

## From the Desk of Dr. Jahna Duda



Good morning, Royal Lion Family.

Earlier this month, my husband and I reflected on the two-year anniversary of two significant events in our life - the offer for me to join the RC family and a work injury that we are still navigating for him. As the spring of 2022 unfolded, and in the time since then, we have very clearly observed the fingerprints of God in our story with the most significant being the provision of a Christ-centered community here in Rockford. A community that literally stood in our driveway and prayed for our family while my dad was dying of cancer; a community that frequently texts and checks in while Bret continues to heal; a community that makes phone calls and gets us connected with medical providers who can help; a community that has provided invaluable counsel and support as I stepped in to lead; a community that has been an answer to prayer in so

many ways beyond what I can adequately describe here.

Community is a vital component for an individual's personal and spiritual well-being. Even as I researched well-being and purpose for my dissertation, evidence emerged indicating the impact that groups like those found in a school or church have on the healthy development of one's identity and purpose. I knew this to be true as I observed it in my students, but the experiences since moving here have further solidified it in my heart.

In conversation after conversation, I hear narratives similar to ours of how you and others have been and are being impacted by the sense of belonging present at RC. Impact that is hard to quantify for prospective families because it does not nicely present itself in a bar graph or chart like GPAs, test scores, or other accolades often do. You see, the value of the student experience at RC reaches far beyond the classroom, field, or band room. The experience is day-by-day, month-by-month, and year-by-year forming your child's God-given identity and preparing them for the purpose God has for them to impact their home, their workplace, their community, and the greater Kingdom of God. Whether it was the Christian environment, smaller school setting, strong academics, or something else that originally drew you to RC, your child being here is by God's design so that through the student experience, they will be...

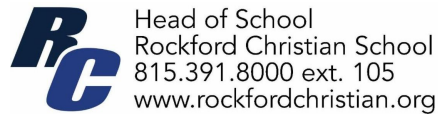
- Known and loved
- Encouraged to see who God created them to be
- Ready to pursue their purpose
- Prayed for
- Equipped with rigorous curricular and cocurricular programming
- Prepared by a traditional educational experience
- Armed with a biblical worldview to stand against dangerous social agendas

- Supported through the toughest challenges of childhood and adolescence
- And much more

Communities, like families, are imperfect. Humans are jagged people, and we often create jagged paths, not only for ourselves but for those around us. What I do know about *this* community, though, is that we are characterized by grace, we have a heart for reconciliation with God and others, and we are a team focused on honoring the Lord with all we say, think, and do. And in a time characterized by division and isolation, the value of belonging that exists at Rockford Christian is priceless.

Thank you for being part of this mission, this team, this effort to raise children to love and serve Jesus Christ. Your prayers, commitment, and overall support for our students, faculty, and staff are making a difference far greater than you could ever ask or imagine.

In His Name,  
Dr. Jahna Duda



## Strategic Plan Updates: 3rd Quarter

The Rockford Christian leadership team and board continue progress toward the four initiatives in our strategic plan. We wanted to provide updates for this quarter as we work toward the common goal of enhancing the student experience at RC by focusing on our community, our people, our programming, and our property.

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### Our Community

RC will advance cohesive culture and community across the school and among all stakeholders.

[Click here to read about the highlights listed below:](#)

- Mrs. Melanie Sawdey, Head of Upper School, collaborates with team members to enhance the student experience for incoming 5th-grade students and plans additional touch points to support the move from Lower to Upper School.
- Parent fellowship groups are explored to equip and support middle school students and families.
- Intentional marketing and admissions strategies support events by sharing the story of RC.

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### Our People

RC will build upon the strong faculty and staff foundation to create new, strategic, competitive advantages in developing, retaining, and attracting mission-fit employees. [Click here to read about the highlights listed below:](#)

- RC continues to move closer to compensation goals for faculty and staff.
- Teacher-led professional development is successfully implemented during faculty inservice days.
- The addition of a full-time Human Resources Director allows for dedication to employee well-being and enhancing the faculty and staff culture.

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### Our Programs

RC will examine all Academic, Artistic, and Athletic (AAA) programming with long-term viability in mind; assessing and determining that which is missional, that which is essential, that which is

desirable, and that which is expendable; creating a clearly defined plan for improvement in each area and implementing the outlined plans in a linear manner over the next three years. [Click here to read about the highlights listed below:](#)

- Mr. Heath Tibbetts, Director of Spiritual Life, is promoted to Head of Spiritual Formation, joining the Executive Team and ensuring we establish a cohesive PreK-12 framework for spiritual development.
- New College and Career Readiness course provides job shadow and internship opportunities for high school students to find their purpose.
- RC explores potential strength and conditioning programming for Upper School students to enhance overall health and athletic competition.
- Purposed Mindsets, a mental health and well-being program, is coming to RC this spring.

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## Our Property

RC will ensure long-term financial viability by examining all current facilities and infrastructure, and developing strategic priorities to maintain or enhance all property, plant, and equipment. [Click here to read about the highlights listed below:](#)

- Mr. Matt Nyberg, Head of Lower School, leads Campus Planning Committee in assessing current facilities and creating a predictive model for repairs, replacement, and maintenance of properties.
- RC Board of Directors establishes tuition strategy to protect the school's financial sustainability.
- Scholarship programs revised to keep the excellent, Christ-centered education at RC accessible to families.
- Record year-to-date giving prepares RC for development strategies aligned with donor passions and best advancement practices.

2023-2026 Rockford Christian School Strategic Plan

## Welcome to RC ~ Laura Ahern, Human Resources Director

We are excited to welcome Laura Ahern to the Business Office in the role of Director of Human Resources. Laura has worked in human resources, compensation analysis, and customer service for over 28 years, receiving her bachelor's degree from Loras College and a Master in Human Resource Management from the Keller Graduate School of Management. She and her husband William have been part of the Royal Lion community for the past four years when their son Dillon joined Rockford Christian in PreK3. Laura is looking forward to this new opportunity to continue to serve our Royal Lion faculty and staff. She will begin onboarding Monday, February 26th.





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