



HERON NEWS

SPRING
2026



We Went The
Extra Mile

How Far Did
We Go?

Graduation
& Awards

Alumni
News

WE WENT THE EXTRA MILE

"Going the Extra Mile" means staying after school to paint sets for the play, even when you know no one is watching you. This year the teachers pushed us to "go the extra mile" on everything from classroom assignments to cleaning up the school.

The 2026 musical was "Newsies". After weeks rehearsing the songs and running through the dances, we packed our sets and headed over to the theater. Not the usual one, but further down the road to the St. J School's professional-feeling theater space. The tech crew had to learn how to use whole new lighting systems and figure out where everything would go. When the curtain broke during one of the performances, they held it open even when other people offered to help.

During our annual Winter Carnival, we worked together with older students leading the younger students to different activities such as an ice cube hunt and a snow sculpture building contest. Then we pulled each other around in a sled dog race on the soccer field! Or, for those who wanted a greater challenge, our teacher Sean designed a race around the whole campus!

The Riverside library is going digital! Students in the Librarians elective strived to make Riverside better by making the library easier to use.

In the fall several students chose to be in a film elective. We wrote the script at home and went to the costume closet at lunch to put together costumes, using our free time to go the extra mile and make an

entertaining movie.

This year we re-started Riverside's Math Counts club. Seven students, looking to challenge their math skills, stayed after school two times a week to practice. Practice means doing worksheets and playing math games to get ready for a competition.

STEAM Fest, our special day before April vacation, is a chance for those who love science, technology, engineering, art, and mathematics to extend their skills in creative projects. Everyone went above and beyond on their creations.

For this Spring's field trip we crossed the border and went to Montreal. Parents volunteered to drive us. We went to multiple historical sites and enriched our knowledge of Montreal's history.

Next year I know the teachers will have a new idea for us to strive for, but as an 8th grader, I plan to keep going the extra mile and keep encouraging others to do so too.



By Sophia Smith, '27

Winner of the
Lindbergh-Newell
Humanities Award



How Far Did We Go?

Annual Musical - Break a leg, not the curtain



6th grader Kai Hartshorn went the extra mile when he stepped up from the ensemble to fill a major role as "Crutchie," with just two weeks until showtime, and he stole the show with his charismatic and heartfelt performance.

This year, middle schoolers danced the extra mile in the musical "Newsies," about the historical New York newsboy strike of 1899. The stage show is based on the popular 1990s Disney film and features a lot of singing and dancing. Fortunately, Riverside has a group of trained student dancers who took on the extra task of choreographing multiple musical numbers and then teaching their classmates how to dance. "Our very beautiful dancing showed

when you put the work in, you won't look bad," 7th grader choreographer Antonia Montague said. The first time the actors wore costumes and ran through the show under the lights was the dress rehearsal on Friday afternoon of Play Week. "By the time we worked out the natural mistakes that come during an admittedly tight rehearsal process, act one of Friday night's opening night was almost flawless," director Will Albritton said. "Then the curtain broke. It's the first time in my 15 years of directing theatre that I ever had to stop a show." After a brief pause in the action to determine

if the curtain snafu could be resolved, the show went on, with backstage crew and teachers taking turns holding open the curtain with their hands. The actors had to quickly mentally regroup and stage some scenes differently in real time. Generous parents volunteered to stay after Friday's show to help fix the tangled chains of the curtain, and Saturday's matinee ran smoothly. "It's kind of fitting with the overall goal of Play Week: coming together to overcome obstacles," Will said.



Milky White made her annual appearance in the scene where the Newsies show off their collaboration with the commitment of leaders from all over New York City to their protest.



8th grader Jasper Ouellette led the cast with his talent and experience, here showing his criticism of corporate greed through his art to other Newsies Davey (8th grader Fiona Creaven) and Les (7th grader Antonia Montague) and reporter Katherine Plumber (8th grader Phoenix Newell)

Winter Carnival

Winter Carnival is one of physical education teacher Sean Fortier's favorite "special days" at Riverside. "The magic of winter, the upcoming long holiday break, and the kids working together and persevering through challenges all come together to make it a super fun and high energy day," Sean said. Participating in their Houses, the students started the day as usual by hunting for colorful ice cubes. "I love seeing the older kids helping the younger kids, and the excitement when anyone finds an ice cube," Sean said. Next, they participated in the newer tradition of creating snow sculptures, in which houses are tasked with carving a sculpture out of a huge snowbank and decorating it with the ice cubes found during the hunt. "It's like watching an ant colony break down a large piece of food," Sean said. "After so much energy and scurrying around, all of a sudden an incredible sculpture emerges." This year, the day culminated in another new tradition: the dogsled races.

The younger grades competed in races around the soccer field in knee-deep snow. The final race, the Iditarod, had four-member teams of 5th-8th graders from each house competing in a loop around the entire outer perimeter of the campus. This winter provided a particularly grueling course, with knee-deep snow, an uphill start and finish and a tricky downhill section. Scattered around the course was the rest of the school, cheering on and supporting their house's competitors. "These students were able to persevere and push themselves through the snow, hills, falls, swaps, and exhaustion to complete the race," Sean said. "It was a profound representation of our theme this year – 'Go the Extra Mile' – and showed how much our kids care about their house, their school, and our special traditions."



The Library Goes Digital

For the past decade, the books in Riverside's Founders Library have been organized by author and inventoried via card catalogue, and many editions are showing their age. That now-outdated system has resulted in fewer students checking out and reading the books on campus. To modernize the inventory, a new once-a-week elective was offered to students who saw the value in organizing by genre to attract more readers, and creating a digital catalogue. Art teacher, and former librarian Abby Johnson said, "Anything we can do to increase the likelihood of books being checked out and read seemed like a worthwhile investment of time." The new system will help students search for titles, subjects

and genres – and it will be easier to track the books that have been borrowed. "Some kids might be attracted to a certain author, but most might not know where to look," Abby said. "They might know that they like graphic novels, mysteries, or realistic fiction. So we wanted to make it easier to find what they liked." The online tool Booksource Classroom will also allow each teacher to have their own classroom library as well, and this integrated program will help specials teachers who may be looking for a book that already exists on campus. The project is ongoing and will continue over the summer. If you are interested in assisting, please give us a call!

Film Elective

To extend the learning from a summer novel read for middle school English, the film elective took on the ambitious task of remaking a 20-minute version "The Princess Bride" as an amateur movie. Twice a week, in 45-minute periods, students would quickly change into their costume; grab the script for that day's scene to be shot; walk to the location somewhere on the campus grounds; hand an iPhone to whoever was the camera person that day; listen to a student director call action; recite lines multiple times from different angles; and then run back to change clothes again. "It was really cool to see the filming process and how much work goes into making a movie," 7th grader Sophia Smith said. "Now, when I watch TV, I have a lot more appreciation for them." One of the challenges facing the cast, who also

rotated as crew members, was Vermont's ever-changing weather. "In one of the scenes, it was supposed to be sunny but instead it was pouring rain," 6th grader Lily Pollard said. "The next cut, it's bright and sunny because we didn't have time to finish the scene." The challenges helped create a fun atmosphere that resulted in an additional six minutes of humorous outtakes that were also shown at "the premiere" as part of a movie night in the barn. "The audience thought the film was funny but I don't think they understood how hard it was to make because they laughed at us a lot," Sophia said. "I am looking forward to doing film next year because I learned so much and it was very fun." "The Princess Bride (at Riverside)" can be viewed at vimeo.com/theriversideschool

Enrichment with Mathcounts

The new 5-8th grade Math Counts club provided an opportunity for math enrichment and exposure to challenging concepts, as well as help to get the student off-campus and into the greater math community. New middle school math teacher Ty Hartshorn said this experience improved students' scores. "The average middle school student at Riverside, according to I-Ready, had made a full year's growth in mathematics when we reassessed their skills in March," Ty said. "Students doing Math Counts, on average, achieved greater than a year and a half's expected growth by March. These 20-30 additional hours of math play, resulted in nearly 1.5 times the growth that other students made." After showing off their skills to the rest of us in assembly, the club competed in the regional Math Counts competition held at VSU Lyndon. Schools spanning the region from Waterbury to Lyndon attended, and Riverside took 3rd as a team.

8th grader Skylar Lindsay, 5th grader Max Royer, 6th grader Josiah Galinat, and 7th grader Sophia Smith showed off their mathematical competition skills in assembly one morning as they prepared for the state-level competition. The team was coached by teachers Nathan Gair, Ty Hartshorn, Kathleen Haines, Caroline Thompson, and Will Albritton.



STEAM Fest

The focus of STEAM Fest this year was "the tools of the trade," and three community members (meteorologist and alumni parent Mark Breen, forester and parent Molly Willard and art professor and parent Kate Renner) presented about their STEAM profession. The students worked on their own STEAM projects, which were displayed in a "museum" at the conclusion of the event. There were paper airplanes, noodle towers, cardboard tunnels, baked goods, slime, kites, catapults, musical instruments and circuits on display. Throughout the day, there was a smoothie bike going that the 8th graders pedaled to make and deliver smoothies to the student body. Middle school science teacher Joel Gilbert said he hopes the event will help students learn to love science. "They get to celebrate their peers' creations and see various ways of approaching the same problem," Mr. G said. "They get to perform science and practice those skills. They get to have fun before a vacation."



6th grader Peregrine Bongaarts Weiss helped preschooler Uly with his ideas for a cardboard construction project during STEAM Fest.

Spring Field Trip Crosses the Border



8th graders balanced on the border while visiting the Haskell Library and Opera House in Derby Line, USA, and Stanstead, Quebec, Canada.



4-5th graders engaged in an engineering challenge while visiting the Bombardier Museum in Valcourt, Quebec, which celebrates the life of the inventor of snowmobiles.



Some middle school students chose to spend an afternoon exploring Montreal's China Town, doing a competitive photo scavenger hunt.



4-5th graders showed off their values while considering what it's like to found a country while visiting the Cartier National Historic site in the oldest part of Montreal.



6-8th graders sang the customary chant for the Montreal Soccer Club at a professional game in the stadium.



Some middle school girls enjoyed a raucous game of Uno before bed in their cabins at Centre Fatima, the same place Riverside has always enjoyed staying when visiting Montreal.

45th Graduation

Our annual graduation ceremony included some new traditions this year: alumni joining in the singing of Gaudeamus Igitur; brief speeches from members of each class about the memories of the year; and a more thoughtful focus on the individuals in the graduating class of 2026.



Our guest speaker was Nathaniel Gleicher '95, who explained the lessons he learned "in this special place" that he's found useful in his prominent career in law and cybersecurity: the value of stories and the ability to "hack" a problem.



Meaghan Bourque '01, Maaïke Dam '20, Lennon Daffinrud '22, Nathan Giar '02, Sawyer Daffinrud '24, Cameron Clark '21, Zoe Bunnell, Polly Yerkes '86, Zoe Heinrich-McMullen '18, Moxie Stahler '23, Lacey Patoine '20, Phoebe Donn '23, Katie Moritz, Nathaniel Gleicher '95, Evan Newell '93, Michael Kane '94, Kellan Bristol '25, Koji Ebbett '21 joined in singing Gaudeamus Igitur.



1st graders Evie Chichioco and Walter Szwedo were chosen to represent their class in a speech about their favorite memories of the year and what they're looking forward to in 2nd grade.

2026 Award Recipients

Arts Award

Kai Hartshorn (6th)
Vivian Keller (4th)
Mabel Perreault (5th)
JB Stinson (7th)

Athletics Award

Emmett Bristol (7th)
Paul Patoine (5th)
Mabel Perreault (5th)

Boswell

Mathematics Award

Josiah Galint (6th)
Skylar Lindsay (8th)
Max Royer (5th)

Citizenship Award

Josiah Galinat (6th)
Antonia Montague

Founders' Bowl*

Fiona Creaven

The Founders Cup of the Arts & Burklyn Arts Scholarship*

Julian Bongaarts Weiss
Fiona Creaven
Phoenix Newell
Jasper Ouellette

The Heron Award*

Chloe Surat

Janus Award

Audrey DesJardins

Koehne World

Languages Award

Phoenix Newell (8th)
Olivia Nesbitt (8th)

Lindbergh-Newell

Humanities Award

Sophia Smith (7th)

Prometheus Award*

Raya Mirkin
Victor Stahler

Williams Award for Academic Excellence*

Phoenix Newell

Thompson Award for Athletics*

Reid Moriarty

Trocchi

Perseverance Award

Anders Daffinrud (8th)
Skylar Lindsay (8th)

Waring Science Award

Amos Donn (8th)
Sophia Smith (7th)

Young Heron Award

Violet Anderson (5th)

* Only 8th graders are eligible to win these awards

Alumni News

Class of 2026

Liam Albritton
Julian Bongaarts Weiss
Fiona Creaven
Anders Daffinrud
Amos Donn
Raleigh Ebbett
Skylar Lindsay
Oden McMullen
Raya Mirkin
Reid Moriarty
Phoenix Newell
Jasper Ouellette
Lilyahna Patoine
Victor Stahler
Chloe Surat

St. Johnsbury Academy
St. Johnsbury Academy
Lake Region High School
St. Johnsbury Academy
St. Johnsbury Academy
St. Johnsbury Academy
considering St. Johnsbury Academy
St. Johnsbury Academy
St. Johnsbury Academy
St. Johnsbury Academy
St. Johnsbury Academy
Emma Willard School
St. Johnsbury Academy
St. Johnsbury Academy
St. Johnsbury Academy
St. Johnsbury Academy

Class of 2022

Annie Alexander
Izzy Butler
Lennon Daffinrud

Adrienne Desrochers

Jeronimo Deyhle
Samuel Keith
Maceo Kramar
Macy Moore
Charleigh Moriarty
Colin Randall
Camryn Reimert
Lydia Reimert
Bryn Waring
Riley Washington
Jeremiah Watson

Boston University
Champlain College
Royal Central School
of Speech and Drama
LNA at The Pines
Rehabilitation Center
Massachusetts Maritime Academy
Apprentice at Royal Electric
Maine Maritime Academy
Skidmore College
Wesleyan University
post graduate year
Mount Holyoke
Skidmore College
post graduate year
Hofstra University
post graduate year

CLASS OF 2026

Photo Credit: Herb Swanson





Zane Buckminster '13 graduated from Vermont Law and Graduate School and is preparing for the Vermont Bar Exam.

Aurora Gilbert '18 graduated Summa Cum Laude from University of Vermont this spring with a major in Middle Level Education, specifically for math and social studies, and minors in Special Education and Education for Cultural and Linguistic Diversity. Aurora says that the best part of her UVM experience was "finding such a close-knit major that let me build strong connections with friends and professors." During student teaching in her year she led two solo units about Africa and ratios. Aurora has committed to teaching 6th grade math in Providence, RI. The West Broadway school has about 500 students in 5th-8th grade, 75% of whom identify as Hispanic. Aurora is excited for this position, which is a perfect fit for her specialties.



Finley Cobb '12 graduated Magna Cum Laude from Washington University Law School with an award for Academic Achievement and the Dean's Service Award, which "recognizes individuals who have demonstrated outstanding leadership, exceptional contributions, and dedicated service to the law school and broader university community" through significant time spent on pro bono work, of which Finley did 75 hours. He worked primarily on

an appeal case in federal court for a man's a state law conviction, so he spent the fall of last year preparing a brief for the Sixth Circuit Court of Appeals and then this spring argued his case before a panel of judges. They are hopefully awaiting the decision. Finley was also the editor-in-chief of the Washington University Jurisprudence Review.

Christian Kapoukranidis '13 is working for Alpinestars, which makes high-quality apparel and gear for motorsports athletes. Their apparel is tailored to the athlete, with custom fitting and protection that features their sponsors. Christian enjoys helping the company broaden their clientele toward the east coast, in particular networking with friends, contacts, and rising athletes in the NEK community. Recently he has been connecting mountain bike and motocross athletes with sponsors for product development.



Trevor Lussier '18 graduated Summa Cum Laude from Norwich University this spring, with a B.S. in Education and a minor in history. Trevor was recognized at the ceremony for his "promise as a public school teacher" in the future. It is the students at North Country Junior High School who will benefit from his teaching next year.

PRSRT STD
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
Wht Riv Jct, VT
Permit No. 73

The complete 26–27 calendar is on our website.

I Like Riverside because
People are Kind loyal
and the school
is the best.
I Love Riverside
Devin

Caroline's
calm
+ care

I Love Riverside because
the 8th graders are soo nice
and funny.

As part of celebrating our 100th day of school this past February, middle school math teacher Ty Hartshorn challenged us to come up with 100 reasons we love Riverside.