

# Our

# REFLECTIONS

WINTER 2025

NEWSLETTER: HAPPENINGS, EVENTS AND ALUMNI NEWS

## COMING HOME TO ROCKWAY

Rockway's Connections Homecoming Night took place on Friday, October 18 and we could not have been happier with the turn-out and the level of excitement in the building. Over 500 people were in attendance to enjoy the delicious Spaghetti Supper and cheer on our teams during the Alumni Sports Challenge. The school was filled with alumni, current students and families, faculty, staff and members of the Rockway community. A big thank you to everyone who was able to join us!

This year, we introduced an online auction to help with our fundraising efforts which kicked off the same night. There were over 60 items featured on the auction website and everything was donated by members of the Rockway community and local businesses.

All of the proceeds from the Spaghetti Supper and online auction went to support the *Go Rockway!* Annual Fund. Thanks to everyone's generous support, we were able to raise over \$24,000.



Some members of the class of '04 (left to right): Tina Wheaton (née Ashley), Jeremy Roth, Chanel Cressman, Robyn Farlow, Lauren Duimering.

During the event, two graduating classes celebrated significant milestones. The class of 2004 celebrated their 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary of graduation and the class of 1954 celebrated their 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary. Some members from the '04 class attended the Spaghetti Supper and posed for a picture (left), including Rockway faculty member, Robyn Farlow. The class of '54 opted for something a little quieter and had a private dinner in the library. For some, this was their first time back in the school since they graduated!

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**Rockway**  
MENNONITE COLLEGIATE

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Two members from the class of '54, Ferne Burkhardt and Laurence Martin, shared some words about their reunion:

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*Meeting on our 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of graduation from Rockway was a very meaningful experience for the Class of '54. A group of six of our class of 22 graduates, plus three spouses, met to celebrate this highpoint year. The group included Wayne Schiedel, Edward Weber, Ferne Burkhardt, Liz Rudy, Norma Shantz and Laurence Martin. Three others, Joy Witmer, Willis Rudy and Wayne Cassel, were unable to attend but we connected by phone. We were not able to contact the fourth of our 10 remaining classmates. We also remembered those who have passed on and shared wonderful memories; among them, the grade 11 drama, the senior skip and many around music.*

*A highlight for us was to see and experience what Rockway is like 70 years after our graduation. Principal Josh Hill provided glimpses of Rockway as it is now, as well as some plans being considered. We found this visit from the principal very welcoming.*

*We talked about the influence of Rockway on our lives; how it was a time of awakening our interests and possibilities for the future. It was also an awakening to the world and the importance of music and various art forms for a meaningful life. We remembered the development of skills at Rockway that were important in later years.*

*Four of us were challenged to become teachers, another a piano teacher and church organist and others had careers serving in meaningful ways in various parts of our needy world. Three were inspired to serve with Mennonite Central Committee and Mennonite World Conference.*

*This group of alert octogenarians closed our time together expressing our appreciation for friendships that were formed at Rockway in our teens and for the opportunity to celebrate these friendships again at the 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary of our graduation.*

Rockway wants to thank both graduating classes for coming home to Rockway and celebrating with us! Anyone with an anniversary in 2025 that would like help coordinating a reunion, please reach out to Kristen Hines ([alumni@rockway.ca](mailto:alumni@rockway.ca)) and she will be happy to help with the plans.

We hope you can join us next year! Please be sure to add **Friday, October 17, 2025** to your calendar. Stay tuned to [rockway.ca/events](https://rockway.ca/events) for more information on Connections and our other upcoming events.



A SMALL SCHOOL  FOR A **BIG WORLD**



## CELEBRATING FAMILIES

On Friday, October 11, we welcomed over 200 parents, grandparents and students to our annual Family Breakfast. This is a long-standing tradition at Rockway where we invite all of our current students and their families to Rockway for a delicious early-morning breakfast before the start of school. This event is a meaningful way of kicking off Thanksgiving weekend and provides our families an opportunity to connect with other members of our community.



Thanks to Cyndi, the Food Services Team and our volunteers from the Rockway Board of Directors who worked hard to make this event a success.

For those with students attending Rockway next year, please add Friday, October 10, 2025 to your calendar and be sure to join us next year!

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## CONNECTION THROUGH VOLUNTEERING

By Stephanie Janzen '00, parent to three current Rockway students

Service is at the heart of Rockway. As a Rockway parent, I'm grateful for opportunities to engage with our school as a volunteer! Being a small part of various Rockway events has given me the chance to make some great connections.

One of my favourite opportunities is volunteering to serve dinner at Christmas Banquet with fellow parents. The chance to witness the joy of our kids and their teachers celebrating together is delightful. Enjoying the meal with fellow volunteers, after we've served, is a lovely (and delicious!) chance to visit with old friends and make some new connections. And, watching the students be entertained by the staff and faculty performance is priceless!



Last year, it was a treat to work alongside two of my own kids and some of their friends to set up for Spaghetti Supper. What a gift to see them in their element and a bonus to get to know their friends as we worked together to set up the gym for dinner.

Helping out at Grade 12 Graduation is a wonderful way to see what is to come for my kids. Working behind the scenes gave me a chance to witness a special celebration with students, their families and the teachers and staff who invest so much to support our grads. Having had a glimpse of that special day for last year's class, I look forward to celebrating with my own grad next spring.

Being in the Rockway building as a volunteer gives me the opportunity to connect with other parents, students, staff and teachers and to give back to a community I deeply value. I'm grateful to be invited in!

***If you are interested in connecting with Rockway through volunteering, we would love to have you join our volunteer team for this year's Founders' Day celebrations on February 14. Contact Jenn Maxwell at [volunteers@rockway.ca](mailto:volunteers@rockway.ca) for more information.***

# THE LIBRARY: THE PLACE WHERE PEOPLE MEET

By Stacey VanderMeer, Rockway Librarian

The goal of a school library is to create a physical and digital space that is open and accessible to all where reading, inquiry, research and creativity are central to students' educational, personal, social and cultural growth. We strive to create a space where students feel welcome, comfortable and safe, and hope to instill in them an understanding that, while libraries may be predominantly focused around books and information, they are also places to relax and make community connections. It is our hope that Rockway students take that understanding with them when they leave this place and seek out their local library when they need it throughout their lives.



*The library is a popular place for students to meet and work together on school projects and homework or to just relax and socialize with friends.*

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To create this welcoming environment, we have to sometimes flip the traditional idea of a library on its head. Gone are the days of the shushing librarian. The school library is a place where students can share ideas, work together on homework and projects, and build connections with each other. We regularly have students working out problems, brainstorming on the whiteboards and collaborating on schoolwork in the library. We also provide activities for students when they don't have any school work to complete or when they need a break. This past year, those activities included a puzzle table and colouring pages and this year expanded to include board games and crafts.

To make searching for books easier, we broke the fiction collection into adult and teen/young adult sections so that students can choose the level that suits them. From there, we classified each book into a genre, whether fantasy, mystery, romance... the list goes on. If a student is browsing the library and they know they like fantasy stories, they only have to browse through one or two sections rather than the entire collection to find a book. This will hopefully make the process of selecting books less overwhelming. While our non-fiction collection organization hasn't changed, we are exploring how



*In December, a table was set up in the library with craft supplies so that students could make Christmas cards for friends and family.*

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to make browsing information books more accessible.

Our students also have access to our online databases, both at school and at home, which gives them access to highquality information for research projects.

When most of us think back on our elementary and high school experiences, we can likely remember trips to the school library. Whether it was finding a favourite picture book in elementary school, using the reference collection for research, or studying for exams, the library played a role in our education. In a time where school libraries are constantly underfunded and understaffed, Rockway students are blessed to have a school that continues to value the school library and the role it plays in our students' education.



## WELCOME CHRISTMAS

This year, our Christmas concert returned to being held at Rockway. With over 200 of our 280 students in music, we have outgrown church spaces. Gyms ABC were transformed into a festive concert hall with decorative wreaths, black backdrops and several trees throughout the gym.

Our grade 7 & 8 choir opened the concert and brought smiles to our audience as they joyfully sang, *Welcome Christmas*. The evening continued with the rest of our choirs and musical ensembles inviting us to celebrate the beauty of the season, demonstrating the depth of talent in our school. One of many highlights was a quintet of grade 10 students who sang Pentatonix's arrangement of *That's Christmas To Me*.

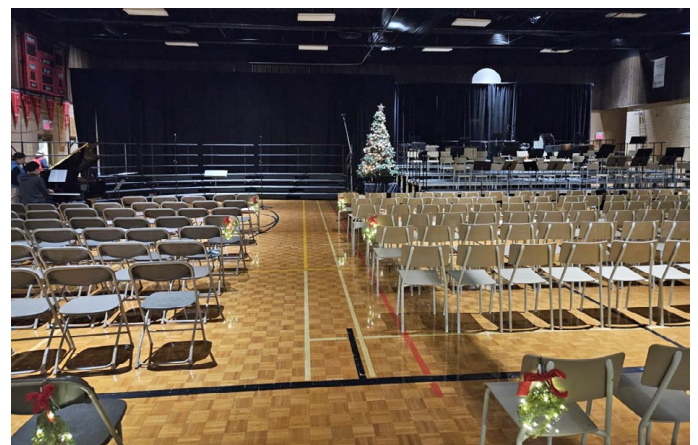


Our students were not the only ones who shared their musical skills that evening. Faculty and staff joined in as well. Josh Hill and Stacey VanderMeer accompanied the choirs in several pieces and a number joined with the students as part of the instrumental ensemble, *Rockway Rhapsody*. Rockway is so blessed to have such engagement and talent.

In his Christmas message, Rockway's principal, Josh Hill, reminded us to prioritize human connection this season.

"The most powerful gift we can give each other is the gift of our time and attention." He also thanked the Rockway community for their support of Rockway's music program and pointed towards the new choral risers which had been purchased this past summer with their support. Having good equipment demonstrates to the students that they are important to us.

The evening ended with a standing ovation. A big thank you to our music teachers, Jeff Enns '90 and Katie Nicholl, for a beautiful concert and for all the time and energy they give to our school's music program. Additional thanks goes to the faculty, staff and custodial team who helped prepare the school to host this year's concert. It was a beautiful evening!



## ALUMNI UPDATES

By Eric Wildfong, Class of 2019



# ROCKWAY ALUMNI

I just wanted to take a minute to share that, back on October 18, I officially graduated from Laurier and received my Honours Bachelor of Science in Computer Science. I graduated with distinction and am now working full-time at *Cooperators* as an Associate Systems Developer on the team with which I did my co-op placement. I thoroughly enjoyed my time there as a co-op student, so I'm glad I've been given the opportunity to return.

There are a multitude of ways Rockway impacted my life and I'm not sure how to put them all into words. I've always been drawn to the more mechanical or technical things, especially those related to computers. It comes naturally to me and I've known for a while I've wanted to do "something" with computers. I was never strong in English and so I kind of flourished in Computer Science not having to write a ton of papers, but I do remember getting my first 80 in English in Chuck's grade 9 English class.

I excelled in my technological courses at Rockway. I remember, for the final project of Ms. Wahl's grade 11 Computers class, being challenged by her to stretch myself and learn a new programming language instead of using Scratch like my peers. She knew I had been introduced to the platform by my cousin when I was 8 or so. That year, I received awards for Academic Achievement in Business & Computers as well as Excellence in Technological Design.

I enjoyed my time at Rockway. The smaller classes at Rockway helped me form connections with my classmates and feel like I could hang around the "cool kids" of the class.



## COMMUNICATION CORNER

### Update your communication preferences

**Help us reduce the number of misdirected pieces of mail going out.**

Visit the Alumni section of our website and click on Stay Connected to update the mailing and/or email addresses of you and your family members and/or request to switch from physical mailings to electronic (if you prefer). You can also contact **Kristen Hines** at [alumni@rockway.ca](mailto:alumni@rockway.ca) or 519-743-5209 x3980

### Stay Connected Online

If you haven't already, check out our [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#) accounts to stay connected with the school and with each other. Alumni, there are special [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) groups just for you!





Join us for

# FOUNDERS' DAY!

**Friday, February 14, 2025**

- 9:15 am 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Founders' Day Chapel  
(we have a BIG announcement to make that day!)
- 10 am Tea & Pastry Reception
- 5-7 pm Soup Supper Student Fundraiser  
Adults (ages 12 and over): \$15 • Child (ages 3-11): \$10 / (under 3): eat free!  
RSVP today! Prepay online ahead of time OR  
cash only at the door.
- 7-9 pm Alumni Sports Challenge  
Alumni vs Sr. Boys' Basketball  
Alumnae vs Sr. Girls' Volleyball  
Join a team ([alumni@rockway.ca](mailto:alumni@rockway.ca))  
or cheer in the stands!

VISIT  
**[rockway.ca/events](https://rockway.ca/events)**  
FOR MORE  
INFORMATION!



#LifeatRockway

**Rockway**  
MENNONITE COLLEGIATE  
Charitable #: 119122091RR0001

## DID YOU FALL IN LOVE AT ROCKWAY!?!

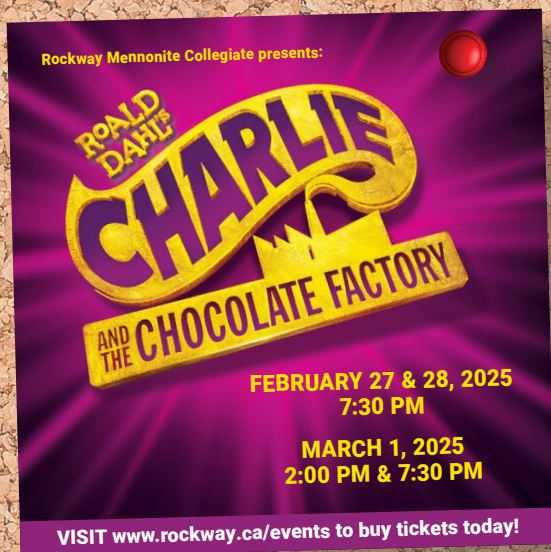
This year our Founders' Day celebrations will be occurring on Friday, February 14 — yes, that is Valentine's Day! In keeping with the theme of love, we are asking alumni to share with us their stories of love that they found at Rockway. Whether it's *your significant other, a hobby, a passionate cause or career path*, we'd love to hear your stories. Please send them (along with a picture if you can!) to [alumni@rockway.ca](mailto:alumni@rockway.ca). We will have them on display during our Founders' Day celebrations.





## STAY CONNECTED – GET INVOLVED

Stay connected and get involved by watching your email and visiting our website ([rockway.ca/events](http://rockway.ca/events)) for all the latest news and updates about upcoming events. Stay engaged online by liking, sharing and following us on our [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#) accounts. Check out our all-school videos on [YouTube](#)!



### 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](mailto:office@rockway.ca)  
[www.rockway.ca](http://www.rockway.ca)

Principal: Josh Hill

Charitable Number: 119122091RR0001



#LifeatRockway

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