WHAT'S HAPPENING AT ROYAL WEST ACADEMY

RWA NEWS

WWW.ROYALWESTACADEMY.COM

November 2026

WORDS FROM THE ADMIN



Principal David Lee (center)
with Vice-Principal Maria Pizzichemi (left) and
Vice-Principal Steven Manstavich (right)

Welcome back

The Royal West Academy administration and staff are excited to welcome our students and families to the 2026–2027 school year! Our hallways are once again filled with energy and enthusiasm as we look forward to another year of learning, growth, and memorable experiences. We thank our families for their continued support and look forward to another wonderful year together.

Meet the Secondary 1 Teachers

Our annual Meet the Secondary 1 Teachers evening provided families with an opportunity to meet their child's teachers and learn more about the academic program and expectations for the year ahead. Parents also received valuable information from Student Services about the many resources and opportunities available to students, including guidance services, extracurricular activities, peer tutoring, and the MindPOP program. Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make the evening a success.

Active Learning Classroom 204

RWA's Foundation proudly celebrated the completion of another classroom in our Active Learning Classroom project. Classroom 204 has been outfitted with modern, versatile furniture designed to enhance collaboration and learning. The tireless efforts of this parents' organization is greatly appreciated.

Please join us for events this school year to raise money to transform more spaces into active learning classrooms.

Welcome Back Assembly

Students from all grade levels came together for an engaging and lively Welcome Back Assembly to kick off the 2026–2027 school year. Our Student Leadership Association representatives served as emcees, introducing fellow students who highlighted the many exciting activities and opportunities available at RWA as well as the launch of the SLA House Program, a new tradition to further strengthen RWA's sense of community.

The administration team shared important reminders about safety information related to traffic and bullying prevention, reinforcing our commitment to a safe, respectful, and welcoming school environment. It was a wonderful way to begin another exciting year at Royal West Academy!





ECAs

At Royal West Academy, Extra-Curricular Activities (ECA) are an important part of student life offering opportunities to explore interests, develop new skills and get involved in the school community. Students are required to participate in 3 of the 4 ECA categories: Cultural, Sports, Community Service, and Environmental. Activities may take place before school, at lunch, or after school.

From sports teams and cultural clubs to community service and environmental initiatives, there is something for everyone.

Academics

All Standards and Procedures for each course are available on the school's website. If your child requires additional academic support throughout the year, RWA offers an excellent peer-tutoring program at a minimal cost. For questions or further information, please contact our School-Community Animator (ECA coordinator) Ms. Di Pietro, at sdipietro@emsb.qc.ca.

Pedestrian Safety

During the first week of school, the administration team and members of the Student Services Department were out in the community welcoming new and returning students at key intersections and areas surrounding the school. Staff helped guide students safely from public transit drop-off points to RWA encouraging the use of designated crosswalks and reinforcing the importance of pedestrian safety.

Welcoming New and Returning Staff

The administration team is pleased to welcome new staff members to the RWA community along with returning staff this year.

New staff members

- Julia Faoro (ELA/Visual Arts)
- Amanda Montaque (ELA)
- Suzanne Laporte (Guidance)
- Donald Murnaghan (Caretaker/Maintenance worker)
- Lilieth Caesar (Caretaker/Maintenance worker)
- Ali Srour (Mathématiques)
- Meagan Santella (Resource)
- Andrea Bukta (Attendant)
- Maria Pizzichemi (Interim Vice Principal)

Welcome Back Returning Staff

- Marika Bateman (CCQ)
- Hélène Leblanc (français)
- A.J Macpherson (Ed Tech, CCQ)
- Marianne Perais (Mathématiques)
- Ryan Friend (ELA)
- Caroline Benamron (Français)
- Victoria Gagliano (Math)
- Christine Suarez (Visual Arts)
- Jamal Zigby (Science/Social Studies)

Welcome Back BBQ

The Student Life Association's first big event of the year was a success. It was a beautiful day filled with smiles, fun activities, delicious treats and plenty of school spirit. What a wonderful way to start the new year on a positive note.








Grade 8 Terry Fox Run

On Friday, October 9, RWA's Grade 8 students completed the Terry Fox Run with support from teachers and Leadership students. Together, they raised an impressive $2,391.50 for the Terry Fox Foundation.

The event demonstrated the students' perseverance and generosity while supporting cancer research and carrying forward Terry Fox's legacy of courage and hope.




The Awards Ceremony

On October 9, RWA celebrated the achievements of our 2025–2026 students at our Awards Ceremony. Students were recognized for top marks in a course, MVP title for sports, extracurricular accomplishments, and national distinction in the Waterloo Math Competition. Special recognition was also given to our Principal's List recipients and four winners of the Taylor-Negm Award, named in honour of the RWA founders, for their commitment and contribution to school life.

Open House

On September 17, we were pleased to welcome so many prospective families to RWA. A heartfelt thank you to our dedicated staff, volunteers, and students whose enthusiasm, teamwork, and commitment made the evening such a memorable experience.




CEGEP Information Assembly

The Guidance Department held an information session for all Grade 11 students to explore post-secondary options and learn about the CEGEP application process. Students are encouraged to schedule individual meetings with a member of the Guidance team to further discuss their options.

Sec 1 Day Trip

On September 29, Secondary 1 students enjoyed a wonderful full day excursion in Wentworth-Nord, where they connected with peers, strengthened their teamwork skills and participated in many fun, exciting outdoor activities surrounded by nature.

Senior Camping Trip

Royal West Academy's Senior Camping Trip took place from September 27 to 29. Students had the opportunity to experience the natural beauty of La Mauricie National Park through camping, hiking, swimming and canoeing in the cold waters of Lake Wapizagonke. Participants and chaperones enjoyed wonderful weather and beautiful fall scenery for most of the trip. A special thank you to everyone who helped organize and support this memorable experience.

Royal West Academy Foundation News



Five Classrooms Transformed — Let's Build More!

Thanks to the incredible generosity of families, alumni, and friends, the ***Royal West Academy Foundation*** **has now completed five Active Learning Classrooms** — modern spaces that inspire collaboration, creativity, and engagement. These classrooms are transforming how students learn and connect with their teachers every day.

With **your continued support**, we can bring even more of these innovative spaces to life. Every contribution **helps us enrich the Royal West Academy experience and shape the future of learning**.

Watch the ALC Video



Please support the Active Learning Classroom Campaign — visit rwaf.ca and give today!

Join us at the next RWA Foundation meeting.
Click here for dates and times

Want to get involved with the Foundation?
Contact us at: info@rwaf.ca

Please support Royal West Academy's Active Learning Classroom Campaign. Visit rwaf.ca

Give Today!

Royal West Academy Home & School News

The Royal West Academy school store (RWA CO-OP) began in 2023. It is a fully volunteer-run enterprise, open daily at lunch, and serves as a second hand uniform shop, school supply store and swag/spirit wear boutique. It's not just a store – it's so much more! From art pencils, locks, science boards, snacks, and more, the RWA Co-op is a space where students can volunteer, shop, suggest items, donate items, and be part of their school store, all while raising funds for RWAHSA.



The school store is looking for more volunteers! The store is open daily at lunch. If you want to volunteer, please send an email to rwastore189@gmail.com.

ROYAL WEST ACADEMY HOME & SCHOOL ASSOCIATION & FundScrip

RWAHSA group code: **6T4XMZ**

RWAHSA has partnered with FundScrip for a fundraiser made simple: support RWAHSA while you shop for the things you already need, and a percentage comes back to us! It's the easiest way to shop, gift, and support—all at once!

Click **HERE** to become a supporter of RWAHSA On FundScrip.



A Warm Welcome on Orientation Day

By: Hayley H.

Worried about high school? You won't be after this day. Royal West Academy's annual Secondary I Orientation Day took place on August 27, and it was a big hit. Organized by the Student Life Association (SLA) and overseen by Mr. Adam Wiltzer, Orientation Day was the perfect way to welcome the incoming Secondary I cohort.

Orientation Day has been an RWA tradition since the school's founding in 1983, introducing new Secondary I students to the true RWA experience. This year, the event was run by the Horizon slate, who are leading SLA for the 2026–2027 school year. The slate brought in many new and creative ideas to make this first day truly unforgettable.

The day was packed with a mix of activities. Informative sessions, like school tours and Q&As, helped the new students get comfortable with their new surroundings and get to know the school. Meanwhile, laid-back activities such as dodgeball, water games, and capture the flag gave them the chance to have some fun and get to know each other.

By having a variety of different stations, both practical and playful, SLA showed the students that school is about much more than a place to learn. It's a place to meet new people, try new things, and, most importantly, be part of a community. For all those nervous young students who walked through the doors for the first time, that day showed them that they are not alone and the RWA community is ready to welcome them with open arms.

The day also marked SLA Horizon's first event of the year, and it was evident they were well prepared. In the words of Mr. Wiltzer, "It was a great first SLA event and it went very smoothly, great preparation by all the members and presidents. If this is a sign of things to come for SLA Horizon, I'm very excited for 2026–2027."

As the day came to an end, the goal was that the Secondary I students left with a better understanding of what the school has to offer and, hopefully, new friends. After a memorable Orientation Day, the Student Life Association is proud to carry on the tradition of welcoming the new Secondary I students and looks forward to doing it again next year!



Open House, Open Arms

By: Uzair A.

During Open House, some schools simply open their doors, but on September 17, 2026, Royal West Academy not only opened its doors, but also its hallways, classrooms, gyms, and, for a night, its heart.

The school came alive, opening its doors to approximately 2000 people, according to Ms. J. Fogel, one of the organizers of Open House. This number is in line with the turnout of previous years, showing that Open House remains one of the busiest events of the school year.

Behind the success was a dedicated team of students and staff. While everyone played a part, the students were the powerhouse behind it all. "The students, as usual, are the most important part of the night," said Ms. Fogel. "They truly showcased what Royal West has to offer." And the students did indeed deliver. The tour guides, students ranging from Secondary II to Secondary V, were the true MVPs of the evening. Group after group, the guides led the way with welcoming smiles, answering questions and sharing stories about their time at RWA. In between tours, guides could be spotted glancing over their personal notes, taking a breather, and heading back to meet the next group. Every visitor, whether a curious parent or a future student, was made to feel right at home.

However, the tours were only the beginning. Mr. J. Zigby's physics demonstrations, Ms. C. Suarez's art displays, and showcases from other departments gave visitors a closer look at what students learn in the classroom. Meanwhile, live performances from the dance crew lit up the night and kept the energy at an all-time high.

All that work added up to more than a walk through the building. Open House is more than just a tour for prospective RWA parents and students. It is a time when future students picture themselves in the school's hallways and classes, and maybe most importantly, it is also a chance for the RWA community to give visitors an amazing first impression, and this year, it passed with flying colors, really earning that A+.

By the end of the night, the hallways had gone back to being quiet, but RWA pride and spirit was still echoing in the air. These feelings belong to every student and staff member whose hard work kept the evening running so smoothly, and they deserve a big thank you.





Music Welcomes Visitors at RWA's Open House

By: Charles S.

When visitors entered the auditorium during Royal West Academy's Open House, they were welcomed by music from the school's Honour Band. Each time a new group arrived, the musicians performed a few pieces, giving prospective students and their families a glimpse of life at RWA. Instead of simply telling visitors about the school, the band had the opportunity to show them what being part of its community could sound like.

For the musicians, the performances were more than a chance to play. As a member of the Honour Band, I remember how eager everyone was to perform for a room full of people we had never met. We wanted to make a good impression and represent our school well. The visitors seemed impressed, and I noticed many younger children looking around the school with genuine interest. Seeing their reactions made the performance feel especially meaningful, as we were not only playing for an audience, but potentially inspiring future students, and for those of us graduating, that's a magical and heartwarming feeling.

These performance came early in the school year, when the band had had limited time to rehearse together. Nevertheless, the open house gave the musicians an important opportunity to perform as an ensemble. Music teacher Ms. G. Purdy explained that she wants visitors to feel comfortable, enjoy the music, and feel part of something special. She also hopes younger students will imagine themselves performing on stage one day.

Building the band itself requires careful consideration. Ms. Purdy wants to include as many students as possible while ensuring that each musician is ready for the experience. She then chooses music suited to the group. Her goal is to create a band in which students can enjoy the year while developing their abilities together.

Despite the limited rehearsal time prior to the open house, Ms. Purdy was proud of how the musicians worked together. She praised their musicality, energy, ability to listen to one another, and professionalism. Reflecting on the performance, she said, "I couldn't have been prouder." She was also pleased with the initiative students showed in helping set up, seeing it as a positive sign for the year ahead.

For visitors, the Honour Band's involvement at this year's open house offered a small introduction to RWA's music program. For the Honour Band, it was an exciting opportunity to perform together and represent the school. The open house is a great opportunity to show what makes our school special, and this year, I believe the Royal West Honour Band did just that.

Think Globally, Solve Locally: An Inside Look at GIPS

By: Markéta A.

Climate change, artificial intelligence, and food security… Your solution to these problems could make all the difference. Sounds like a lot of pressure? Well, welcome to Global Issues Problem Solving! This is an extra-curricular activity offered at Royal West Academy where students prove that changing the world is not just reserved for adults.

Global Issues Problem Solving (GIPS) is a program that encourages students to think outside the box, tackle global issues, and develop creative solutions to problems that are starting to affect us today. Club members research real-world topics before diving into imaginary future scenarios.

However, don't be fooled by the name, because GIPS is so much more than just memorizing facts and throwing random ideas. Members follow a six-step problem-solving process: identifying challenges, selecting an underlying problem, brainstorming solutions, establishing criteria, evaluating their ideas, and developing an action plan. These steps help us break down overwhelming topics that could affect us in twenty years or even tomorrow. In GIPS, we're not taught what to think, but how to think and how to become more critical thinkers. This is a vital quality every student should have.

Creativity is the most essential part of this program. Members learn to collaborate, communicate, think critically, and approach problems from *all* perspectives. This way, no two ideas will ever be the same. Whether they're exploring technological advances or finding ways to address environmental challenges, participants discover that sometimes the most *outstanding* solutions come from standing out.

At RWA, we have middle teams (Secondary I to Secondary III) and senior teams (Secondary IV to Secondary V) so that students can compete no matter what grade they're in. The driving force behind our GIPS teams, cultivating a supportive environment where we can truly learn the most, is Ms. Sarah Lubbe. As she states, "Most importantly, GIPS helps students develop skills and confidence that extend far beyond the classroom and prepare them to take on the complex challenges of tomorrow."

Now, why complain about the world's problems when you can help solve them? Today's brainstorm could inspire tomorrow's breakthrough, and with GIPS, students around the world are taking it upon themselves to evaluate big problems, think of bold ideas, and create a brighter future!

FUTURE Problem Solving®

The Road To Prom

By: Carolina P.

The countdown to prom is on, And the Grad Committee has been very busy making sure this year's graduating class has a prom to remember!

They've been working hard to Raise money to make prom tickets cheaper and fund all the beautiful décor that fits the enchanted forest theme. Prom is one of the most anticipated events in high school, and our mission is to create a special night people won't forget.

So, what has the Grad Committee been up to? One of the Grad Committee's biggest fundraisers every year is selling chocolate boxes. Each graduate gets a box of chocolates that they must sell. Selling each box helps the Grad Committee tremendously. Grads did a fantastic job selling the boxes, raising over $10 000! This reduced prom tickets by $30! Students and families got the chance to buy a delicious treat while helping to raise money for a good cause.

However, the sweetness doesn't stop there! Throughout the year, the Grad Committee sells four different flavours of TCBY. This gives students the perfect opportunity to treat themselves because, let's be honest, who could say no to ice cream? It's delicious and sells for such a low price. Not only do they sell ice cream, but Homers donuts as well! Who can resist a donut, especially for a good cause? All these sales help us raise money for prom, all of which goes to lowering ticket prices and purchasing beautiful decorations.

Behind all this fundraising, the Grad Committee's goal is to create an unforgettable night for all graduating seniors to celebrate finishing high school. Prom is more than just a dance. It's a chance to celebrate the memories we've all made throughout the years. So next time you see the Grad Committee selling ice cream or donuts, remember that it's not just for the money; it's about making prom a memorable event in every senior's life.



Leave Your Mark!

Ciara M.

As you flip through a high school yearbook years from now, memories of unforgettable trips, hilarious moments with friends, and favourite school events will come flooding back. Most Royal West Academy students eagerly pick up their copy of the yearbook at the end of the year, but getting to create those pages of memories is an entirely different experience.

Now that the school year is well underway and our team is fully immersed in the yearbook creation process, it's clear to us that the yearbook isn't just a book. It's a lasting reminder of our high school journey and having the power to shape those memories, for the entire school has made us feel like we're leaving a mark on RWA history!

For the creative minds out there, imagine having your work printed and held by the entire school. For example, my teammate and I got the unique opportunity to draw this year's yearbook cover together! There is so much room for creative input, whether it's coming up with this year's grad nomination categories or simply suggesting fun ideas for sections to include in the book. But we haven't just been sitting in meetings; our team is constantly out around the school capturing moments! From snapping photos at the recent Homecoming Dance to roaming the hallways for everyday moments, we work hard to ensure every single student feels included, because these memories belong to all of us.



ROYAL WEST ACADEMY
YEARBOOK COMMITTEE

Elizabeth C., a fellow member of the committee, perfectly sums up the experience: "Yearbook committee gives me the opportunity to engage in new experiences, learn about students, and see our school from a fresh perspective. It's far more than just taking pictures; it's a true community effort alongside your peers."

That shared sense of teamwork is what makes being on this committee so rewarding. As Secondary V students in our final year, joining the yearbook committee is a truly memorable way to end our RWA journey. After years of having our own pictures taken, we are finally given the chance to step behind the camera and capture these memories before we graduate.

So, to all lower grades, if helping create our school's photographic time capsule sounds like something you're interested in, watch for the opportunity to join near the end of your Secondary IV year! It's a *picture-perfect* way to make your senior year unforgettable!

Growing A Greener School

By: Lee-Ann W.

Ready to make a difference and help our planet Earth? Come join the Environment Committee!

Aoife F., a secondary III student—who had recently won an award for her formidable support of the environmental section and who spoke on behalf of the club at the welcome back assembly—has decided to tell us what goes on in the Environment Committee!

Every Thursday during lunch in room 104, students in the EC meet up to plan for workshops and discuss ongoing environmental issues. As many of you know, the Waste Reduction Week workshop recently took place during the week of the 19th. This year, the EC has worked very hard to organize different activities and challenges, such as informative presentations, a scavenger hunt, and DIY eco-friendly decorations that will make your Halloween much more green.

For those who are disappointed they couldn't make it to this past workshop, fear not! Another one is happening in April: Earth Week. After a short break, the weekly meetings will pick up again, just in time for Earth Week, and that is exactly why the EC needs you! The more people join, the more green ideas can be incorporated into the workshops. It could also allow the committee to organize workshops more frequently, each with a larger variety of activities. Missing out on this awesome opportunity seems like such a *waste*, and we all know how to *reduce* it!

The Environment Committee's goal is to tackle problems that affect our lives every day.

"What the workshops are trying to accomplish is to help people incorporate little things that help the environment into their day-to-day routine," Aoife F. says. Little things that involve knowing which items belong in the compost bin as opposed to the garbage can, or taking your bike out for a spin, can actually make a bigger impact than you think. The Environment Committee is looking for people who are willing to make these small changes that will help our planet. Be the change you want to see and have fun while doing it!

If you have any questions about the Committee or its Earth Week workshop, you can find Ms. Cristina Almeida in room 104.



Examples of the DIY Halloween decorations made at Aoife F.'s workshop

Silence, moteur et l'excitation commence

Par: Masha A.

Envie d'un peu de drame? Pas besoin de chercher loin, une sortie au théâtre suffit. Entre l'amour non réciproque, les tensions familiales et les rêves brisés, *La Mouette* ne manquait certainement pas de tragédie. Le 13 octobre, les élèves de secondaire IV et V de Royal West Académie ont eu l'opportunité de découvrir cette pièce lors de la deuxième sortie du club de théâtre au Théâtre Denise-Pelletier, sous la supervision de Mme Stephanie Ferland.

Le club de théâtre est une activité parascolaire de RWA qui propose deux sorties au cours de l'année. Les élèves qui participent à une sortie et à deux rencontres à l'heure du dîner peuvent obtenir un crédit culturel. Lors des rencontres, nous découvrons l'histoire des pièces et partageons nos impressions après les représentations. En plus, l'activité est entièrement gratuite! Tout ce qu'il faut apporter, c'est un sourire et ses oreilles.

Écrite en 1895 par le dramaturge Anton Tchekhov, *La Mouette* est un classique qui aborde des problèmes encore actuels. Dans cette adaptation de Guillaume Corbeil, l'histoire est modernisée grâce au français québécois et à des références actuelles. On suit des personnages qui rêvent d'amour, de succès et d'une meilleure vie, mais qui sont souvent déçus par la réalité. Leurs ambitions soulèvent une question: faut-il être célèbre pour être considéré comme talentueux? Avec des acteurs convaincants et un déroulement captivant, cette représentation a retenu notre attention et nous a fait réfléchir bien après la fin du spectacle.
Pour les élèves, cette activité permet de découvrir la culture québécoise et de pratiquer le français de façon amusante. Blake T., qui a participé à la sortie, a partagé son enthousiasme : « La pièce m'a captivé du début à la fin et je l'ai trouvée vraiment touchante. » Ces sorties nous permettent aussi d'en apprendre davantage sur le théâtre avec nos amis. C'est aussi une belle façon de rendre la vie scolaire plus intéressante.



Grâce aux scènes intenses et aux discussions animées, le club de théâtre permet aux élèves de secondaire 4 et 5 de s'ouvrir à de nouvelles formes d'art. Que vous soyez passionnés de théâtre ou que vous n'ayez jamais assisté à une représentation, le club de théâtre est une belle occasion d'essayer quelque chose de nouveau avec d'autres élèves de RWA.

A Brush With Greatness

By: Brianna D.

Royal West Academy is notorious for all the various programs that are offered. From Digital Graphics to Sound Engineering, and many more, the options a student can choose for their electives are endless. So, of all the options at your disposal, why should Visual Arts be one to consider?

If you do choose Art as your elective when Course Selection arrives in January of 2027, you will learn a multitude of things that will change your artwork for the better. Stemming from the introduction you got in your first year at RWA, your artistic skills will be further developed because you will have the full year to learn, and not just a third of it. You will get to manipulate various mediums that you might have never had the chance to use before. This will allow you to use and create all you could ever dream of (within the rules and regulations of your assigned project, don't go *too* crazy with all that artistic freedom). Contrary to the first year, Secondary 2 to 5 students present so many different projects that are new and exciting. Speaking from my own personal experience, I grew to love the new mediums and express myself freely in all the unique projects assigned. This is why continuing on is so great! Not only do you get to play around with materials that might be entirely foreign to you, but you might learn to adore and use them in your future projects as well.



You don't need to be the next Pablo Picasso to take part in Art at RWA, because this program is meant to foster creativity and build your skill from the ground up because, as Ralph Waldo Emmerson said, "Every artist was first an amateur." You will learn to improve through real technique and understanding. I believe that the best results are produced when someone has a proper comprehension of *why* they are doing what they're doing instead of copying what's in front of them. I've always believed that learning how to produce different types of pieces and doing it well is how one builds an appreciation for the work. That goes for everything, not just art. Seeing a constant amelioration in my abilities thanks to the guidance of Ms. Christine Suarez is why I kept coming back. I hope to have it as part of my career someday, as should you if you decide to choose Art!



24 Poses (portraits). Une scène: A Night to Remember

By: Emma D.

The evening of September 23rd, I was part of a lucky group of Secondary IV and V students who got the chance to see a French play downtown at Place des Arts, completely free of charge. This amazing opportunity was organized by French teacher Mme Stéphanie Ferland Turcotte and was made possible thanks to the amazing extracurricular program at Royal West Academy.

La pièce, intitulée *24 poses (portraits)*, a été écrite par Serge Boucher et présentée au Théâtre Jean-Duceppe. Elle met en scène une réunion de famille québécoise dans une cour arrière, où des secrets et des non-dits se cachent derrière de nombreuses anecdotes et blagues. Au début, la réunion semble normale et joyeuse, mais il faut faire attention, car un drame se déroule derrière cette façade. La mise en scène et la scénographie uniques de cette production de 2026 sont très ingénieuses. On peut observer les moments où les personnages laissent tomber leur masque grâce à des projections en forme de boîtes qui les montrent seuls dans différentes pièces de la maison. C'est lorsqu'ils sont seuls qu'ils peuvent finalement abandonner leur sourire et laisser paraître leurs véritables émotions. Cette technique permet au public de mieux voir à travers leur facette extérieure et de mieux comprendre ce qu'ils cachent, mais d'une façon plus subtile que de le montrer directement.

Being part of this club, going to see a French play, is an excellent way to immerse ourselves in Québécois culture while also getting to explore downtown Montreal with friends. This play was a great opportunity to challenge myself and improve my French skills because there were a lot of overlapping conversations and expressions that I'm not used to hearing, sometimes spoken with strong Québécois accents.

Also, the lunch conversation afterwards was an important part of the experience. Discussing the play in French allowed me to check my understanding as well as hear different points of views from my classmates. Abigail I. reflected, saying, "Ça m'a fait réfléchir à tout ce qui peut rester caché au sein d'une famille." We were able to share our interpretations of certain scenes or characters while practicing French in a more relaxed environment. These types of experiences demonstrate how RWA encourages students to learn beyond the classroom in real-world settings, without the pressure of grades.



Danny Taillon, *24 poses (portraits) - Théâtre Duceppe,* 2026, https://duceppe.com/24-poses-portraits/

A Walk in the Park!

By: Zoe S.



Are you in need of time to take your mind off your struggles? Perhaps a relaxing walk in nature could be the perfect solution? Well, Royal West Academy offers an incredible extracurricular activity just for you! Introducing… power walking! The perfect after-school activity to catch up with your friends, stay active, and enjoy the beautiful nature that surrounds us. Participants gather every Wednesday after school for an hour of peaceful walking on the many paths of the lovely Montréal-Ouest neighborhood.

This extra-curricular activity is offered to all grade levels, so any student can join! Ms. Sadia Di Pietro, ECA coordinator and organizer of power walking, confirms the benefits of this activity, expressing that, "[By] taking a break from the demands of school, students can clear their minds, recharge, and enjoy the fresh air in a relaxed environment." Moreover, this is a very simple and relaxing opportunity to receive a sport or community credit. Yup, it's that easy! All you have to do is show up to eight different walking sessions to get a full credit. Furthermore, ten meetings are hosted, so you are able to miss two afternoons to fit your schedule. I can confirm, having participated for the past three years, that this ECA has allowed me to connect with new friends, has deepened my connection with others, and has been an absolute blast!

In addition, power walking is hosted in not one, but two seasons! The fall season is already in full swing, having started in mid-September—the perfect time to get a breath of fresh air, appreciate the foliage, and admire the unique Halloween decorations. It is fall, after all, and the autumn leaves have reached their most colorful state! If you aren't already signed up for the fall season, spring sessions are also offered. It's the best time to marvel at the vivid flowers, feel the brisk air grow warm, and attempt to spot a small critter emerging from the wild.

I haven't even mentioned the best part yet! A free treat is offered during the last session, either a small dessert at Lafrenaie or a cold treat, to reward you for your dedication and hard work. If that hasn't convinced you, I don't know what will! Make sure to keep a lookout for the spring sign-up sheet posted between March and April. I hope to see you there!

The Journey no Photograph Could Capture

By: Sparsh S.

The end of September is when the warm autumn colors are in full bloom, from the bright hues of yellow and orange streaking the trees to the darker shades of red and brown covering the ground. As for us Royal West Academy students, this was the backdrop of our canoe-camping trip. From September 27–29, thirty-one students from Secondary IV and V (myself included) accompanied by three teachers, had the opportunity to visit La Mauricie National Park.

From the moment we arrived, we were greeted by beautiful scenery that was both refreshing and energizing. Being fully disconnected from the internet allowed us to soak in the beauty of the hills and the lake beside our campsite. The sunny weather was just warm enough to give us the freedom to swim in the lake, which many of us chose to do right after setting up our tents. Some students brought their guitars, bringing the campsite to life by playing melodious tunes as we roasted marshmallows around the campfire, below the starry sky. We shared stories, further strengthening the bond between us as schoolmates.



Our second day was filled with adventure. We woke up at the break of dawn and went on a hike, bright and early. This was followed by a scenic canoeing journey that took us until lunchtime, when we stopped at a beautiful beach overlooking a long, narrow stretch of Lake Wapizagonke snaking between rows of tall mountains. The trees were reflected on the water, creating a wavy mirrored image of the natural beauty that our cameras were simply unable to capture.

Although the trip came to an end, we will forever cherish the memories we made and the experiences we had. During the bus ride home, as we re-entered the city, my friend Srijith P. remarked, "Even though we are surrounded by the tall city buildings, I am still seeing the colorful trees, feeling the warmth of the campfire, and, most importantly, remembering the freshness of the air we got to breathe and the time we spent with each other outside of school." Some experiences cannot be described with words or expressed in a painting or picture. After the 3 days we spent at La Mauricie, I believe it's fair to say that this experience is one of them.

From Baking to Giving Back: The Hope Project

By: Sabrina B.

What began as a simple baking program has grown into a school-wide effort to support those in need. Through the Hope Project, students at Royal West Academy are finding ways to give back to their community, from baking treats for homeless people to organizing clothing, food, and hygiene product drives. The initiative began during the 2025–2026 school year when a volunteer from Resilience Montreal contacted our Extra Curricular Activity coordinator, Ms. S. Di Pietro, about involving RWA in a baking program. Seeing an opportunity for our school to become more involved in the community, Ms. Di Pietro introduced Baking for Resilience Montreal as an extracurricular activity. Once a month, students who've signed up to bake goods at home and bring them to school in the morning. A volunteer from Resilience Montreal then picks up the treats and delivers them to the organization's shelter.

Founded in 2019, Resilience Montreal is an Indigenous-led organization that supports unhoused people and vulnerable members of the community, specifically in the Cabot Square area. As well as providing critical services and meeting the daily needs of their patrons, the organization works to prioritize the dignity and well-being of their clients.

According to Ms. Di Pietro, she immediately jumped at the opportunity because, although schools frequently organize drives for necessities like clothing, food, and hygiene products, homeless people deserve to enjoy a sweet treat and something special to look forward to, just like anyone else. The baking program quickly became popular within the school, encouraging Ms. Di Pietro to contact the same volunteer to ask how else the school could help. This led to the beginning of a fall clothing drive that focused on collecting warm clothing items for the winter.

Since the baking was so successful, Ms. Di Pietro and Mr. D. Linton created the Hope Project, a committee within our school with the goal of finding more ways to support people in need. Ms. Di Pietro wanted students to have a voice in the initiative, so that the entire school community could contribute ideas rather than depending exclusively on staff to come up with new projects. Since then, the project has grown larger, beyond its original partnership with Resilience Montreal. Some of these additional initiatives include a hygiene product drive and a food drive helping John Grant High School with their program where students and staff create food baskets out of donated foods for families in need. This school year, the baking program and donation drives will continue, including our upcoming fall clothing drive. Students will also have opportunities to participate in new activities, like a visit as volunteers to Resilience Montreal's new facility.

Participating is simple and accessible. Students interested in volunteering can sign up at school, with Ms. Di Pietro coordinating any details. For these drives, students only need to bring their donations to school in the morning, and they will be taken care of. These programs offer students at RWA a great way to help others while earning ECA credits at the same time.

The Hope Project committee, led by Ms. Di Pietro and Mr. Linton, will continue to meet every two weeks to talk about new projects to help the community and encourage students to share their ideas. From baking at home to contributing ideas for future projects, the Hope Project gives students opportunities to support their community. As the Hope Project continues to grow, so do the possibilities for students at RWA to make an impactful contribution to their community.

More Than Just Art

By: Noa B.

Ms. Christine Suarez has been a beloved art teacher at Royal West Academy since 2012. She was greatly missed last year when she went on sabbatical, but now she's back for her 15th year at RWA and we couldn't be happier. When asked about her feelings on returning to school, Ms. Suarez said she's so excited to be back. As much as she misses her own routine—and not hearing bells ring every hour—she says she really missed the RWA atmosphere, calling the school her second home.

Ms. Suarez has many new project ideas for this school year, but don't fret, for the long-lasting tradition of Artist Trading Cards will still be upheld this year! Artist Trading Cards (ATCs) are a fun way for students to explore their own art style while experimenting with different mediums, styles, and materials.

Ms. Suarez also runs a few extracurricular activities (ECAs), such as Mural Painting for Secondary IV and Secondary V students, as well as Art Crew, so if you're interested in either of these, you should definitely see her about it. She's also hoping to start a new ECA where students make small crafts to sell at the Art Vernissage in May.

Speaking of the Art Show, Secondary V art students, get ready! If you've been in visual arts before then you would remember the booklets we had to complete every year at the Art Vernissage. Well, this year we get to make them ourselves! (As a Secondary V student myself, I am very excited about this!)

According to Ms. Suarez, technique is the foundation to be able to create art. Learning techniques first is the key in order to be creative with your artwork. In Ms. Suarez's words, "I think anyone can be good at art, and I think the first step in becoming really good at art is learning the foundations." Ms. Suarez even compared visual arts to music, saying that, in both art forms, you must learn and practice frequently if you want to get better at it.

If you're a student struggling to decide which art stream you want to go into next year, I implore you to try out visual arts. As a student who has been in visual arts since Secondary II at RWA, I can tell you that I've had the best time in Ms. Suarez's class and I hope other students share the sentiment.

RWA Cross-Country Team Shines at Mount Royal

By: Zoe K.

On October 6, 2026, Royal West Academy's cross county team made their way to Mount Royal Parc to participate in the GMAA Cross Country race. With 543 athletes from 32 different schools, the competition was intense. Nevertheless, the RWA runners rose to the challenge, delivering some impressive results across the Bantam, Cadet and Juvenile age groups.

The Bantam boys' race included 96 athletes, with five RWA students finishing in the top 60! Oisin H. led the group, finishing in 13th position with a time of 11:18. The Bantam girls were equally impressive, competing in a field of 158 runners. Eight girls finished in the top 100, with Lea M. winning the bronze medal with a time of 11:20!

The Cadet boys' race brought another major highlight for the RWA team. Out of 116 competitors, Archi E. claimed gold with a time of 15:29 on the 4km course. He had just a four second lead on second place, beating his opponent in an incredible sprint to the finish line. Lucas B. also had a top ten finish, placing sixth in 16:10. Overall, RWA had six of its nine runners finish in the top 50.

In the Juvenile girls' race, Mikaelle P. earned RWA another podium finish, taking third place with a time of 19:01 on the 4.2km course. Zoe K. followed in fifth place with a time of 21:36. However, the race took an unexpected turn when a course mishap forced many girls to run an extra kilometer. Among this group there were three RWA athletes, Mathilda K., Abigail I. and Brooke L.

These results didn't come from nowhere, reflecting all the hard work and effort the RWA cross country team put in, training two times per week and focusing on building up speed and endurance through hill repeats and interval work. When asked about the team's performance, Ms. D. Hipfner, one of the coaches, mentioned being very proud of everyone's performances and said she wasn't surprised by any of the results, having confidence in the training and effort the runners put in.

Teamwork also played a very important role in the team's preparation. According to Ms. Hipfner and Mr. A. Tetrault, the other coach, training with teammates pushes runners to work harder, run faster and hold each other accountable. Beyond this competition, they hope the athletes continue to lead healthy lifestyles, stay active, and set good examples for their peers.

All of this wouldn't be possible without the wonderful coaches, who pushed all of the runners to work harder, become better athletes and supported them every step of the way.

"Ice" To See You Again!

By: Elodie S.

Why is an extracurricular activity that was dropped during COVID-19 suddenly coming back? If you haven't already heard, Ice Hockey is now officially back at Royal West Academy, and it is all thanks to popular demand!

Last year, our principal, Mr. D. Lee, was approached by many students who were interested in joining a hockey team. He took the request to heart and decided to try to reintroduce this sport. The first thing he needed was a supervisor. He tried to find a staff member who would be willing to take on the responsibility. While Mr. A. Macpherson stepped in to manage the girls' team, there was still a teacher needed for the boys' team. When no one volunteered, Mr. Lee decided to step up. He took the opportunity to learn about hockey (a sport he did not know much about prior to this decision) and become the team's general manager. It is not every day that you see a principal running a sports program, although I'm not surprised to see it at RWA. Our school has a way of making things happen. Even with his loaded schedule, Mr. Lee made time for the students who had been waiting for this opportunity.

"It was good to see the kids out of their academic environment," said Mr. Lee. This extracurricular activity is an example of how, as well as its amazing academic programs, RWA also offers great opportunities outside the classroom. Students get the chance to try new things, build friendships, and represent their school. Mr. Lee also stated that more students joined than he had anticipated, which is a great start for the program's first year back. Thankfully, he has support from head coaches Michael Kholam and Tim Paterson, the latter of whom is in charge of the girls' team alongside Mr. Macpherson and is the parent of a player on the team, and two leadership students. The teams also have a partnership with the Montreal West Hockey Arena, making it easier to hold practices.

It is worth mentioning that not many public schools offer hockey as an extracurricular option. It is quite special that RWA has brought this opportunity back, especially since students showed so much interest in it. Even without a private ice rink or brand-new equipment, the team has the enthusiasm and determination to make the most of this experience. I have faith that the team will have a great season, and I hope every player enjoys themselves.

Bringing back hockey might seem like a small change, but it represents something much bigger. It shows that students' voices matter, and that the staff at RWA are willing to listen to them and take action. It was definitely a *goal-den* decision, and I think we can all agree that RWA has *scored* big with this one!

One Final Shot

By: Abigail I.

The Royal West Academy girls basketball season begins in the coming weeks, and with it comes many high hopes and lots of excitement. After an impressive performance from both the Bantam and Juvenile girls last season (placing third and second, respectively), the players are looking to see if last year's momentum can carry over to this year. This season also brings a new Cadet team, showing just how many students are choosing to participate in the sport. In short, this program is thriving—but it wasn't always like this.

Back in October 2023, a promising group of secondary II girls had been practicing, but as the registration deadline approached, it quickly became apparent that there were no staff available to coach the Bantam girls basketball team. For other age groups, there were simply not enough players that signed up. In fact, despite a flourishing boys basketball program, there was not a single girls team registered that year. However, rather than sitting back, a couple of students stepped up and asked Mr. Robert Aiken to become their coach for the following year. This proved one of the best moves the players ever made, on or off the court—Mr. Aiken agreed with enthusiasm, providing the commitment and support the team needed. Under his coaching, the team flourished, winning eight out of ten games that season before unfortunately losing to Lower Canada College in the playoffs.



For Mr. Aiken, though, it's certainly not just about winning. He says, "the true indicator [of success] is that people want to come back and play because they had a previous positive and fun experience. If on top of that we can win, then fantastic."

This mentality has clearly been reflected through the players, who are always encouraging each other and bonding as a team.

As the buzzer sounded in the Juvenile girls finals last year, the scoreboard read 27-54 for Lower Canada College. However, what those numbers couldn't possibly reflect was the immense amount of growth that has happened since that October day when the players learned they would not have a season. Now, the team begins its final year together. There will undoubtedly be many bittersweet moments as the players think back to all the obstacles they overcame, all the unforgettable memories—the cheers, the buzzer beaters, and even the losses that pushed them to practice a little bit harder.



- Nov. 6 - Grad photos absences
- Nov. 6 - Term I ends
- Nov. 9 - Ped Day
- Nov. 9 - Term 2 begins
- Nov. 9 - Young Women in Aviation
- Nov. 11 - Remembrance Day
- Nov. 13 - Variety Show
- Nov. 16 - 19 - Food Drive

RWA News

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