

Salutatorian Speech for LDHS Class of 2013

By Daniel Snyder

Welcome, to the class of 2013, and to all here tonight. To the parents who endlessly supported us, we finally made it! To the siblings who have been there along the way, see you later! And to the faculty, mentors, family, and friends, thanks for guiding us along the way as we learned one or two things about life.

Well, I don't know about you guys, but I'm pretty stoked to graduate. We've spent 17 or 18 years here, 12 of those years in school, working hard to achieve what we have perceived to be important: Academics, sports, music, technology, trades, and fun. And after such a long and arduous journey for some of us, we have made it! And the path has been easier for some than others. Some of us have had to deal with loss, with anxiety, with relationship problems, with parents and guardians, siblings, teachers, grades, tests, essays, SATs, college applications, scholarship applications, deciding to enlist in the military, paying for college, figuring out a career path, looking for a job, deciding on colleges, balancing a busy schedule, dealing with stress, and the list goes on and on. Although some of us like to think growing up was easy, let me tell you, it wasn't. But the good news is that each and every one of you sitting here today in a distinguished blue or white gown has surmounted difficulties to make it to this center to get your high school diploma. Isn't that incredible?!

And it's funny, because I think our parents and guardians are happier than we are that we graduated because they can finally get rid of us. And most of us don't realize this, but they have done more for our good than we have for ourselves at times. They raised us from tiny children, not even able to feed ourselves, and have helped nurture us and guide us to where we stand today. I can't even begin to comprehend the joy they feel at having one of their children check high school off their list as they move onto bigger and better things.

Speaking of how our parents and guardians helped us grow, do you guys remember what we were like years ago in elementary and middle school? Do you remember when we all wore bright-colored clothes with cool windbreaker jackets. Now all we have are yoga pants and crocs.

Do you remember the TV shows we watched? Spongebob (personal favorite), Hey Arnold! The Wild Thornberrys, Rugrats, Catdog? Now we have The Office, How I Met Your Mother, Modern Family, and

the Big Bang Theory - BAZINGA! Do you remember the music we listened too? the Pokemon Soundtrack, Green Day, Kelly Clarkson (Evan Ungar), Avril Lavigne, Britney Spears, and Maroon 5? Now we have a guy who's gonna "pop some tags" with only "20 \$ in his pocket" and someone asking you to "call me maybe". Do you remember the movies we liked? Disney dominated with Aladdin, the Little Mermaid, Toy Story, and Beauty and the Beast. Now some of us are obsessed with movies such as Bridesmaids, Anchorman, All Across the Universe, and Pitch Perfect. Is it me or has our world changed? Back in my day I heard phrases like something being sweet, LOL, or having an epic fail or win. Now, I just hear about how "swag don't come cheap" and how "ain't nobody got time for dat!"

There is no doubt that as we have grown up, our world has been transformed before our very eyes. Now, we have the world at our fingertips through technology in smart phones and laptops. Conflict is all over the world and economic crises keeping people up at night. Crime is extensive in many parts of the world and there are volatile debates over sensitive issues. In America, we incessantly hear the tragedies and misfortunes that we continue to learn about through the news. Politics are a mess and there are just a lot of terrible things going on in our world today. But you see, that's where we come in.

We have all reached the point at this moment, regardless of age, that we have become adults. We can buy lottery tickets, we can vote, and we can save the world! And that means that we will now be held fully responsible for our actions. As Harry Truman said, "The buck stops here". That means it is time for us to step up our game. You see, I have been pointing out some of the negative aspects of this world because I know that students sitting here today are going to change that. Students sitting here today who are genuinely good, and who will go out into the world and use the gifts and abilities they have been blessed with to denounce wrongdoing and to promote well-being and joy for all people. Now some of you might be thinking, can I really do this? Can I actually make a difference in the lives of others in a significant way? Can I really make matters better? And the answer is a resounding YES! And let me prove it to you through some examples of the incredible achievements of our class. In the arts, we had four all-state musicians, talented dancers who voluntarily helped with younger classes, Apollo-nominated actors and actresses and an Apollo-award winner (two of them are my neighbors!!!!), some gifted artists with incredible works and a killer senior yearbook and falcon flash team. We had some kids involved in technology, who won a contest and went to Germany! In athletics we had a State Champion field hockey

team and State –level baseball team, and had so many other sports teams make playoffs, I can't even remember them all! We even had some kids build a boat! Can you believe it? We have students who have been a great part of volunteer organizations such as Volunteen, National Honor Society, Special Olympics, and Mini-Thon (who, by the way raised a record amount of money this year!). Obviously, we have some motivated, talented, and dedicated students sitting here today among us, so let's get moving!

Now I don't care whether you work at McDonald's the rest of your life, or you become the CEO of a large corporation, you CAN make a difference. And so, I challenge our class (including myself) to this proposal: Take all that we've learned so far in our lives from our family, our friends, and our life experiences at Lower Dauphin and apply it in an effective way for the benefit and well-being of others. Don't just do your job, but go above and beyond your duties for others, make others wonder why you care so much about helping people, make the effort to spend time with your family, be a good friend, live a good life, make an impact! In the famous words of Winston Churchill, "We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give." Now I'm sure you have all heard these encouragements before, but what we do in our lives really matters. Now is the time to start a new chapter in the book of our lives, so why not make it interesting, heartwarming and satisfying through taking actions characterized by diligence, kindness, and honor?

Well, all I can say is peace. I have thoroughly enjoyed getting to know many of you these last couple of years, and I hope to hear good things about all of you as we truly grow up and go live out in the real world. So remember, be nice, have patience, respect others, be excellent, never give up, and live an abundant life. Go do something spectacular Class of 2013, 'cause it's go time!!!!