

Giving

Four-Season Field of Dreams

During the peak of the pandemic, when school was in and out, it was tough on everyone—teachers, students and parents. Perhaps one of the saving graces was RSGC’s physical education program. In the Junior School, the program took place outdoors no matter what the weather. It allowed the boys to burn some energy, learn new sports and help everyone’s mental health.

The Junior School phys-ed team of Scott Ackley, Drew Blanchette, Sensei David Miller and Steve Turner worked hard to put together a unique program that held the boys’ interest, got them moving and followed COVID protocols.

“It was like starting from scratch. Your gym, your rink, your pool, your program—everything was gone, so for us, it was a huge opportunity to rethink how we do phys-ed. We got to dream big and change up what we could offer the boys, and we had fun while we did it,” said teacher Drew Blanchette. “For things like pickleball and tchouk ball, we were able to procure that equipment and, with the space we had, develop a program with all kinds of different activities. As a group deploying that, it was fun and at times challenging, depending on what the weather was looking like outside.”

The teachers worked outside all day long in all sorts of weather conditions. They learned how to dress properly and set the boys’ expectations.

“We trained them to have the proper gear, but truthfully, they were just happy to be out there,” said Drew, who felt very lucky to be teaching outdoors through the pandemic. “They’ll come outside in



the rain, in the snow. Unless it’s -40°C and they have to put their hands on a metal lacrosse stick, they’re fine.”

Thanks to a generous donation from the Iantorno family to the phys-ed program, the department purchased heated storage units that served as equipment

storage on one side and heated shelters for staff on the other side. These units were instrumental in allowing the teachers to properly run their program.

“Prior to those shelters, we had those propane heaters and would stand under them to keep warm. It wasn’t easy! We’re



so appreciative of these shelters. They gave us a place to keep warm and a place where all of us could do our work,” said Drew. “Now, we can store so much equipment there. At any given time, the kids are playing four or five different activities and we have ready access to the equipment. When you have equipment, the kids are going to play!”

With the Iantorno donation, the phys-ed team also purchased a wireless scoreboard for the turf. Drew says it has been helpful for both the students and teachers.

“I’m able to control the

scoreboard from an app on my phone,” said Drew. “Not only do we use it for phys-ed all the time, but we also use it for recess, just so the kids know how much time they have. It’s very useful.”

Drew recognizes that the gift from the Iantorno family has been extremely impactful.

“I’m super appreciative. Our program is so much better because of that gift. It allows the adults who deploy it to stay warm and do our jobs better, and it allows us to store the equipment,” said Drew. “It’s like being a construction worker and having

a place to store our tools. Without it, I don’t think we’d be doing the same job. From my perspective, it’s been brilliant.”



“Outdoor physical education is important to our youth. It gives them a space to release their energy, express themselves and clear their minds. It is crucial for the growth of our children and the preservation of our environment. Donating to RSGC’s outdoor education is just one way our family can help to do our part, and encourage physical activity and healthy habits.”
—The Iantorno family

