

River Grove School

Royal Revolution

Winter '24-'25 



Meeting the Needs of All RGS Students

Hello River Grove Community! It is my privilege to highlight River Grove School, a true “community school” in the heart of River Grove! RGS is a diverse school with approximately 700 students, where English, Spanish, Polish and Ukrainian are the top languages spoken in homes. In order to ensure RGS is a high quality learning environment that responds to the needs of all of our students and our community, the Board has created a Long Range Strategic Plan, to serve as the roadmap for the District. The RGS Vision is to prepare students for success in life. The Mission is to provide a comprehensive and high quality education for all students. Strategic Plan Goal 1 focuses on Student Growth and Achievement, specifically to increase student achievement and ensure all students grow academically.

In order to meet the needs of all students, RGS is committed to both supporting students who require extra help to meet grade level expectations and enriching students who are ready for advanced learning. We are proud to offer many opportunities for students through our curriculum and learning programs, specialized courses and extracurricular activities. Please see the graphic with examples of some of the opportunities we provide for our students.

	SUPPORT	ENRICH
CURRICULUM	Differentiated resources are included with K-8 content area curricular programs	Enrichment lessons are embedded in K-8 content area curricular programs
I-READY PERSONALIZED LEARNING	Provides “just right” levels of K-8 reading and math instruction to fill learning gaps	Provides advanced levels of K-8 reading and math instruction to extend learning
COURSES	K-8 co-taught classes are taught by a general education teacher along with a special education and/or English Learner specialist, allowing for multiple levels of instruction simultaneously	Advanced placement courses are available to 6th-8th graders who demonstrate a need for acceleration in reading, writing, and math
WHAT I NEED (WIN) PERIODS	Provide time for K-8 reading and math intervention taught by specialists and for teachers to work with students in small groups to strengthen skills	Provide time for enriching learning through small group lessons led by K-8 teachers or independent activities
EXTRACURRICULAR PROGRAMMING	K-8 Summer Learning Program 3-8 English Learner Academic Support 5-8 Learning Lab	K-8 After-School Clubs 6-8 Newspaper Club 6-8 Math Team 6-8 Scholastic Bowl

As you can see, RGS is always striving to improve the educational environment and opportunities for River Grove children and families. It is truly an amazing place to be! To keep updated on the happenings at RGS, please visit our website at www.rivergroveschool.org, follow us on **Instagram (rgs.855)** or **Facebook by searching “River Grove School District 85.5**. Our **Twitter** feed is easily viewed on the main page of the website. Please follow us **@rivergrove85_5, #rgroyals, #WeAreRG**. Past newspapers are digitally linked on the website as well.

I wish the entire River Grove Community a Happy Holiday and a safe, happy and healthy New Year!

Sincerely,

Dr. Jan Rashid

Message from Our Principal

Hello RGS Community! It is my pleasure to share updates from River Grove School with you.

We have a talented teaching and support staff who are dedicated to providing quality learning experiences for our students. One area of particular focus for us over the last couple of years has been working together to make improvements to our master schedule. As a result, we have been able to increase the opportunity for targeted, personalized learning for students. And, we have further developed and strengthened our teaching teams, providing additional opportunities for collaboration and implementing co-teaching practices throughout the school day.

RGS teachers work in teams to improve the academic achievement of all students. Together, teams discuss the important standards and skills our students must learn to be successful, share effective instructional strategies, analyze student work samples, and create assessments to determine where students are in their learning. Student learning is positively impacted by our teaching team structures and co-teaching practices.

One structure we utilize to meet all students’ needs is What I Need (WIN) periods. All students in grades K-8 have thirty minutes built into their school day where depending on individual needs, they *may*:

- receive on grade level instruction and practice grade level skills
- receive targeted support or intervention to fill in learning gaps in reading, writing, or math
- are given enrichment opportunities to extend learning opportunities on above grade level skills and standards

Our teaching and learning practices are making a difference. A majority of students are demonstrating expected and accelerated growth on local benchmark assessments, such as the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) test administered in both reading and math. Additionally, we are seeing steady increases in the number of students who are demonstrating proficiency on grade level standards in reading, writing, and math as measured on the Illinois Assessment of Readiness (IAR). We are proud to share news of our students’ academic growth and achievements with you.

River Grove School is truly a special place, and I am honored to continue to serve as principal. I wish you all a joyous holiday season and a wonderful new year!

All my best,
Christine Trujillo

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Follow River Grove School on Social Media

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Foundations Fundraiser

The River Grove Foundation Fundraiser was held on Friday, October 18th at the Moose River Park Lodge 2578. This dinner and night of fun helped fund the mission of the Foundation which directly supports teachers and students. For example, all the overhead projectors and document cameras in classrooms were purchased with funds from the River Grove School Foundation. In addition to this technology, the Foundation has purchased iPads, technology programs, and magazine subscriptions to enhance student learning.

To help make this event a success, teachers, community members, and local businesses donated gift baskets, parties, and their time to be auctioned off. Auction prizes included pizza parties, book baskets, movie night baskets, and even principal for the day! Frank, a member of the Moose Lodge, was the lucky "Principal for a Day" winner and worked with Mrs. Trujillo, our school principal for a day. He



toured classrooms, met students, and ended his day with a Thanksgiving celebration with the River Grove faculty and staff.



Mrs. Williams, sixth grade math teacher and foundations volunteer said, "The Fundraiser was a memorable evening; a great opportunity for families, staff and community members of River Grove to come together and generate support for enriching activities at our school. It was fun to meet other members of River Grove whom had never met before!"

Halloween Parade

Every Halloween, RGS holds a Halloween parade during school hours for grades K-5. Students get to dress up in their costumes, walk through the gym, and continue their walk outside. This is always a fun experience for both students in K-5 and 6-8. The 6th-8th graders sit in the bleachers and watch the K-5 students as they walk through the gym. K-5 then goes outside and walks around the block. Even some of the staff decided to wear their costumes! Our principal, superintendent, and student services coordinator had rock-paper-scissors costumes, with each of them dressed as one of the problem solving items. Some of the popular costumes worn by K-5 students included Spiderman, Scream, and various soccer players. The most loved costume was the BIG baby. Parents and other community members were able to sit outside and watch the K-5 students walk in their cool costumes! If you missed it this year, I encourage you to come next year to see students and staff in their creative costumes!



Antony Figueroa

Junior High Fall Dance

The River Grove School PTA organizes many seasonal events for students. Students who attended the Junior High Fall Dance thought it was amazing, from the music and various decorations to the concessions and open gym with access to the blacktop. The students even brought their costumes, which showcased a lot of creativity. Junior High students want to express their gratitude to the PTA for

their generosity in giving each student who attended a ticket for a free slice of pizza and one free drink. We also want to thank all the parents who volunteered to help run the dance. As they left the dance, Junior High students were excited about the next dance to come.

Giovanni Diaz



Thank You To Our Board of Education



Behind the Newspaper



The Royal Revolution Newspaper Club stands out as a shining example of collaborative storytelling and youthful creativity. Led by teachers Mrs. Sparano and Mrs. Schar, this group of students from 6th, 7th, and 8th grades came together weekly to create compelling articles. From brainstorming innovative article ideas to conducting interviews, these young journalists learned important communication and teamwork skills while strengthening their writing abilities. Their commitment to sharing stories, exploring ideas, and giving voice to their school community transforms the Royal Revolution from a simple school newspaper into a powerful platform for student voices and expression.

Newspaper Club members:

6th grade: Anthony Figueroa, Samantha Torres, Sophia Ramirez, Ximena Cruz

7th grade: Alexandre Cruz, Julia Bielamin, Maya Nowakowski, Sara Pawlik, Veronika Kovalenko

8th grade: Sofi Vargas, Giovanni Diaz

McTeacher's Night

River Grove School had the opportunity to take part in a McTeacher's Night fundraising event. This unique evening allows our school to collect funds for various programs. McDonald's contributes a portion of the sales generated during the event back to our school. The best part is that the teachers get to work at McDonald's for the night! Families get to see their teachers take on a new role! Students and staff really enjoyed themselves. Mrs. Hailand, who volunteered for the event, said, "I had a blast raising money for RGS! What a great turnout!"



Meet Our New Teachers



Ms. Korleski, Ms. Arabic, Ms. Ridge, Ms. Serpico, Ms. Shrader, Ms. Peterson

River Grove School is starting the school year strong, with six new amazing teachers! We are excited to welcome these new teachers because they bring fresh ideas and different activities to our school! We sat down with each teacher individually to learn more about their backgrounds.

Julia Bielanin & Maya Nowakowski

Ms. Korleski

Q: Have you always wanted to be a teacher?

A: Yes, I never dreamed of doing any other job.

Q: Why did you decide to teach kindergarten?

A: I like teaching young children so they learn to love school at a young age.

Q: What do you love about teaching?

A: I love seeing the pride the students feel when they learn and get the questions right. Their big smiles make me the happiest!

Q: How do you motivate your students?

A: By making learning fun and exciting. Telling jokes makes learning enjoyable. I try telling them the wrong answer to see if they are listening.

Ms. Arabic

Q: Have you always wanted to be a teacher?

A: Yes, I have. Even when I was younger, I would play teacher with my younger brother.

Q: Why did you decide to teach 5th grade?

A: I like teaching the older elementary students. I think that the kids are starting to mature while still growing.

Q: What do you love about teaching?

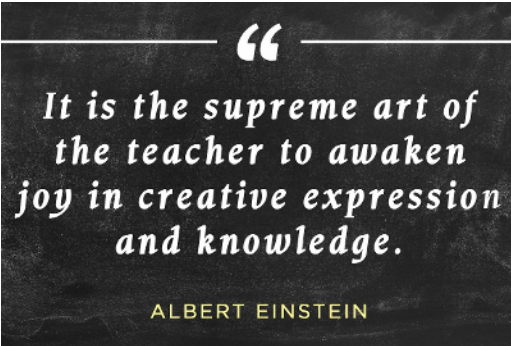
A: I love seeing the kids smile and meeting new students. I also enjoy when they tell me exciting news in their lives, because this means they trust me.

Q: How do you motivate your students?

A: I tell them it is important to take ownership of their learning and to make it fun.

Q: How do you help students engage in their learning?

A: I like to have them work in groups and with partners. I also like to try different activities to see what works best for them.



Ms. Ridge

- Q: Have you always wanted to be a teacher?
A: Yes.
- Q: Why did you decide to teach 5th grade?
A: I like to teach 5th grade because I enjoy this age group; we can have more conversations.
- Q: What do you love about teaching?
A: I love how rewarding teaching is and seeing kids learn.
- Q: How do you motivate your students?
A: I like to play music and pass out candy.
- Q: How do you help students engage in their learning?
A: I use fun activities and videos that relate to the topic and let them share their ideas.

Ms. Serpico

- Q: Have you always wanted to teach?
A: Yes, ever since 1st grade.
- Q: How long have you been teaching?
A: This is my 5th year teaching.
- Q: What do you love about teaching?
A: Watching kids learn things that they will use forever.
- Q: How do you motivate your students?
A: With positive encouragement and stickers.
- Q: Do you have an example of an activity your students love?
A: Alphabet crafts!

Ms. Shrader

- Q: How long have you been teaching?
A: This is my 1st year teaching.
- Q: What do you love about teaching?
A: I love my students' creativity.
- Q: How do you motivate your students?
A: I provide enjoyable material and encouraging comments.
- Q: Do you have an example of an activity your students love?
A: My students love the "Share Bear" activity, crafts, and sharing time.

Ms. Peterson

- Q: Have you always wanted to be a teacher?
A: No, I used to want to be a crime scene investigator.
- Q: Why did you decide to teach 4th grade?
A: I like teaching kids who are a little bit older.
- Q: What do you love about teaching?
A: I love watching kids grow and make progress.
- Q: How do you motivate your students?
A: By encouraging them and giving them positive feedback.
- Q: How do you help students engage in their learning?
A: By giving them real-life scenarios and showing them why it is important to learn.



Crazy Christmas

There are lots of things to think about during Christmas, like guest lists and decorations. But all of that might double or triple if you have a big family. With all this on my plate, plus other responsibilities, I'm in really bad shape. When I heard my Mami and Papi tell me that my Tios and Tias from Mexico were coming to our tiny house for a week, I was not happy. All I wanted was a peaceful Christmas with my parents and a few cousins, not a whole household of them!

Luggage and clothes in messy piles were all over the house, and the noise was so loud I couldn't hear a megaphone close to my ear. The smell of Mexican food filled the air around my house, as I tried to not get distracted from the most important thing on my mind: the Hockey Contest this weekend. My cousin Lucas seemed to understand the trouble I was going through, but he didn't seem fazed by it.

"How can you be fine with this?" I asked him, my voice loud enough for him to hear amid all the chaos.

"You gotta let go of that contest, JJ. You can't let that ruin your Christmas." Lucas said. I just rolled my eyes at him and walked into my room. Of course, Lucas wouldn't understand; he's never worked so hard to master scoring a puck so hard that your hands start getting callused.

Annoyed by all the chaos, I took my phone, bulky headphones, and hockey supplies down to the basement, a place where there was finally some peace and quiet. As I put on my music, all the noise just seemed to fade away, and my music was the only thing in my ear as I scored goal after goal.

Just then, as I dialed my music down, I saw my baby cousin, Camilla, walking towards me as far as her tiny legs could take her. She stumbled on the couch as she looked at me with a toothless smile. I smiled back at her, but she was busy admiring my jersey. It was navy blue with my favorite hockey player, JJ Moser, with his number 90 below it in big, bold letters. She pointed to it and said her first word: "JJ."

I picked her up with excitement and told her to say it again, which she did. With tears of joy in my eyes, I ran upstairs and shouted, "Camilla said my name!"

"What are you talking about, JJ?" Tia Victoria asked in a disbelieving tone. "She's 3! She's too stubborn to talk."

"Aww, mi amor, give her a chance." Tio Ruben said, pulling her close with one arm. "She might have."

Tio Victoria smiled at him and replied, "Bueno, bueno! I'll see for myself."

Just then, Camilla started repeating "JJ!" over and over. Tia Victoria started praying in Spanish while Tio Ruben took his daughter and tossed her in the air. Camilla was giggling as my family praised her. I remembered what that was like, when I first told my family I made the tryouts for Hockey, even though they didn't know what it was, they praised me for it, like they did with Camilla. That was when I realized maybe this Christmas wouldn't be as bad as I thought, and maybe this was the Christmas I was dreaming about all along. Feliz Navidad!



Sofi Vargas

Movie Review: *The Peanuts Movie*



Charlie Brown thinks that he is one big failure, but a new girl has moved in across the street. Charlie falls in love with this girl, but he worries that all his mistakes in life will keep her from talking to him. He decides to get some advice from his friend Lucy, and she tells him that a girl likes someone with accomplishments and who is confident, so that's what Charlie decides to work toward. He joins in on a talent show run by the school, but before he can perform his act, he decides to help his sister, who isn't getting any attention. This decision ends up with him becoming fully humiliated. He then participates in a dance competition at the school dance. Just as he is about to finish his competition-winning dance, he trips and causes the school sprinklers to go off, humiliating himself again. However, he gets one final chance to prove himself to the new girl, he gets partnered with her for a book report but she is out of town for a couple days. So, Charlie decides that he could do it for both of them. He spends days working on it, but it ultimately gets destroyed by his friend Linus' model airplane. Charlie now feels hopeless. I loved this movie because I originally just loved Charlie Brown and the Peanuts series. I love the animation and I think that Snoopy is a really funny character. I think that it would be really fun for you to watch this movie and a great movie to watch with family and friends. This movie can be viewed on HBO Max, Hulu, Sling TV, Amazon Prime, Youtube TV, and Apple TV.

Anthony Figueroa

Book Review: *Paper Things* by Jennifer Jacobson

Ari isn't getting the life she wishes to have. She and her brother, Gage, made a promise to their mother that they would always stick together. So Ari chose to go with Gage, but what Ari didn't know is that Gage didn't have anywhere for them to stay. They both are switching from roof to roof, from shelter to shelter, which starts to bring down Ari's grades and causes her to fall behind on her schoolwork. All of this is also starting to make her lose friends. Ari ends up having to make a very difficult decision. Ari had to go through all of this at the age of 11, while Gage was only 19. Ari was a very brave girl, and her brother was doing his best. Gage believed that he would be able to take care of Ari while being homeless. This book had many surprises at the end that just blew my mind. I think that this is one of the best books I've ever read, and it could be your favorite, too. This book offers a great perspective on homelessness. I believe that this book is not read enough, and you should give it a try! What do you think Ari's difficult decision will be?



Anthony Figueroa

Movie Recommendations

Are you looking to relax and cozy up at home during this cold weather? We have some festive movies that you might choose to enjoy:

- *The Grinch*
- *Home Alone*
- *The Christmas Carol*
- *The Nightmare Before Christmas*



Not feeling festive? Or are you looking to get out of the house? Check out these movies at the theater!

- *Moana 2*
- *Wicked*
- *Sonic the Hedgehog 3*
- *Mufasa: The Lion King*

Alumni: Where Are They Now?



Laura Wasowicz, Class of 1975

High School: East Leyden High School

What did you do after high school? I attended and graduated from Rockford College (now Rockford University) in 1983; I majored in History and minored in Latin. I received an M.A. in Library Science from the University of Chicago with an emphasis in the History of the Book in 1986. I received an M.A. in History from Clark University in 1994. In 1987 I moved to Massachusetts where I joined the staff of the American Antiquarian Society (an independent research library that preserves American books, pamphlets, newspapers and visual images

produced between 1640 and 1900). I catalog the AAS collection of historical American children's literature (30,000 volumes and growing) and since 2004 have been Curator of Children's Literature. Besides cataloging, I help researchers to use the AAS Children's Literature Collection, buy books for the collection, give presentations about the collection, and publish on aspects of historical children's books in publications including *Radiant with Color & Art: McLoughlin Brothers and the Business of Picture Books* (2017).

Can you share a memory from your time as a student at River Grove School? Several memories come to mind: the close-knit classroom experience of second grade with Miss Coleman in the portable building (like a one-room schoolhouse!); Tom Reader's seventh grade social studies class where he made history come alive with his gifted storytelling and folksy humor; the gentle kindness of music teacher Virginia Munson.

How did River Grove shape your future and lead you to your accomplishments? Chelsea Peters (fifth grade), Leo Alt (sixth grade), and Tom Reader (seventh and eighth grade) brought historically infused perspectives to their teaching of social studies, and they challenged me to think historically when trying to understand current events at large and to make sense of my own social environment as a young person. Their teaching inspired me to make the choices I did in pursuing special collections librarianship.

Steven Marecek, Class of 2017

Life After RGS: After graduating from East Leyden High School, I worked at my dad's company and did an apprenticeship. I didn't find a passion, so I went into the automotive field. Currently, I'm attending Triton College in their automotive technology program while working for Mercedes Benz.

How did River Grove shape your future? An accomplishment is attending ISYM (Illinois Summer Youth Music @ University of Illinois-Champaign), and completing the program for the week. Turns out that after the program(the week), I didn't want to go back home. It shaped me in the sway of being attentive to whatever I'm doing. How to be on time, and how to have fun.

JOSH WALTER, CLASS OF 2021

High School: East Leyden High School. studying Business or Marketing and planning to attend DePaul University

Memory From River Grove School: During 8th grade year, when we did the 8th grade activities before graduation. I'm thankful for all teachers at River Grove and East Leyden High School for making me successful. My advice to students is "Work hard with something you like and even if there's challenging times-don't give up."

CASSANDRA CASTELLANOS, CLASS OF 2022

High School: West Leyden High School: I am technically still considered a high school student , but I attend school full time at Triton College, since I got accepted into the dual credit program. Through this program. I am able to graduate my senior year of high school with my high school diploma along with my associates degree.

Memory From River Grove School: I have many special memories of RGS, my favorite being science class with Ms.Sparano. After class we would sometimes chat about a show called "This is Us". At the time we were both watching it. Some other fun memories I have were in P.E with Mrs.O'Connell, in 8th grade math class with Mrs. Evangelinos, being on the cheerleading team, and of course recess! :)

How did River Grove shape your future? During my last year at River Grove, I worked really hard and almost got straight A's. For the first time I saw my name under the high honor role category! I proved to myself that with dedication, one can accomplish anything. During my River Grove years, I also learned that one needs to choose their friend group wisely. "Tell me who you hang around with and I'll tell me who you are." I had a friend during this time that constantly got great grades. She was even in AP classes. Lastly, being in Mrs.Gbur's English class helped me. She motivated me to do the same!

ALEX KAMUDA, CLASS OF 2023

High School: East Leyden High School

Memory From River Grove School: Creating bonds with my teachers was always something so important to me. My best memories are the ones where I got to talk with my teachers whether it was school related or not.

How did River Grove shape your future? Because of RGS, I realized I wanted to become a teacher.

KATHY CHILINSKI, CLASS OF 2024

High School: East Leyden High School

Memory From River Grove School: Being in Scholastic Bowl all three years was such a fun time. Even if we lost, there was always lots of laughter. The tournaments were always fun ranging anywhere from the stack of pizza tables to the crazy amounts of food we brought each other.

Getting to School Safely

Students come to school every day and each student gets to school in a different way. Some students walk, while others take the bus, drive in a car or even ride their bikes. No matter how you get to school, it is important to travel safely. Here are a few safety tips to consider.

Walking To School

Some students walk to school. The first safety tip for walkers is to always walk on the sidewalk. Don't jay walk which means you should always use the crosswalk. If there is a crossing guard present, cross with the crossing guard. If you see someone you don't know trying to follow you, you should find a trusted adult.

Taking the Bus

Some students take the school bus to school. Each year students are taught about bus safety. All students must stay seated with legs out of the aisle in case of an emergency or accident on the back of the bus and the bus driver has to get back there. If students don't follow this rule, the bus driver might trip or take a long time to help a student. Students need to keep the volume down or not shout out loud to kids across the bus. Again, this is in case of an emergency because the bus driver may have to take a call or help a student in an accident. Lastly whenever you get off the bus, always thank

the bus driver because the bus driver has to deal with all the noise the kids make on the bus.

Driving

If someone drives you to school, be sure to follow the drop off route. Once you get out of the car you have to go straight to your line on the blacktop. If you need help or have a question, don't ask a stranger instead you should ask a school supervisor.

Riding Your Bike

If you ride a bike, here are some examples to help you be safe. If you ride a bike to school, you should never go on the street nor go in alleys. Just like walkers, when you cross the street on your bike, you should always cross on a crosswalk. When you are about to cross the street, always make sure cars notice you on your bike. It is important to look both ways and even behind you when you cross the street.

Samantha Torres



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Honoring & Supporting Our Veterans

Veteran's Memorial



On Monday, November 11, 2024, the town of River Grove showcased its appreciation and honor for all the veterans with a veterans memorial located at Indian Boundary and Grand Avenue in River Grove. The veterans memorial was created to serve as a place of recognition and remembrance for those who have given their lives for this country. The memorial will feature six displays, each dedicated to one of the six branches of the U.S. Armed Forces: the Air Force, Army, Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy, and Space Force. The outside of the memorial will have a bright display honoring the quote, "All gave some, some gave all." The town of River Grove is honored to hold such a memorial for the veterans.



Giovanni Diaz

Hines VA Fisher House

Service learning is a way to extend learning into our community so that students and community members can benefit. Eighth graders recently led a service learning project to collect items for Hines VA Fisher House. Fisher House provides a home



away from home for families who are supporting veterans with serious medical issues who require an extended hospital stay at the Hines VA Hospital. Eighth graders organized a school-wide collection and visited Hines VA Fisher House to bring all the donated items. Thank you to all the RGS families that participated in this service project. The families of Hines VA Fisher House greatly benefited from your generosity.

Youth Government

A new government in River Grove: a Youth Government! On November 18, 2024, the youth government assembled for one day for a trip around the River Grove area, followed by a swearing-in ceremony that night. The annual Youth Government consists of elected students from both River Grove and Rhodes School who represent real village officials in River Grove.

Giovanni Diaz



Cultural Food and Traditions of RGS Families

River Grove School welcomes lots of kids from different cultures. In fact, there are 26 different languages spoken within the homes of River Grove students. All cultures are special and have their own unique and traditional clothing styles, music, celebrations and most importantly food! I had the chance to interview some of the kids in my school. They shared some traditions and recipes from African, Polish, Mexican, Puerto Rican, and Arabic cultures. Maybe you would want to try these recipes at your next party with family friends or anywhere.

Ximena Cruz

Cesina

Ryan in sixth grade loves helping his dad make cesina, His favorite part is adding the lemon.

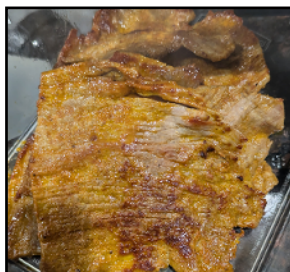
Ingredients

- 1-2 lbs of Cesina meat(marinated), found at most Mexican grocery stores. This meat is very thin almost knife thin(as pictured)
- lime(natural) or lime juice(concentrate) to taste/preference
- adobo seasoning brands vary but usually the smaller brand name the better

Instructions

Place a drizzle of oil in skillet place meat and season with adobo and lime. Brown/cook to preference. Turn over and repeat. This meat is very thin and should take a minute or two. See pictures of meat, it will have a non-red color before cooking and during cooking and also when it is finished.

*Recipe shared by Jose Holguin
(Father of Ryan Holguin)*



Chapti

Elijah Njuguna shared his favorite Kenyan recipe for Chapati. He helps roll out the dough into circular shapes and puts oil on the pan. Elijah's favorite part is eating the soft bread.

Ingredients

- 2½ cups all-purpose flour
- 1 tsp salt
- 1 tbsp sugar
- 3-5 tbsp oil
- 1¼ cup warm water
- Additional ghee, butter, or oil for cooking

Instructions

- **Dough Preparation:**
 - Mix flour, salt, and sugar in a bowl.
 - Rub in oil, then add warm water to form a soft dough.
 - Knead in oil and let the dough rest for 30 minutes. Resting the dough will make it pliable.
- **Shaping Chapati:**
 - Divide dough into six parts and roll into balls.
 - Roll each ball into a 6-7 inch circle.
 - Smear with ghee/butter and fold into a fan shape, then spiral.
 - Allow the shaped dough to rest for 10 minutes.
- **Roasting Chapati:**
 - Heat a griddle and roast each chapati for 1-2 minutes on each side.
 - Smear with oil/ghee while cooking until brown specks appear.
 - For a crispy variety, roast longer over medium heat.
- **Serving:**
 - Best served hot with curry or tea.
 - A soft chapati is ideal for tearing and picking up curry.

Arroz Con Gandules

(Puerto Rican Rice with Pigeon Peas)

Sixth grader, Jaelynn, shared this recipe made by her grandmother. Jaelynn's favorite part is the taste testing!



PREP TIME
5 MIN



COOK TIME
25 MIN



SERVINGS
8



Ingredients

- 1 head garlic, peeled
- 2 medium onions, peeled
- 1 red bell pepper, stemmed and seeded
- 2 green bell peppers, stemmed and seeded
- 2 large tomatoes
- 1 bunch cilantro leaves
- 1/2 bunch fresh parsley leaves
- Ingredients
- Arroz con gandules (Rice with pigeon peas)
- 1 head garlic, peeled
- 2 medium onions, peeled
- 1 red bell pepper, stemmed and seeded
- 2 green bell peppers, stemmed and seeded
- 2 large tomatoes
- 1 bunch cilantro leaves
- 1/2 bunch fresh parsley leaves
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1/3 cup country ham or bacon, diced (optional)
- 1/3 cup sofrito
- 3 cups water chicken broth
- 1 1/2 tsp Goya sazón seasoning packet
- 2 tbsp tomato paste or 1/3 cup tomato sauce
- 1/4 cup fresh cilantro, chopped optional
- pimiento stuffed olives optional
- 15 ounce can Goya Pigeon Peas (Gandules)
- 2 cups rice (pearl rice /short grain)

Instructions

1. Heat your deep pot and cover. Cook on medium heat and add your olive oil, bacon/ham (if using) and sofrito. Stir constantly until fragrant and tender, but not browned, about 4 minutes.
2. Next add in the Sazon and stir to combine.
3. Add in the drained water/broth. Add the cilantro and/or olives, if using. Allow the liquid to come up to a boil, and taste it for salt. If it needs more saltiness, add in another chicken bouillon cube. You want this liquid to be highly seasoned, as it will determine the final seasoning of the rice.
4. Once the mixture is boiling, add the rice. Stir the rice to get it submerged and distribute the pigeon peas throughout.
5. Cover and allow the rice to absorb all the visible liquid. Once most of the visible surface liquid is absorbed, stir the rice, and cover again. Lower the flame to low, and allow it to steam for 20-25 minutes. It's done when all the liquid is absorbed and the grains are fluffy and fully cooked.

Enjoy with a fresh salad and season meat on the side.

We have a saying in Puerto Rico when something is good and we are full of excitement:

WEPA or Que Rico !!!!

*Recipe by Kayla Huertas
(Grandmother of Jaelynn Tedder)*

Other Favorites

Julia Mroz and her mom make Polish borscht with meat dumplings on Christmas Eve.

Sara Jardat loves Arabic grape leaves.

Veronika Kovalenko has a favorite Ukrainian dish called vareniki. Vareniki (va-ren-iki) is one of the many dishes in Ukraine that are served and loved by many. It can be served in different ways like with sour cream, green onions, or fried to get a nice crispy vareniki.

Pierogi are loved by many during the holidays and throughout the year.

And, of course, we love traditional desserts like apple pie and chocolate chip cookies.

Leyden Band Night

At River Grove School there is a long standing band program. The band program includes Pre-Band, Cadet Band, and Concert Band. This program includes 85 students from grades 4 through 8. Each of these groups are conducted by the dedicated band director, Mr. Rudnick

Recently, the River Grove Concert Band was invited to the annual Leyden Band Night. Many middle school bands from the area were also invited. During this event, all middle school students were led by high school band members to practice with everyone. Together they played *You Belong With Me* on the football field. Later that night, band members watched the football game and they ate pizza. Then, at half time it was the big time to perform. All the middle school bands and the high school band joined together to play some of the most popular songs out there.

Looking forward, the band program will have more events this year. Some of the events take place at River Grove School which include the Winter Concert and Spring Concert. On top of these events, there is Music in the Parks which

starts with a performance at a middle school and ends at Six Flags Great America where school bands and choirs receive awards and students get to ride rides. Lastly, at the *solo ensemble and the organizational contests* students will perform and the judges rate their performance and they give suggestions to improve.

I am lucky enough to be part of the River Grove Concert Band and I was able to attend Leyden Band Night. My experience at Leyden was amazing. The band sounded breath-taking and I felt at home. I felt alive and I was proud to be in the River Grove Concert Band. I know the rest of the year is going to be amazing.

Sara Pawlik



Artist Spotlight

Eighth grade student, Martina Prut created this artwork after visiting the Museum of Mexican Art. She was inspired by the hummingbirds seen in artwork featured in the Dia De Los Muertos exhibit. Martina used charcoal and watercolor paint. She also made the flowers three-dimensional by cutting paper-towel tubes and glueing them to her paper. Martina says, "My favorite thing about my artwork is the hummingbird."

Julia Bielani & Maya Nowakowski



Annual Sing & Share

The Sing-n-Share is an annual event hosted at West Leyden High School. It is directed by Choir Director Stacy Cunningham and the students of the East and West Leyden choirs. This annual event took place this past September. The Sing-n-Share brings choirs from different middle schools together to sing and perform their love for music through individual songs from each school. Students from both middle schools and high schools are happy to represent their school's musical talent in song. Students not only perform but are also taught how to apply for choir in high school so they can continue their love of music and choir. During the event, the middle school choirs were taught two songs by the East and West Leyden Choir. Choir students loved singing "We Don't Talk About Bruno" from Encanto and a choral piece called "Clap Your Hands and Sing" by Mary Lynn Lightfoot. The River Grove Choir left an amazing impression at West Leyden, and they are very excited to go again next year.



7th Grade student, Anastasia Badzia, drew a winter picture that was inspired by the holidays and the warm, cozy feeling that we experience.



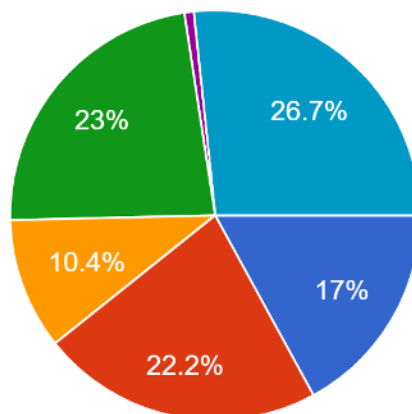
Holiday Jokes

- What do you call an old snowman? **Water**
- How do elves respond when Santa takes attendance? **Present!**
- What do you call Santa when he stops moving? **Santa Pause**
- Why do reindeer like Beyoncé so much? **She sleighs!**
- What did the gingerbread man put on his bed? **A cookie sheet**

Junior high students were asked what activity they were most looking forward to over winter break. The results were so close, but playing video games came in with the most votes!

What activity are you most looking forward to over winter break?

135 responses



- Drinking hot cocoa and watching movies
- Spending extra time with family
- Playing in the snow (if it snows)
- Sleeping in
- Reading
- Playing video games

A Great Boys Softball Season

The boys softball season was a great start to River Grove's year of sports with Mr. Soulias leading the team. Boys softball season ended with four wins across Varsity and Jr. Varsity and placed 6th in the tournament. Mr. Soulias hopes that current players return and play for the Royals. We hope to have another great season next year!



Alexandre Cruz



Girls Softball Season is a Hit

The girls softball team, lead by Mrs. Turocy, had an amazing season with a 9-2 record. They won the blue division, and took 3rd place in the Conference Tournament. As impressive as the team was, only seven girls from junior high tried out including four returning players. For the first time, fifth grade girls tried out and six of them made the team! Two returning 8th graders lead the team. Haliey Palma had 19 hits (including 3 homeruns), and Ava Jamrozek struck out 26 players in 2 games. Mrs. Turocy hopes more players try-out and bring talent to the table.

Alexandre Cruz

Boys Soccer Makes Their Goals

After having 34 boys try out, the boys soccer team ended up with 17 players, 8 of them being returning players. The team had a 1-7-1 record which included beating Rhodes and tying with Rosemont. Although the Rosemont game ended in a tie, it was still impressive because it was the first game of the season and the team only had one 20 minute practice before that game. They had a total of 8 goals scored this season with 3 goals scored by Gabe Nunez followed by Edgar Villegas with 2 goals. Mrs. Turocy hopes to have a strong start for next season and players return to play for the Royals!



Alexandre Cruz

Running Club

Running club is an opportunity for kids to run at recess, runners run once a week during recess. I had the chance to interview a 4th grader, Adrian Ramirez, who participates in running club. Adrian started running club in third grade. He said he likes being with his friends when he runs. He gets over 10 laps every time he runs. Adrian and all the other participants work hard to run. Many of these runners also participate in the Color Run. The Color Run takes place in the beginning of May. Kids come and show off their hard work and they all run across the playground and get sprayed with color. So come in May and help support and spray the younger kids with color.

Sofia Ramirez

Shootin' Hoops with Boys Basketball



The boys' basketball team, led by Ms. Burton, has started. The team has been practicing hard and getting ready for the season. There are 12 players on the Varsity team, with 10 returning from previous seasons. The JV team also has 12 players, with 4 returning from last year. The players have been working hard to learn plays and improve their defense, and they are excited for the upcoming season. We hope to win our division again this year.

Julia Bielanin & Maya Nowakowski

Cheerleading and Poms: Ready...Ok!

This year's cheer season started in December. The group of sixth through eighth grade girls cheer for boy's basketball. The girls with the most experience are the

captains and they call all the cheers during the games. They also cheer at halftime and between quarters. Some favorite cheers are *Rowdie*, *Fired Up*, and *Check Us Out*. The squad is doing an amazing job cheering and adding a lot of enthusiasm to their performances.

Sara Pawlik



Girls Volleyball Net Results

The girls' volleyball team, led by Ms. Ocasio and Mrs. O'Connell, worked hard this season with 12 returning players and 12 new players. Both teams ended the season with 3 wins and 6 losses. It was a great season; players on both teams worked hard and improved their skills. Varsity players Kate Puttin, Bianca Licciardi, and Ava Jamrozek showed great skill and leadership this season. JV players Sofia Moreno and Natalie Winiarski stepped up to leadership roles

on their team. These five players consistently promoted positivity, dedication, and motivation. New player Hailey Ornelas learned the game quickly and became one of the leading servers on her team. All of the players played with great heart and hustle and never gave up.

Veronika Kovalenko





River Grove School Mascot

As you may have seen on our spirit wear or letterhead, River Grove School uses a logo with a bell and our district name. That bell, is the bell from the original River Grove School dating back to 1864. So, we have used that as a logo to represent the long tradition of being a school in the heart of River Grove.

While tradition is important to our community, River Grove School was looking for a student and "team" friendly mascot. As the River Grove Royals, what makes more sense than to have a lion who is the "king of the jungle"?! Now you can see River Grove School represented by both the traditional bell and the lion. #WeAreRG