

Our

REFLECTIONS

SPRING 2026

NEWSLETTER: HAPPENINGS, EVENTS AND ALUMNI NEWS

BRINGING THE HEAT TO WINTER: A NEW TRADITION BEGINS

This winter, Rockway tried something new, and our community showed up in a big way.

Our inaugural Winter Warmup event replaced Soup Supper as our Trips Week Fundraiser, and it's safe to say the change was a hit! More than 400 guests joined us for an evening of warmth, laughter and connection. It was incredible to see so many familiar faces, along with new ones, all gathered to support our students. Together, we raised over \$5,700!

The Hawaiian theme truly set the tone for the evening. Guests embraced the spirit of the event, arriving in colourful Hawaiian shirts, sun hats, sunglasses and plenty of tropical flair. Even in the middle of winter, the room felt bright, cheerful and full of warmth.

One of the highlights of the evening was the food experience. Guests enjoyed building their own rice bowls, choosing from a wide variety of fresh and delicious ingredients. Meanwhile, our talented student mocktail mixologists kept the tropical vibes flowing by serving creative and refreshing beverages that quickly became crowd favourites.

The feedback we received after the event was overwhelmingly positive. Many shared how much they enjoyed the relaxed, interactive atmosphere and the opportunity to connect with others in the Rockway community. Events like Winter Warmup are wonderful reminders of how special it is to gather together in support of our school and students.

Thanks to the enthusiastic response, we're excited to share that **Winter Warmup will return next year and, yes, the Hawaiian theme will be back!** We hope even more alumni and friends will join us.

If you missed this year's celebration, we hope to see you next February. Trust us, you won't want to miss it.



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ROCKWAY ROBOTICS REFLECTS ON A REMARKABLE 2025-2026 SEASON

With 75% of our Rockway Robotics Team 8089 composed of brand new members, this year's participation in the *First* Robotics Competition has been unlike any other. It was a true testament to the dedication, resilience, and talent of Rockway's students.

On the competition floor, our efforts were recognized with three prestigious awards: the **Imagery Award**, celebrating our team's visual identity and branding; the **Team Spirit Award**, reflecting the enthusiasm and community our students bring to every event; and the **Innovation in Control Award**, honouring our technical excellence at the provincial level. Not only that, but our team ended the season **placing 33rd** out of 120 teams in Ontario! This is an amazing milestone for these students and something we are incredibly proud of. We are also thrilled to acknowledge one of our own students, who was named a **FIRST Leadership Semifinalist** – a remarkable achievement recognizing their character and impact beyond the robot.



Behind these results are countless hands-on learning moments. Our students spent the season bringing their designs to life, building, refining and programming the robot piece by piece. At competitions, our team worked under pressure to maintain the robot, strategize with other teams and keep the robot ready for each match.

This season marked a significant technical milestone as our team made a successful transition to **swerve drive** – a new way for our robot to move around the field! This initiative was powered by our Code team's outstanding work with PhotonVision integrating cameras and sensors to maintain precise, autonomous field positioning. Our Build team demonstrated tremendous growth in CAD skills, and worked hard to design robotic mechanisms that fit compactly in our robot, all while the Marketing team kept our community connected through blog posts, Instagram updates, and video recaps from each competition.

Looking ahead to the off-season, students are energized and eager to expand on manufacturing and programming abilities, setting up an **AltMill** and exploring **System Core** – building skills that will carry us into next season stronger than ever.

None of this would be possible without the unwavering support of our **parents, mentors, and sponsors**. Your investment in these students shapes not just great robots, but great people.

If you are interested in joining our community as a mentor or sponsor, or want to learn more about the program, check out our website: www.8089rockway.ca or email us at robotics@student.rockway.ca.

Thank you all, we can't wait to see what next season brings!



The Rockway Robotics, *FIRST* Robotics Competition Team 8089

AN EVENING OF MUSIC AND COMMUNITY

This year's Spring Concert arrived a little earlier than usual, making room for the construction project which started at the beginning of May.

The concert showcased the talents of Rockway's grades 7-12 music students in their various vocal and instrumental ensembles. Among the many memorable moments was a playful surprise from the Grade 7 & 8 Choir, who delighted the audience by pulling out hidden kazoos during their performance of *If I Were a Fish* by Roger Emerson. Laughter and applause filled the space, capturing the joy that music brings to our community.



Other highlights included the student-and-faculty/staff vocal and instrumental ensembles, *Cantabile* and *Rockway Rhapsody*, respectively. The evening concluded with a powerful performance of *Will the Circle Be Unbroken* sung by the grades 7-12 Mass Choir.

It was especially meaningful to have the Rockway gyms filled with families and supporters one last time before the transformation of the space starts at the beginning of May. As we look ahead to this next chapter, we are grateful for the generosity of the Rockway community donors that have made this project possible.

ROCKWAY RETURNS TO THE DRAMAFEST STAGE

By Stacey VanderMeer, Director

After a decade hiatus, Rockway returned to the National Theatre School (NTS) DramaFest, formerly known as Sears Drama Festival, with our production of *The Day the Internet Died*. The NTS DramaFest is an annual high school theatre festival where students create and perform one-act plays, developing skills in collaboration, self-expression, and problem-solving in a supportive environment. This incredible student experience has been running since 1946 and involves thousands of students across Canada, offering them a chance to connect with the wider theatre community.



The cast and crew of *The Day the Internet Died*.

Our cast and crew of 18 students performed *The Day the Internet Died* at John F. Ross Collegiate in Guelph. Our show's comedic examination of society's dependence on technology garnered many laughs, and our cast and crew rose to the challenge of performing in a brand new venue. The festival adjudicators appreciated the way our ensemble worked together and supported each other, as well as our use of our set and props. At the awards ceremony at the end of the week, our show was blessed to receive two awards: Henry Vosters, received an **Award of Merit for Comedic Spirit**, and our ensemble, an **Award of Excellence for Camaraderie**. The show was then performed for a very appreciative audience at Rockway the following week.

Thank you to all of the audience members who came out to support the show, and the faculty and staff who provided production support as well as encouragement for our actors and technicians. Rockway theatre would not exist without all of your support!

CASE CLOSED! HUMPTY DUMPTY IS MISSING! DELIGHTS SOLD-OUT CROWDS

By Rebecca Penfold, Director

It was a pleasure working with students, faculty and staff to prepare our grade 7&8 production of *Humpty Dumpty is Missing!* This 'comedy caper,' was a delightful spin-off of the 1940's and 1950's 'film noir' detective novels and movies. Our SOLD-OUT audiences delighted in the witty and very 'punny' dialogue as Detective Sammy Scoops and his capable assistant, Alice from Dallas, investigated a variety of 'prospects'. Together with the help of the beloved Old Mother Hubbard and Old Mother Goose, they cracked the case. I am so proud of the incredible production that this talented group of students whipped-up together! Deepest gratitude goes to the Rockway faculty and staff, students, parents and especially our parent volunteers for helping to create this important opportunity for learning and growth. We couldn't have done it without you!



Cast pictures from the 2009 production of *Humpty Dumpty is Missing!*

This production may feel familiar to some of our alumni and alumni parents. As the role of director for the grade 7&8 play is fairly new to me, I researched the list of Rockway's past shows and found that *Humpty* was originally produced by Jen Hoffman-Bailey in 2009 by the grade 6-8 classes. I took the opportunity to use a 'tried and true' script along with the fantastic support of Jen to guide me along the way.

Drama at Rockway has a long history and tradition; *The Robe*, was directed by Rockway's first teacher, Salome Bauman, in the early years of Rockway's history. As an Alumna, it is a privilege to have experienced this type of experiential learning myself as an actor – first in the grade 7&8 musical *Oliver* ('95), then in shows like *The Sound of Music* ('96), *The Farm Show* ('98), and *Joseph and the Amazing Technicolour Dream Coat* ('99). It is truly an honour and joy to return to Rockway's stage to continue in the tradition that first inspired me!



THE POWER OF ART

A Student Reflection

Cassidy Unrau, a Rockway grade 12 student, recently captivated students, faculty and staff during chapel with a thoughtful reflection on the meaning and importance of art.

Drawing on famous works such as *The Starry Night* and the *Mona Lisa*, Cassidy began by reminding students that art is deeply personal. While techniques and styles can be imitated, truly original works come from the unique memories, emotions and perspectives of the artist. Her message was clear – creativity is rooted in what makes each person unique.

A central theme of Cassidy's talk was that **art is for everyone**.

She challenged the idea that art is simply a talent someone is born with; comparing it instead to athletics. Just as athletes improve through practice, repetition and perseverance, artists grow through trial and error, patience and dedication. "There is something satisfying in pushing yourself to be better at something that you love", she shared; encouraging students to embrace the process of growth.



Laiklyn Snider's piece, *Aurelia*, was this year's Visual Art Exhibition's Title Piece.

To bring this idea to life, Cassidy highlighted the work of fellow Rockway students; showcasing how their artistic styles have developed over time through commitment and practice. By comparing earlier pieces with more recent creations, she beautifully demonstrated how every sketch, experiment and unfinished idea contributes to an artist's journey.

Cassidy also expanded students' understanding of what art can be. Beyond drawing and painting, she spoke about music, theatre, writing, film, photography and even unexpected forms such as digital design, robotics and mathematical creations. Her message resonated deeply, "**art can be made from anything and everything, as long as there is a person there to guide how it should be**".

She also explored the ways in which art shapes the world beyond the classroom. From social activism and therapy to advertising, technology and medicine, Cassidy highlighted how creativity strengthens problem-solving, observation, emotional expression and human connection. Her examples reminded students that art is not separate from science, math or everyday life, but woven through all of them.

Perhaps the most inspiring takeaway from Cassidy's chapel message was her encouragement for every student to pursue something creative. Whether through cooking, coding, music, design, dance or visual arts, she emphasized that creativity helps us grow intellectually, emotionally and personally.

Cassidy concluded by inviting the school community to the then, upcoming Visual Arts Exhibition, themed **Bloom** (held on April 14), a celebration of artistic growth and self-expression. Her words served as a beautiful reminder that to be an artist is to grow, to practise and to discover new ways of seeing the world.



Cassidy Unrau speaks during chapel on April 7.



At this year's Visual Arts Exhibition, *Bloom*, attendees were invited to tap into their own creativity and contribute their own paper bloom to the display or take it home with them.

FOUNDERS' DAY

On the morning of Thursday, February 12, the Rockway community gathered to celebrate Founders' Day, an annual tradition that honours the founding of our school while connecting today's students with those who once walked the same halls.

This year's Founders' Day Chapel welcomed alumni guest speakers Laverne Brubacher '62, Ben Janzen '97 and Emily Moffat '20. In an interview-style format, Principal Josh Hill asked the alumni about their time at Rockway and the lessons they have carried with them beyond graduation.

Throughout the conversation, the three alumni encouraged students to try new things, step outside their comfort zones and take full advantage of the opportunities available during their high school years. They spoke candidly about the opportunities they embraced, the relationships they built, and the challenges that helped shape who they are today. Their stories served as meaningful reminders of the lasting value of a Rockway education. They also emphasized the importance of treating others with kindness and respect, values that continue to define the Rockway community.

Following the chapel service, invited guests gathered for a Tea & Pastry Reception, offering a wonderful opportunity for alumni, faculty/staff and guests to reconnect and share in the spirit of community that has long been at the heart of the school.

Founders' Day serves as a powerful reminder of the vision and dedication of those who founded Rockway, as well as the responsibility we share to carry that legacy forward. We are deeply grateful to our alumni speakers for returning to campus to inspire the next generation and for helping make this year's Founders' Day celebration such a meaningful and memorable occasion.



ROCKWAY ALUMNI



CONGRATULATIONS!

Rockway congratulates alumni and former Athletics Department Head, **Ray Boehm '84**, on his induction into the Brock Badgers Hall of Fame as part of the 1994-95 Men's Wrestling Team. As written on the Brock Badgers webpage, "The 1994-95 Brock Badgers men's wrestling team helped launch a

streak of sustained success at both the provincial and national levels. That season, the Badgers earned nine medals at the OUAA Championships, including three gold, three silver and three bronze, while claiming the second provincial title in program history... [and] was named Brock University's Team of the Year." The ceremony took place on Sunday, April 26, 2026.



Ray Boehm (second from the right) is pictured with the 1994-95 men's wrestling team.

2026 BIG NIGHT OUT



JOIN US!

Dinner & Dance

- Friday, September 25, 2026
- 6:00-11:00 pm

Visit rockway.ca/events



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Mennonite Collegiate
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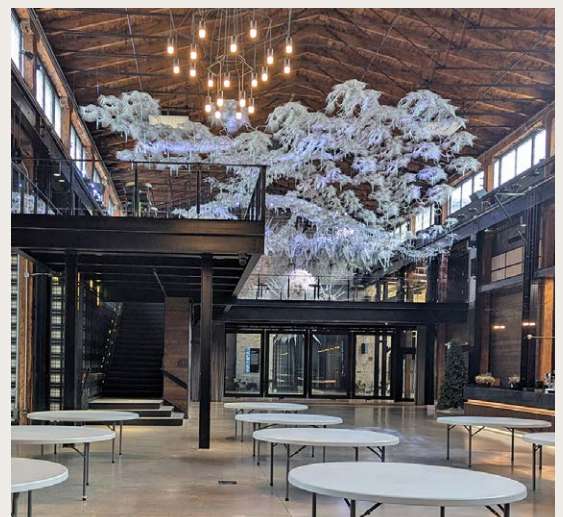
The evening at Steckle Heritage Farm last fall, held in celebration of Rockway's 80th Anniversary, was something truly special. It brought together so many of the things the Rockway community holds close; great food, meaningful fellowship and fantastic music. Generations gathered to let loose, reconnect and simply enjoy being together.

As the night came to a close and guests reluctantly made their way home, Rockway event planners kept hearing the same refrain: "We need to do this again!" A group of parents took that sentiment one step further and, perhaps even that very evening, began forming a committee to find a way to help Rockway bring that same sense of fun back once more.

This fall, we are thrilled to invite the Rockway community to the Tapestry Hall in Cambridge for our new fundraising event, **BIG Night Out**.

Guests can look forward to many of the touches that made last year so memorable, including the return of **Better Than Nothing**, whose fantastic live music promises to keep the energy high. With the move to the larger and stunning Tapestry Hall, BIG Night Out offers even more room to gather, celebrate and enjoy an elevated dining experience that builds on the wonderful hospitality shared at last year's event.

For more information and to purchase your tickets, visit rockway.ca/events. **Early Bird tickets are on sale now until June 15**; \$100 for adults (25+) and \$65 for students (up to 24).



Looking forward to decorating Tapestry Hall Rockway style.

STAY CONNECTED – GET INVOLVED

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



LEARN MORE AT rockway.ca/events



GRADUATION CEREMONIES

GRADE 8

– Thursday, June 18, 2026
at 7:00 pm

GRADE 12

– Saturday, June 20, 2026
at 3:00 pm
– Ceremony at Waterloo
Mennonite Brethren Church

A MONTHLY GIFT CAN MAKE A LASTING IMPACT. WHEN YOU GIVE:

- \$20/month = \$240/year
- \$20/month for 5 years = \$1,200 invested in students and programs

Monthly giving provides reliable, ongoing support that helps Rockway plan ahead with confidence. Consistent donations strengthen student programs, enhance learning opportunities and ensure we can respond to emerging needs throughout the year. By becoming a monthly donor, you join a community of supporters helping sustain and grow the Rockway experience for current and future students.

EVERY DONATION COUNTS! rockway.ca/donate

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.



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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