with attendees of all ages.

Our **Spaghetti Supper Student Fundraiser** was a huge success with a turnout of over 400 people. All of the funds raised went toward our May Trips Week. There was plenty of entertainment for those in attendance. As people lined up, they were treated to a **musical performance** by 2016 Rockway Alumni, Jacob Steinmann and Laura Joy Moolenbeek. They were also provided the opportunity to engage with our **Robotics Team** who were on-hand to answer questions and demonstrate their impressive robot design. Heading into the gym, Kyle Bonnyman from The Memory Maker **Photobooth** was there with his collection of fun accessories and costumes for anyone wanting to capture the moment and take a picture home (see above).

Following the meal, we held our ever-popular **Alumni Sports Challenge**. The stands were packed as our Sr. Girls Basketball team was challenged by a determined group of alumnae. It was a fun and entertaining match with the alumnae coming out victorious. The number of alumni

that came out to challenge the Senior Boys Volleyball team was impressive. They played a best of five match and needed all five games to determine a winner. Each game went back and forth, but for the first time since 2016, our Senior Boys were able to defeat the alumni and add their name to the trophy.



The Sr. Girls Basketball team and alumnae team pose after a fun and competitive game.



As people lined up, they were treated to a

musical performance by 2016 Rockway Alumni, Jacob Steinmann and Laura Joy Moolenbeek. They were also provided the opportunity to engage with our **Robotics**



The Sr. Boys Volleyball team pose with the alumni team whom they beat in a best of 5 match contest.

As a new addition to our Founders' Day celebrations, our next Alumni Sports Challenge will take place on the evening of **Wednesday, February 15**. If you are interested in competing against our Senior Boys Basketball or Senior Girls Volleyball, please email alumni@rockway.ca. We will have more information for you in the near future. In the meantime, please be sure to add the date to your calendar.

GENEROSITY AND TALENT ON DISPLAY AT ROCKWAY

ROCKWAY THRIFT SWAP

Rockway students, faculty and staff were invited to bring in one or more pieces of clothing to contribute to a pop-up Thrift Swap located in the Student Lounge. The event, organized by the **Enviro-Social Concerns Committee**, raised funds for The Working Centre in Kitchener. The Working Centre is a non-profit, community-based venture that provides access to tools and opportunities for people living on a low income.

All together the sale raised \$300! Thanks for your generosity Rockway!



Enviro-Social Concerns Committee members display the Thrift Swap they set up in the Student Lounge.

MUSIC CAFÉ



The halls are, once again, alive with the sound of music! Rockway's **Music Council** has continued the tradition of providing students with the opportunity to share their musical talents with the rest of the school. Once in October and again at the end of November, students were invited to sign up and perform for their peers during the lunch hour.

The Music Cafés were well attended with all grades participating. We look forward to hearing more from Rockway's talented students.



SAMANTHA'S COOKIES

Grade 11 student and Sr. Robotics team member, Samantha Loberto (pictured left), wanted to help raise money for Rockway's **Jr. Robotics Team**. She used her amazing baking skills to create 100 cookies to sell at the Rockway Robotics Information Night in early November. Unfortunately the event was cancelled, but Samantha was determined to help the grade 7/8 team. She reached out to family and friends and sold her cookies, raising an incredible \$300!

Thanks for your hard work and enthusiasm for supporting the Jr. Robotics team, Samantha!



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 Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.

ALUMNI BABY T-SHIRTS

At the beginning of 2023 we will be sending out 2T sized T-shirts to babies born to alumni in 2022.

To get your future alumni their t-shirt, email Kristen at alumni@rockway.ca with the name of the baby, parents, date of birth and a mailing address.



Join us for FOUNDERS' DAY!

- 9:15 am Founders' Day Chapel
- 5-7 pm Soup Supper & Hot Chocolate Fundraiser
- 7-9 pm Alumni Sports Challenge (Girls VB and Boys BB)

VISIT
rockway.ca
FOR MORE
INFORMATION



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

Rockway Mennonite Collegiate's
production of

Disney
FROZEN JR.

JUNE 7-10, 2023

TICKETS ON SALE
MARCH 2023

WATCH
rockway.ca
FOR UPDATES!

ROCKWAY VOLUNTEERS

Rockway has reimagined its volunteer program and we would love for you to **get involved**. Consider becoming a **Rockway Volunteer** and get reconnected with your Rockway community.

Check out our
Interest survey:



ROCKWAY MENNONITE COLLEGIATE'S

28TH
Annual

GOLF CLASSIC

- Monday, May 29, 2023
- Grey Silo Golf Club

Visit rockway.ca for updates

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, alumni@rockway.ca or 519-743-5209 x3011. Thank you.

