

IMPT DATES:
12/13—AM1/PM1 Exams
12/14—AM2/PM2 Exams
12/14—Govie Gala
12/15—All day-elective & last required day of 1st semester

RVGS Newsletter



Issue 1
Fall 2023

Counselor Corner

We are approaching the end of first semester, and there is so much to share! In September we held our College Planning meeting for Seniors and Parents and helped students structure their college application process. Our seniors were given the opportunity to participate in the VT early onsite application process and 100% of our students who participated were accepted! Seniors are awaiting the other early admission decisions and continue to work on regular decision applications.

I visited the first-year physics classes and went more in depth on time management and how the role of social media can wreak havoc on their mental health and academic progress. I also met with each first-year student individually to check in and see how they were feeling about being here and what I could do to help support them. I held the first RVGS Determined meetings in in September and October. I discussed goal setting, proactive mental health and impostor syndrome. The December RVGS-Determined topic will be about test taking tips for exams.

As important as learning is, we also manage to have fun at RVGS. In September we held the first Eek-quinox (a fun day created by Mr. Levy) where we served cotton candy and popcorn to students, and the new and improved Lab Rat paid us a visit! We held the Fall Ultimate Frisbee Tournament and raised over \$200 for United WAA. On Halloween we held a costume contest! In December we will be holding our first ever Gingerbread Building Contest with 20 participating teams! We also have RVGS Spirit Week, Penny Wars and the Govie Gala (Winter Wonderland) to finish out the semester. During intersession, we will have a ping pong tournament to help pass the time spend waiting for lab results!

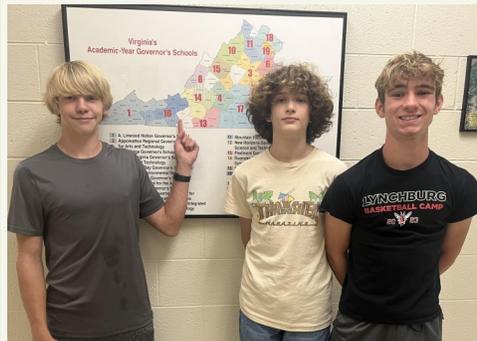
Thank you to all the parents who have contributed to the coffee and snack bar. The students have so appreciated it, as do I! This has been a wonderful semester, and I am looking forward to all the fun and exciting things ahead. Enjoy your winter break, get lots of rest, and stay safe!

As always if you have a question or a concern, please feel free to contact me by phone or email. I am here to help students and parents in any way I can.

Kathy Sebolt

Welcome Back

We were excited to welcome back students to RVGS for the 2023-2024 school year. The first day of school is always a highly anticipated event at RVGS but this year there was a bit of extra excitement in the air. RVGS welcomed 3 students from Floyd County for the first time. We also welcomed back 4 Liberty students after a long absence. RVGS now has students from 8 school systems representing 15 different high schools. We hope that everyone can help us welcome the new students as RVGS continues to grow. There's already lots of activity taking place at RVGS. Students are already busy with field trips, labs, clubs, and meeting with their elective classes. Plans are already underway for student projects for this years Project Forum and students can be found in the morning preparing for the Fall Ultimate Frisbee competition. We are looking forward to another busy and successful year for the RVGS Lab Rats!



Message from Director

We have had a great start to the 2023-24 school year thus far. The students and teachers have collaborated on some excellent work in the classrooms and I'm proud of what they have been able to accomplish thus far. As mentioned in the headline article, we are incredibly excited to be expanding the footprint of students who RVGS is able to serve. Floyd County is the first new school division we have added in several decades, which is something truly special. When you also factor in the return of Liberty High School to our participating high schools, 2023-24 has been quite unique.

We have been happy to continue and extend our support of our RVGS seniors as they prepared for the college application process, by hosting a meeting to help them be well-prepared, providing planning recourses, and encouraging them to meet with Mrs. Sebolt for additional assistance. As we approach the time of students starting to hear back from their early application, I remind seniors and their parents that we are here to provide support for both good and bad news as it comes. If you need help making decisions and learning about various options, be sure to ask.

We always work to try to create a positive and engaging environment for our students, and this year has featured many of our traditional student activities, as well as the introduction of some first time events and experiences that seem likely to join the list of RVGS traditions. Those are well-summarized in the Counselor Corner and elsewhere in the newsletter, so I'll simply say that I'm pleased we are able to provide such a variety of activities for our students. They certainly work hard and deserve to have some fun as well!

As we approach exams, winter break, and Intersession, I encourage parents to stay up to date on correspondences from the school and review email updates from Mr. Levy and Mrs. Sebolt. There was a recent email about end of semester information from Mr. Levy that you should be sure to read. There will be additional information coming soon on other topics so make sure we have an accurate email address on file!

As always, if you have any questions or concerns, don't hesitate to get in touch.

Student Spotlight: *Kathryn Ha*

Kathryn Ha (RVGS/Salem Class of 2025) has earned National recognition and a spot on this year's US team competing in the renowned PING Junior Solheim Cup—one of just a dozen girls in the country to be selected. Kathryn has recently returned from Spain where she competed with and against some of the best teenage golfers in the world. Since returning, she has qualified to represent Salem High School in the State VHSL Golf Championship. Kathryn took a moment from her busy schedule to tell us a bit about herself



How did you get started in golf?



My dad introduced me to golf when I was a toddler. After being the kid to play every sport as a young child, I started taking golf pretty seriously around the age of 12. Up unto now, I have mainly traveled along the east coast to compete with girls through associations such as: The Peggy Kirk Bell Girls' Golf Tour and the American Junior Golf Association.

What do you enjoy doing when you're not on the golf course?

I enjoy volunteering throughout the Roanoke Valley and Salem. This is through the First Tee junior golf program, INTERACT Club, National Honor Society, and Student Council Association (SCA).

Do you find it difficult to juggle your studies with your busy golfing schedule?

My time at RVGS has been amazing because I have made life long friendships and the support system from every teacher, counselor, and faculty has meant even more in recent months.

What are your future plans?

I am very grateful to see my hard work pay off in the form of a verbal commitment to play golf at the University of Virginia.

Thanks Kathryn! Good Luck at States!



Senior Sunrise

One of the most anticipated events for Seniors at RVGS is the Senior Sunrise. This year on October 27th, the Senior class met bright and early to enjoy a sunrise for their final year at RVGS. Students brought blankets and treats to share and Mrs. Sebolt supplied plenty of donuts and juice for everyone. It was a chilly morning but every enjoyed the beautiful sky and being together. The Senior class will be invited back in the Spring for the Senior Sunset to mark the end of their years at RVGS.



Ultimate Frisbee

Ultimate Frisbee has returned to RVGS! The much-anticipated season kicked off with 5 teams representing all grades and home schools. Teams arrived for competition in a variety of strategies and game plans. Some even brought fan bases with banners cheer them on.



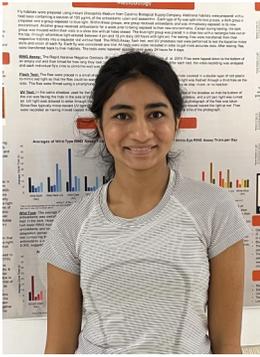
After two weeks of intense competition, the championship was held between “Derivative Destroyers” and “Disc Daddies V3”. The Disc Daddies were able to remain undefeated and be named as Champions of the fall Ultimate Frisbee season. The victors were treated to breakfast



courtesy of Mrs. Sebolt. Entry fees from the tournament were used for a donation of \$225 to the United Way.



Neurosurf :Summer Experience



Diya Reddy recently spent her summer participating in the Neurosurf program at VTCRI. She shared her experience with the program with us.

I first heard about Neurosurf through my biology teacher, Mr. Villers. I asked him if he knew any local research opportunities open for high-schoolers, and he recommended Neurosurf. He pointed me towards two seniors who participated in the program last summer, Eleanor Little and Penelope Smith. After talking with them about their experience, I knew I wanted to apply. The application was simple. I answered two short prompts (approx 500 characters each, so from 50 to 70 words) about why I wanted to do research and why I was interested in translated neurobiology (which I had never even heard of until then). I did need a letter of recommendation, which I asked from Mr. Villers.

A normal day began at 8:30 at the lab. I would start my morning off with filling in my lab notebook of all the experiments I did the day before then I would start prepping for my afternoon experiments, either my making some SDS-page gels or preparing my protein samples. Around 12, we had lectures and talks that I would attend relating to neuroscience and other stem-related fields, that would be taught by the various professionals at FBRI. This lecture would last an hour, and then afterwards I would take a lunch break with some friends I made across the Roanoke Valley who were also involved in Neurosurf. After lunch, my afternoons and evenings were spent running experiments, collecting, and analyzing data. Somedays I would finish by 4 and other days as late as 7.

I would recommend Neurosurf to anyone interested in the biomedical sciences and who want to get experience in research with a professional lab. Participating in this program has made me more interested in getting involved with undergraduate research and will also give me a leg up in more competitive labs because of the experience I have gained.

-Diya Reddy

SOCIAL MEDIA



Want to stay up to date on all the exciting happenings at RVGS? Be sure to following us on Facebook, Instagram and Twitter.

<https://www.facebook.com/RVGSLabRats>

[RVGS LabRats \(@rvgslabrats\) • Instagram photos and videos](#)

RVGS Club: Female Strong

There's a new club at RVGS being led by Mrs. Jenkins. The mission of Female Strong is to give voice to and instill confidence in minority female students. It will provide a safe space for honest discussion about concerns, struggles and triumphs while providing both academic and social support to help realize full potential.



Monthly meetings are held before school in which students can talk freely in a round table discussion format about their daily challenges and triumphs, support each other, and receive support from group leaders and mentors. Additionally, the club will provide inspirational speakers and community support and opportunities outside of school such as STEM-based lectures, field trips (confidence course, college visitations), one-on-one mentoring to help guide participants through life & career journey, and participation in community service projects. They hope to have participants paired up with mentors by second semester.

Female Strong held their first meeting on Thursday, Sept. 14 and have their next one scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 12. Meetings are before school in the conference room.

RVGS Clubs and Activities

There is a wide **variety** of **clubs** and activities available for students to join at RVGS. Clubs and activities are a great way to find where you belong in your high school social community and to find your niche among students with similar interests and goals. Be sure to check out:

- *Maker's Club
- *Mindful Wednesdays
- *Unified Partners
- *Rat Chat
- *Student Advisory Committee
- *FCA

See Mrs. Sebolt to get the details about any of the clubs you may be interested in joining!



Summer Stem Activities

RVGS students had a busy summer! They spent their time away from RVGS attending summer camps and classes, interning, and volunteering.

Charlie Comer- EMT class and volunteered with Franklin County EMS

Evelyn Anderson-worked in a psychology lab

Su Gustoy- volunteered at Creative Therapy Care with occupational therapist.

Caleb Wang-BLAST camp at Virginia Tech

Elisabeth Tershak-Summer Residential Governors School for Engineering, shadowing at Carilion

Brett Smith-NLP AI camp, life science camp at VT

Diya Reddy-Neurosurf at FBRI Finkielstein lab

Lex Farmer-Virginia Tech Summer Residential program of Agriculture and Life Science

Himangi Tiwari- VCOM SEE Medical Camp

Jack Janiga-BLAST Camp at Virginia Tech

Meera Raichura-internship at Universal Health Corporations

Sachita Baskota-VCOM SEE Medical Camp

Hannah Mizuba-volunteered at Carilion

Sophia Zeng-summer immersion course on cancer medicine, worked as math tutor

Caroline Rehardt-Virginia Space Coast Scholars

Josephine Eaton-CTECH2 Engineering Program at Virginia Tech

Kensington Reynolds-Aviation Maintenance camp at Liberty School of Aeronautics

Mira Maked-Virginia Space Coast Scholars

Carson Ray-Virginia Aerospace Science and Technology Scholars Summer Academy

Courtney Monard- VCOM SEE Medical Camp

Students were also busy with: robotics team, volunteering at area hospitals, Girls Who Code, Alabama Space Camp, and research at BSRL

