

UPCOMING DATES

4/28 Senior Sunset
5/1-11 AP testing
5/3 Interim report
5/8 Senior Dinner
5/12 Last senior day/senior breakfast
5/13 Junior Jump
5/23 AM1/PM1 Exams
5/24 AM2/PM2 Exams

Counselor's Corner

Greetings and Happy Spring! We've been busy here at RVGS. I have met individually now with all first-year students and 11th graders and am working on end-of-the-year activities for seniors. It is hard to believe, but the 5th interim just went out! That means that the end of the year is quickly heading our way and there are many exciting (and sometimes stressful) things ahead. Although Project Forum has passed, the stress level for many is still high. Some seniors are still waiting for the last of the college admissions decisions to come in as well as for all their financial aid packages. Teachers are starting to prepare students for the upcoming AP exams, and spring sports are in full swing. Those things can certainly be stressful, but we've already started adding in some fun to counter it all. We're finishing up our spring ping-pong tournament and annual bookfair. We have our spring Ultimate Frisbee tournament scheduled for the week of April 24th. Players will be asked to donate \$5 or 5 canned food items for Feeding America.

As for our seniors...they have divided themselves into groups to work on numerous senior activities including creating a senior tee-shirt, a senior yearbook and a senior video. We are going to hold our 2nd annual Senior Sunset on Friday, April 28th at 7:00 pm. Senior Dinner takes place on Monday, May 8th at the Hotel Roanoke. Invitations will go out after spring breaks conclude. Senior breakfast will take place here at RVGS on Friday, May 12th and this will be the last senior day!

With all the things going on, it's important to remember to make sure students are taking care of themselves. They should be getting plenty of rest, reviewing study skills, and enjoying the fun things in between the stressful ones

-Kathy Sebott

RVGS Newsletter



Issue 3
March 2023

Hoffman Forum

The inaugural Hoffman Forum was presented on March 21st at Fishburn Mansion. Nine students participating in 5 different projects were celebrated for their ingenuity and creativity as the first RVGS Hoffman Fellows. The Hoffman Forum Fellowship Program is a selective program for self-motivated 10th and 11th graders interested in pursuing any topic in-depth. Students are given the chance to explore an idea or to focus on developing a specialized talent outside of their science project and elective class. All projects had to include a service component. Students could work with an RVGS faculty mentor or another mentor in the community. Students were encouraged to pick a topic that they felt passionate about and were limited only by their imagination.



The Hoffman Forum program was made possible by a generous donation by RVGS alumni Sachith Gullapalli (RVGS 2013). RVGS students have a wide range of diverse interests outside of the typical classroom and no one knows this better than our alumni. Sachith wanted to encourage those interests with the development of a new program at RVGS that would support and fund students to pursue work they are passionate about outside of common structures like science fairs. After working with Mr. Levy to create the program, it was decided to dedicate it to one of Sachith's own RVGS mentors, Mr. Fred Hoffman. With the original donation and additional community support, RVGS hopes to continue the Hoffman Forum Fellows program for many years to come.

Message from the Director

Due to an unfortunate oversight following spring break, this RVGS Newsletter has been "on the shelf" since mid-March. For that reason several recent activities are not featured and will be covered in the newsletter coming for May release..

Rather than use this space for its typical purpose, I would like to instead highlight our recent award winners at the Virginia State Science and Engineering Fair:

Emma Baldwin: Second Place, Microbiology
Hannah Mizuba: Third Place, Plant Sciences
Heidi Thompson and Evelyn Anderson: Honorable Mention, Material Science and Sustainable Energy Design and Second Place, Virginia Section of the American Water Works Association
Carson Ray and Kane Reczek: First Place, Leidos Award for Excellence in Applied Science
Griffin Yakob: Third Place, Leidos Award for Excellence in Computational Science
Sophia Schumaecker: Honorable Mention, Leidos Award for Excellence in Applied Science
Aidan Mayhue and Seth Richards: First Place, Virginia Section of the American Water Works Association

Project Forum

The biggest event of the year at Roanoke Valley Governor's School is always Project Forum and this year's event marked our first in-person event since 2019. On February 4th, projects from 245 students and 7 school districts were presented to be judged and then open to the public for viewing.

Freshmen developed their research skills by conducting research on how different substances can affect *Daphnia magna*, seed germination, and *E.coli*. Students experimented with chemicals commonly found in energy drinks, essential oils, and environmental hazards just to name a few.

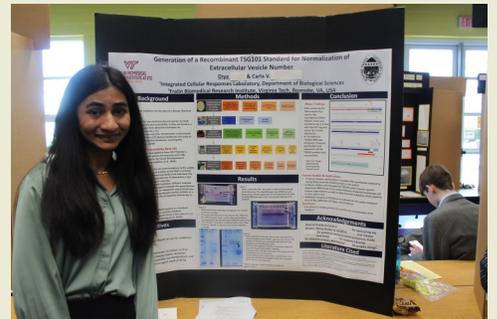
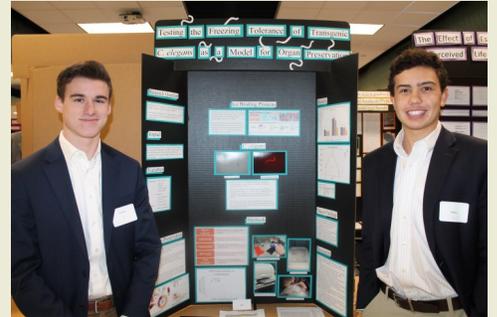
The more experienced researchers were able to focus their time on even more innovative projects in a variety of categories including chemistry, engineering, and biotech.

While most students conducted research at RVGS, some students took advantage of mentorships at area laboratories such as VTCRI and Virginia Tech. Winning projects can compete at several area science fairs including Roanoke County, Roanoke City, Central Virginia Regional and the Western Virginia Regional science fairs. The RVGS Lab Rats also showcased their talents outside the classroom with an art show.

A wide variety of art was showcased including pottery, woodworking,

watercolor paintings, and upcycled bags. Project Forum also marked the end of the "official" Annual Appeal fundraiser. This year, we raised over \$36,000 to support instruction and supplies at RVGS. In addition to supporting the purchase of supplies and equipment for student research projects, the Annual Appeal pays for Project Forum awards, supports student activities and contributes to ISEF travel expenses. A special thank you to all the families, friends, and community supporters of RVGS who made this possible.

Project Forum's overwhelming success was due to the incredibly hard work of the many judges, volunteers and of course RVGS faculty. Thanks to all who donated their time and expertise.



Be sure to follow us on Facebook
(www.facebook.com/RVGSLabRats)
and Instagram (@rvgslabrats)



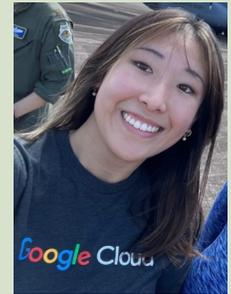
Find us on:
facebook®



Instagram

Alumni Spotlight: Yunyun Wang (RVGS/HV 2016)

I completed a dual degree program in Information Systems Engineering and Government/ Political Science at Cornell University. I am currently a Cloud PM at Google, within the Federal/ National Security team. In this role, I lead engineering teams building AI solutions for our US Armed Forces, predominantly the Air Force and Navy.



Growing up in Southern VA, we had a lot of family friends who were veterans, and I always felt a deep sense of respect for our service members. I was interested in politics and public service, but also wanted to pursue engineering. I tried 6 different majors in college spanning biomedical engineering to philosophy before I found the right combination, which eventually also led to my role at Google.

RVGS was especially pivotal in my current career because it showed me how scientific innovation is tightly coupled with government policy, as well as the importance of public investment in STEM education. In my senior year, I attended the JSHS National Science Fair, as part of the Virginia Delegation after being selected to represent VA in the state fair. It was an exciting opportunity and the week-long experience helped forge friendships with fellow scientists and technologists who I still keep up with today. Some of the science fair participants with the coolest and most advanced research questions were representing military bases abroad in Europe and Asia and are the children of civilian scientists working in research labs. Most recently, during a work trip to Pearl Harbor, I was able to reconnect with the Germany Delegate who is now a researcher based in Hawaii.

RVGS provided me with so many incredible experiences and fostered a curiosity for knowledge and learning that not only helped me adapt to the rigor of Cornell, but gave me the courage to chart my own path based on my evolving interests. I'm grateful for having been a student there and that RVGS continues to educate so many future scientists from Roanoke!

Western Virginia Regional Science Fair

The 70th Annual Western Virginia Regional Science Fair took place on March 11th at Roanoke College. The fair was open to students from RVGS, Roanoke City and Roanoke County. Along with awards for each category, students were able to win special awards from companies and organizations such as: the US Air Force Award, Regeneron Biomedical Science Award and NASA Earth System Science Award. Event host Roanoke College awarded \$1500 scholarships to one project from each high school and \$3000 scholarships to grand award winners. RVGS Foundation, VT College of Science and VT Center for Enhancement of Engineering Diversity were all Grand Award sponsors. AEP Foundation was the Presenting Sponsor.

Thanks to the support of AEP and the Grand Award Sponsors, Claire Wei (RVGS/CS) won a Grand Award and an all-expense paid trip to compete in the International Science and Engineering Fair (ISEF) in Dallas. All first-place category winners can advance to the Virginia State Science and Engineering Fair on April 15th at Old Dominion University. Be sure to share your congratulations and good luck to Claire Wei as she competes at ISEF!



Behind the Scenes of Intercession

