

# Ridgewood Newsletter



RHS Junior, Megan Pecaro, hand painted this jacket for Ms. Gianfortone. The sunflowers represent Mental Health Awareness and the butterfly represents Ms. Gianfortone's late son, Joey. This beautiful jacket took Megan two weeks to complete. The bonds our students make with our staff is truly wonderful!

## From the District

Hello and welcome to the first newsletter for the 2021-2022 school year! Our students, staff and teachers have had an exciting and busy past few months.

It's hard to believe it's already October and our fall sports teams are wrapping up their successful seasons. Make sure to check out our website [www.D234.org](http://www.D234.org) each week to see who has earned "Athlete of the Week." Our coaches and teams are gearing up for a eventful winter sports season.

Every year the Ridgewood Foundation gives scholarships to our graduating seniors. If you are interested in donating to our foundation for the years to come, you can do so on our website, <https://www.d234.org/community/ridgewood-foundation-scholarships/>.

The Ridgewood Foundation has decided to postpone the Alumni Hall of Fame Brunch to April 30, 2022 at 11 a.m.

As always, to keep updated on all things Ridgewood, please visit our website at [www.d234.org](http://www.d234.org). Also, make sure to follow our Facebook page, Twitter account and Instagram account for the latest information, news and announcements.

As the year continues, we aim to capitalize on the momentum we have made by challenging our students both intellectually and athletically. Go Rebels!



@RHSRebelPride



2021 Homecoming - Congratulations to our Royal Rebel, Martina Vitale!

## Equity in STEM Training

The STEM field has been rapidly advancing and the demand for jobs is at a high; however, not as many students are choosing to enter the field due to lack of exposure to STEM courses.

The University of Illinois recognized that not a lot of students are getting exposed to computer science (CS) early enough, so they started the CISTEME365 program. This program assists middle schools, high schools and community colleges in getting students exposed to CS earlier, while also bringing more diversity to the STEM field.

At Ridgewood, we are working to bring more diversity to our STEM clubs and classes. RHS teachers, Stephanie Sneath and Tristan Kumor, have been actively recruiting students to get them involved. Both Sneath and Kumor are a part of this program at U of I. They met six times over the summer for 8 hour days and then multiple times this fall. The training teaches them STEM experiences and tools to figure out how to fit them into the curriculum, as well as continuous communication to follow up on diversity and equity training.

Ridgewood has been extremely fortunate to have a pre-existing strong foundation in STEM, whereas other schools have struggled more with the activities.

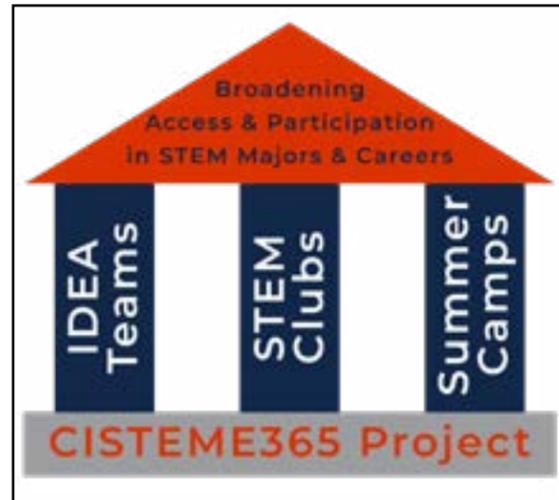
"What I think has been really nice is that they aren't doing it all at once, but they are helping us throughout the school year. So if we have issues we can bring it up to them and they can help us fix them. It's ongoing professional development and isn't all up fronted," said Sneath.

This year RHS started having "Flextime" courses that are 55 minute long periods daily and students sign up for weekly. They range anywhere from workouts, study sessions, college visits, additional office hours, learning Spanish culture, etc. Sneath and Kumor have recently started utilizing flextime enrichment to tie computer science and engineering together. The kids have been signing up for the courses on their own based off of their interest, but they've also been promoting it in the PLTW and CS classes.

The end goal is for the STEM club to begin leading the flextime activities that our teachers are learning through the U of I program. Some of these activities include, building cellphone stands, circuit boards, mini projectors to reflect images and mini engines. Leading these activities will allow our students to learn strong leadership qualities, especially in the STEM program. They also hope to bring the interest in STEM into our middle schools through the Norridge Park District camps.

If any students are interested in learning more, they can contact either Ms. Sneath or Mr. Kumor. Learn more about the CISTEME365 program, <https://cisteme365.engineering.illinois.edu>.

**Read more stories:** [www.d234.org/news](http://www.d234.org/news)



## RHS Senior Awarded with Academic Honors from College Board National Recognition Programs

Congratulations to our own Christian Beltran, who is one of 32,000 students from across the country to earn academic honors from the College Board's National Recognition Programs! These National Recognition Programs grant underrepresented students with academic honors that can be included on college and scholarship applications and connect students with universities across the country, helping them stand out during the admissions process. Colleges and scholarship programs use these honors to identify students from underrepresented groups through College Board's Student Search Service.

RHS senior, Christian Beltran, earned National Hispanic Recognition through College Board.

"Christian is a humble young man with tremendous academic standing and potential as demonstrated by his GPA, SAT score and his desire to help others succeed. It is a great distinction to have received the "National Hispanic Recognition Award,"" said RHS school counselor James Gyori.

The National Hispanic Recognition Program recognizes approximately 5,000 Hispanic/Latino juniors each year from among the more than 400,000 juniors who take the PSAT.

Beltran earned this recognition by excelling on their PSAT/NMSQT, PSAT 10, or AP Exams and in their classrooms. Students who may be eligible have a GPA of 3.5 or higher and have excelled on the PSAT/NMSQT or PSAT 10, or earned a score of 3 or higher on two or more AP Exams; and are African American or Black, Hispanic American or Latinx, Indigenous, and/or attend school in a rural area or small town. Eligible students are invited to apply during their sophomore or junior year, and are awarded at the beginning of the next school year.

## Ridgewood High School District 234 named Apple Distinguished School

Ridgewood High School is pleased to announce that it has been recognized as an Apple Distinguished School for 2021-2024. At District 234, technology, specifically the iPad, has played an irreplaceable role in allowing us to offer online and hybrid learning options to meet the needs of our students while allowing students, to create products that demonstrate their learning.

Apple Distinguished Schools are centers of innovation, leadership, and educational excellence. They use Apple technology to connect students to the world, fuel creativity, deepen collaboration, and make learning personal.

"Earning the Apple Distinguished School recognition allows Ridgewood High school to continue providing a learning environment which ensures all students receive a multi-faceted education grounded in innovation, aspiration, and imagination," said RHS principal, Gina Castellano. "Our use of Apple technology inspires creativity, collaboration and critical thinking and gets students and teachers excited about learning."

The selection of Ridgewood High School as an Apple Distinguished School highlights our success in creating an innovative and compelling learning environment that engages students and provides tangible evidence of academic achievement.

There are exciting new opportunities for students coming to Ridgewood High School in the next few years. A number of our initiatives have been leading us to our official launch of our two career pathways, Business and Technology as well as Arts and Sciences. Each pathway will have 3-4 clusters followed by cohorts that will focus on specific careers. To reach this lofty goal, we will continue to maximize technology to support online job shadows, MOOC's, micro-credentials, and even certificates or degrees. Additionally, Ridgewood High School will continue to build community partnerships. Students will continue to integrate learning with Apple technology to engage in career pathway work and exploration as we fulfill our vision.

## Calling All RHS Alumni!!

Ridgewood has many outstanding alumni who have used their education and experiences to become successful, positive contributors to society. We want to highlight and celebrate their successes. Can you think of a former classmate with a great story to tell? Email RHS Public Relations Coordinator, Bree Sabin ([bsabin@ridgenet.org](mailto:bsabin@ridgenet.org)).

We want to share your stories on our website, [www.d234.org](http://www.d234.org), social media channels, and in our newsletters!



## DVR Awards

On October 4, at the Des Plains Valley Region (DVR) Conference, Ridgewood High School received the following awards:

- Programs that involve a partnership between a high school district and Triton College. Ridgewood was awarded for its work on Transitional Math.
- Programs that involve an initiative that is implemented in the school or district. Ridgewood won the award for its work on the Education Pathway.
- Programs that are created and implemented by an individual or a team and used in the classroom or as a co-curricular activity. Stephanie Sneath and Steve Svetlick won this award for CSforAll.



@RHSRebelPride

## Dual Credit Offerings for Rebels

There are many Dual Credit course offerings available to our students at Ridgewood High School and at the collegiate level. Dual Credit is a college course taken by high school students to earn credit at the high school level. This can be extremely beneficial to students because it reduces college costs, speeds time to complete post-secondary education, facilitates the transition between high school and college, and it offers opportunities for improving degree attainment for underserved populations.

**Resources to learn more about Dual Credit at RHS:**

**Website:** <https://www.d234.org/student-life/dual-credit/>

**Youtube:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqOzRIIwkbw>

## Facilities Update

Our buildings and grounds team did a great job this summer working on upgrading our building and getting it prepared for our students and staff to return to the building.

Some of the larger projects they completed this summer include:

Upgrading door 1 and 2 with ADA ramps and ice melting capabilities, inner courtyard completion, HVAC system upgrades for indoor air changeover and monitoring and related upgrades using ESSER funds and a divider curtain replacement in the small gym.



## APCSA Student Advisory Council

RHS Junior Eliska (“Elise”) Horak was accepted into a national cohort of 30 students to sit on an APCSA Student Advisory Council.

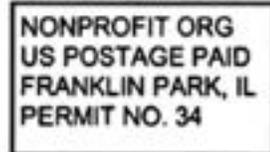
RHS students taking APCSA this year are participating in a pilot curriculum for the course written by Code.org. AP Computer Science A (APCSA) is an introductory college-level computer science course. The curriculum will go live nationally next year, so Code.org is collecting data and feedback from teachers and students, alike, on the curriculum to make it as good as possible at that time.

Elise will play an integral role in shaping the future of the curriculum for this course. A very rare opportunity and a testament to her passion for studying the subject.



Ridgewood High School

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