

# The BLUE DEVIL'S Advocate



Richmond High School  
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Richmond, MI 48062

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## The Gold Key to Success

**Cecily McPherson**  
Coordinating Editor

Whether it be a brush stroke upon canvas, or the sudden flash of a camera, Richmond's art and photography students are thrilled after seeing all the positive results from the biggest art competition nationwide: The Scholastics Competition.

For 91 years, this competition has recognized young artistic talent among middle and high school teens. In fact, many world-renowned individuals such as Andy Warhol, Sylvia Plath, and Robert Redford were granted awards when they were high schoolers.

Throughout the course of this competition, every art student within the school is given the chance to submit their best work.

The process is completely digital. All students who participated had to take a picture of their piece/pieces of art and submit them onto their very own Scholastics account.

Each piece of artwork was given a name and obtained three signatures to ensure its credibility. Once the work was sent, it was in the hands of the judges.

The highest ranking award is called the Gold Key. Any work of art achieving Gold Key status is sent to judges in New York for further evaluation.

After the judges narrow down which works display the special qualities desired, they are entered into a drawing. The winners not only win the satisfaction of a truly extraordinary work of art, but a trip to New York City to accept their awards.

Lauren Maksymiuk and Jaret Gill were lucky enough to achieve this accomplishment last year.

"Going to New York last year was a trip of a lifetime," Lauren said. "I don't believe anything could be quite like it. The satisfaction that comes with being acknowledged for awards such as these is not something many get to experience. I am very blessed."

And the success only continues this year.

This year, students at RHS were awarded 14 Gold Keys, and over 60 awards altogether. Not only is that a significant increase from last year, but RHS have received more awards than any other school in the county.

Maksymiuk, who couldn't be happier with her results, earned two Gold Keys, Gold Key portfolio (mixed media), four silver keys, and four honorable mentions.

"My favorite piece I submitted was my portfolio on mixed media" said Lauren. "I put five months into it, and it had a lot of meaning behind it.

All of the pictures were on 24x18 charcoal paper, and they expressed the personalities of my friends and family."

Her success in scholastics has not gone unnoticed, colleges such as University of Michigan have offered Lauren a significant amount of scholarship money for her accomplishments. It is an exciting beginning for her extensive future in the arts.

Maksymiuk, who plans to pursue a future in graphic design, said, "This year a lot more people saw how well we did last year. This inspired them to submit their work too."

Two new contenders include seniors Ashley Reece and Hayley Lauderbach. "I joined photography mainly because I wanted to learn how to take a better picture. I never imagined that I would actually be good at it," Lauderbach stated.

Reece ended up winning two Gold Keys: one for a picture of her sister and the other of a picture of corn. Lauderbach earned two silver keys and two Gold Keys. Her Gold Key awards were given on a picture of a sunset and paint chips. Neither of them expected to win any awards, nevertheless Gold Keys.

"Scholastics has shown me that anyone with the right eye and the knowledge of a camera, can be successful. I knew nothing about photography before joining the class. I find the results to be tremendously rewarding" said Reece.

Many students, too nervous to submit work in the past, have gained confidence not only from Richmond's recent success, but also from the admiration and encouragement of Mrs. Belf.

Coming from East Detroit High School, Belf was used to the hustle and bustle of many students and many teachers. At her old school, there were four art teachers; here there is only two.

The close relationships she has made with her students has allowed them to grow in ways they have never imagined.

"Before Mrs. Belf, only two students won scholastics awards my sophomore year," Maksymiuk said. "She is really opening the art program up to a wider branch of students. In my opinion, it has grown so much."

As the students cross their fingers and wait for the New York results, all they can see is positivity.

"If in two years we can go from receiving two awards to over 60, then what could be in store five or ten years from now? I believe that it can only go up from here," Lauren said.

## RHS To Become A Better Place For All

**Daniel Seguin**  
Staff writer

We've got a Code Blue on our hands...

But it's nothing to fear.

Recently, legislators made a decision to make all the schools in the state start a PBIS program. PBIS stands for Positive Behavior Interventions System.

Mr. Bourdeau, Dean of Students and Athletic Director, is spearheading the whole program at RHS. He described PBIS as "a system designed to help reinforce positive behavior and to offer support and interventions [to students] that are struggling."

Around the school, many posters have been put up advertising Code Blue. The "Blue" is actually an acronym.

It stands for Bring Responsibility, Live Responsibly, Understand Others, and Engage in Learning. The staff can also be seen wearing shirts advertising the program.

These principles echo a program that was in place at the Lee School around seven years ago.

Mr. Bourdeau spoke at the assembly announcing it. He defined it as being "a school wide positive behavior intervention system that helps create a positive learning environment that allows students to reach new heights both academically and socially."

Basically that means that the intentions of this program are to make RHS a positive place where learning and diversity are encouraged.

Although Mr. Bourdeau was at the helm of creating this program, he had a "Team of teachers and counselors [to work with]." This team included Tricia Till, Sheila Lepak, Edward Delore, Michael Murphy, Nancy Laratonda, Anthonh Bloink, John Schleder, Craig West, and Jennifer Wolfe.

Mr. Bourdeau said that good behavior will be encouraged by positive reinforcement. This will come in the form of Code Blue tickets.

If a teacher or administrator sees a student displaying Code Blue behavior, they can give them a ticket which the student can then turn in to the media center to be put in a raffle.

While the team of teachers involved in creating Code Blue is not entirely sure what prizes to give away just yet, some ideas in the works are similar to the ones given in the M-Step assembly: slushie coupons, prom and homecoming tickets, and maybe even TVs. Another idea is to let students get out of class for a movie in the auditorium.

While there are prizes involved in

Code Blue, Bourdeau would like to stress that students shouldn't display positive behavior with that goal in mind. He said, "It should be intrinsic behavior."

Jenna Stafford, junior, ascribes to this belief as well. She said, "I feel like people should do things without expecting to be rewarded, but I do see the benefits of having incentives."

Ms. Lepak, guidance counselor, believes that the purpose of the program is less about the tickets, and more about rewarding and acknowledging good behavior. She said, "Overall our student body is well-behaved and respectful towards one another. Anytime you can acknowledge that, it's a cool thing. It's not about the tickets; it's about doing the right thing. It always feels good to have something you did right be acknowledged."

A few students have already received Code Blue tickets. Tony Carbone, sophomore, received a Code Blue ticket on the first say that teachers were handing them out. This ticket was given to him by Mr. Murphy for helping hang a picture. Carbone said of the situation, "I felt accomplished; it made me feel good to get a ticket, like I did something good."

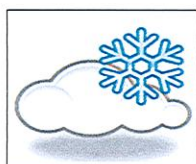
Carbone said he was excited to enter his tickets into the raffle, although he said he believes Code Blue Tickets should be able to be turned in for a certificate of sorts.

Ashley Teltow, freshman, also received a Code Blue ticket. Her teacher, Mr. Treend, gave tickets to the first three students to finish their warm-up, and she was one of them. She also said it made her feel accomplished.

She spoke very highly of the program, saying, "It's going to help kids to be better people. It's encouraging them to do good and rewards them for what they do."

Mr. Bourdeau would like to expand on Code Blue in the future. The program is in its infancy, and as the years go on, Code Blue will grow and mature. He is soon going to be getting videos made of examples of students doing the right thing. Efforts are also being made to bring in speakers to help motivate the students, and an effective award system is still being worked out.

Ms. Lepak would like to see the program truly impact students, saying, "I would like to see some of the social walls break down and the negativity amongst people to be eliminated."



Today's Forecast  
Mostly Cloudy  
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## RHS Singers Soar at Solo Ensemble

**By: Ana Kinkela**  
Staff Writer

Solo an Ensemble ended on a high note.

Four students went head to head in a solo act in choir, trying to get the best rating they could get to build up their vocals. Freshman Rachel Hunt, Sophomore Hailey Fortuna, and Senior Katlyn Gilbert. Hunt was very excited for Solo Ensemble, making sure she was ready to sing in front of the judges by practicing and practicing.

"I planned by practicing at school and after school every day, and getting our schedules early," Hunt said.

Even though they all did a solo act and having different judges that would score them differently, they all still worked together to be prepared.

"We worked by going over songs, over and over again, working on the piano," said Hunt. Every performance they made, they had to make it the best as they can, hoping to improve what they need to work on

in the future, between their strengths and weaknesses.

"The biggest strengths we have was being able to correct ourselves during practices, and to be able to be stronger," Hunt said. The most Hunt wanted was to focus on any weaknesses she had, because the judges would surely notice, which isn't a bad thing in her or anyone's case because that way they can work on it. The Judges are there to decide if singers are ready to move on and to make sure they are doing your absolute best.

"The most stressful moment was singing in front of the judge," Hunt said. She was nervous, only because she wanted to do her best. Having to stand in front of the judges, that listen and watch how you sing can be nerve racking. But that didn't stop Hunt. She went on, doing her best Performance.

"My ranking was good which would be a 2nd to great ranking," Hunt said.

Hunt wasn't the only one who did well. Sophomore Haley Fortuna is

the kind of performer that looks for professional opinions to better her signing as she goes along. The one song she like performing the most is "O Mio Babbino Caro," an opera about an Italian girl in love with a boy. This also will be her second song at states.

"I don't want to just isolate myself; I want to have a challenge," Fortuna said. She would like to challenge herself and her singing to see what places in her singing she needs to work on to further herself after states.

Fortuna loves what she does and performing is one of her favorite things. That's why she decided to take the spot light in Solo Ensemble.

"Take advantage, see where I'm at and what I need to improve on," said Fortuna.

Fortuna got an excellent at Solo Ensemble, which means she will be going to states on April 15-16th at Avondale High School. She will be singing "To the Sky", and "O Mio Babbino Caro".

Senior Kaitlyn Gilbert is another

one of our proud RHS Solo ensemble members.

"It's my senior year and I promised my grandmother I would go," Gilbert said. It meant a lot to her grandmother that she would go to Solo Ensemble, to do what she loved.

"I would say my biggest strength is being able to stay calm while singing," Gilbert said. She feels that she needs to work on confidence while singing.

"Confidence can make or break a performance," said Gilbert. Gilbert's favorite song was "Sebben Crudele". She loves how dramatic it sounds.

Being together and in choir, it's like one giant family to the girls, working together, and helping each other to do our greatest.

"We try to motivate each other and help where we can," Gilbert said.

Gilbert got an excellent and qualified for states like Fortuna. The Solo Ensemble group did fantastic on their rankings, making their school proud of the work they've done.

## Snowcoming Sweethearts

**By: Cameron Barrett**  
Staff Writer

Matt Skoryanc and Lindsay Schweiger both danced the night away at Snowcoming.

The couple that has been dating for a year-and-a-half won Snowcoming King and Queen together.

Senior year is coming to an end. But this couple is making every moment count.

This sweetheart high school couple started dating in 11th grade. It all started when their art teacher, Mrs. Aronson, made the two sit next to each other in art class.

Both are athletes. Skoryanc plays football, basketball, and baseball. Schweiger plays volleyball and softball.

As senior year is coming to an end, both have had big accomplishments in this school. Schweiger said, "My biggest high school ac-

complishment would be making it in the Top Ten with a 4.0 GPA."

Skoryanc, who was on the varsity baseball team last year said, "My biggest high school accomplishment was hitting a home run the last inning of districts against Saint Clair to send us into extra innings." Both of them support each other during their sport seasons. During the football season, Schweiger went to the games and cheered him on. Then Schweiger made Skoryanc a sign for the basketball season and cheers him on at the games as well.

Skoryanc was asked whether he wanted to win Snowcoming or homecoming. He said, "Snowcoming so I did not have to be in the parade."

But what would have happened if one of them did not get nominated? For Schweiger, the outcome would have been a little different. Schweiger said, "If Matt did not get nominated I probably would have wanted

to drop the nomination." Skoryanc, on the other hand, said, "I probably would not have dropped the nomination if Lindsay did not get nominated."

They both agreed winning with each other made it even more special. "We got to take pictures with the capes," Skoryanc said. This was one of their favorite parts of winning Snowcoming together.

Between winning Homecoming and Snowcoming, both agreed they would rather win Snowcoming because they got to walk on the court and got to be recognized in front of everyone who attended the basketball game that night.

The couple did have friends on the court who gave them a run for their money during the voting period. Schweiger, who thought her biggest competition was Hailey Dziegelewski, said, "No I did not think I was going to win." Skoryanc said his biggest competition on the court

was his basketball teammate, Spencer Trapiss.

Winning his senior year, Skoryanc said, "It was memorable mainly because no one knew who won and we were noticed by more than just our friends."

The couple still has another chance to win before their senior year comes to an end, although Schweiger said she wants someone else to win that has not been nominated before.

To this couple, winning these events does not matter that much. But it is still a thrilling moment when they did win and get recognized in front of tons of people.

Hopefully these two will end with a big win at Prom to make their last school dance count. If they do not, hopefully they end their last dance with something memorable

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