

Andy Cirioli

President's Graduation Speech - 2013

My fellow graduates and friends, it is an honor to speak to all of you today. Before I go on I would like to put your minds' at ease: the answer is yes, I am the cashier you recognize from Stop and Shop. Many people say that today is the day we start our journey. I disagree. The journey began a long time ago. Today just happens to be the day where the path we have been traveling on splits into 275 unique roads. Up until now we have been a team walking as one. We have done it all and we have done it together.

Many of us have belonged to this school district since we started kindergarten, thirteen years ago, and I want to take us all back to the date, August 30th, 2000. This was the first day of school and the commencement of our journey. Parents and grandparents walked us to the bus stop, where roughly a thousand pictures were taken. Later that afternoon, Walgreens and CVSs across the town were developing pictures of our cute little faces. For six years after this first day of school, we were blessed with recess, the halloween parade, where students had the opportunity to show off their stunning costumes, Reading is Fun also known as RIF, and the Scholastics Book Catalog, where kids only bought the books that came with incredible accessories. Through it all elementary school was the first the first step of our travels.

We now stand at the merger of four roads becoming one, four schools becoming one. The Middle School -- I think I can speak for everyone when I say these were probably the most awkward three years of our lives. With that said, I will jump over this bump in the road, and

as I do I would like to thank each teacher each principal, and each person who took their time to open the doors of this new chapter for those who were ready, and held the hands of those who weren't.

There are nine years behind us now on the road we travel and we have reached another milestone in our journey. When we walked into freshman orientation I am positive each student had the same thought, "Woah! Those lockers are huge!" And in the end we really never used them. This class of 2013 made history here. We see it each day as we walk down the halls. You see the work of artists in our lobby. You see the achievements in sports posted on the record boards and in the local paper. You hear musicians practicing each morning. And you see the academic achievements through the dedication and the hard work of students in the classrooms. Everyone should be proud of what they have achieved. These years have been nothing less than a success. It was not easy though. Just look at this past year. I honestly did not think we were going to graduate this year thanks to Super Storm Sandy in October and a record-breaking snow storm that made February break last forever. Now here we are. We made it! High School was our guide to the tradition to adulthood.

So now the road we have been walking on brings us to today, June 27th, 2013. This is the part of our journey where we stop for a moment, to take a rest and to reflect on all that has been accomplished. What we have done together over the past few years is truly wonderful. We stuck together and grew together and I could not have chosen a better class to be part of. I have faith in each and every one of you, that no matter which road each of you choose to travel, you will make it your own and you will succeed. So my friends,

remember to rest and relax and grow stronger, let go and let God share your load. Nothing is lost or ended--you've just come to a split in the road.

Thank you.

Daphne Pellegrino

Class Speaker, 2013

My fellow graduates,

Today, we see ourselves as we were four years ago –young, bright, and new to the halls of North Haven High School.

We were unopened textbooks, pencils not yet sharpened, with hearts still raw and unknowing as to what the coming years would hold. The future is more real and honest and pressing in this moment than it has seemed since that first year. But if we have learned anything, it is that the future is unpredictable. Life will continue to surprise us. So, today we see ourselves as we can only hope to become.

And that is scary...

I mean, it's terrifying.

But for now, we will relish this moment. Because with such infinite possibilities before us, there are few things we know as sure as this.

Today is June 27th, 2013 and we are a class of young people who have grown, learned, and made mistakes together. We are generation in flux, taking from the

heartbreak of recent history the courage to accept things we cannot change, and to change the things we can. We may have grown according to different, unique paths, but I think we would be surprised if we knew the ways we have impacted one another.

We are a crowd of athletes, musicians, friends, artists, geniuses. A crowd of moments, knowledge, tears, laughter, and compassion. A crowd of 285 students gathered in one school, and today the world lies unopened before us.

So let us cherish this moment. Let the enormity of it humble and elate us. We will not be sad. We will not worry. We will look forward and back, at these faces that surround us. We don't know who will have come into our lives a year from now. Who will have left, and stayed. And we don't know where we will be. So right now, let us just be here.

Completely, undeniably here.

It is hot. The room is crowded. And we may find our minds trailing to visions of the future, of the past. But pretty soon this will be just another memory, so let us not lose this moment while it is still in our grasp.

For now, we sit, united in this familiar territory. As a class, a community. A sea of heavy maroon fabric and eyes light with anticipation. Let who we are in this moment define us. Not who we were yesterday, or who we will be tomorrow, but who we are right now: North Haven High School's graduating class of 2013.

Matt Marcarelli

Valedictory Address

Greetings, good afternoon and congratulations to my fellow peers,

About a month ago, a group of my classmates and I walked through the door of our first block class at a time that was too early for us to be awake and ludicrously too early for us to be showered, dressed, tooth brushed, coffee-infused and seated in a fluorescently lit classroom. While this AM class exhibited excellent student attendance, its attending students were noticeably absent-minded and also appeared to be suffering from acute symptoms of debilitating narcolepsy. On this day, during first block, it was a struggle for us just to lift our eyes past shut, never mind engage in a usable, retainable lesson. In spite of this quickly spreading bout of crippling, end-of-the-year senioritis, our teacher persisted. However, instead of the lesson she had planned, she posed what seemed like an easily answerable question. She asked, "What is the true, *singular* value of your high school education?"

After a long pause, one cheerfully alert student raised his hand and, when called upon, argued, "School makes us more knowledgeable." This claim provoked the rousing of even more students, some shaking their heads in agreement and others noticeably agitated. Another student raised his hand and countered, "School prepares us for college." This led to the widening of even more eyes and a clamor of well-that's-true's and but-what-if's. Another hand rose: "School helps us form career paths." Another hand rose: "School teaches us to be self-disciplined." Another hand rose: "School teaches us to be responsible." Another hand rose: "School helps us develop social skills." Another hand

rose: "School teaches us the meaning of life." Another hand rose: "School opens us up to the world." Another hand rose and another and another and another. Our teacher calling upon our rocketing hands resembled a strange rendition of the game Whac-A-Mole. Soon, however, the frenzy became so fierce that hand-raising was abandoned altogether.

Our once quiet, docile class transformed into a circus of passionately screaming teenagers. There were myriad arguments made, each transformed by the last. The process of discussing these arguments involved a great deal of quarreling, hand waving, nail biting and, I kid you not, weeping. It was a truly magnificent experience. The presented arguments managed to explain a number of pseudo-sub-purposes of our high school experience, but they ultimately failed to capture the one, *true* value. Truthfully, it wasn't even the subject matter of this classroom discussion that made it such a momentous occurrence, but rather it was the fact that the class was arguing, deliberating over a number of different viewpoints. It was through this fiery, passionate deliberation that the true, *singular* value of our high school education became *strikingly* evident.

While neither my classmates nor I realized it on that day in that classroom, we were displaying the very acquired skills that have made the expenditure of our last four years of life *worth it*. We were considering every available argument, determining the positive and negative aspects of each. We were consciously choosing which argument to support. We were challenging our *own* beliefs and our *own* values. We were being perceptive, deliberative, and we were brandishing our accumulated knowledge in order to build a valid, persuasive case. There exists a single word that sums up all of these reasoning abilities: *control*. On *that* day in *that* classroom, we were in complete and utter control of *how* we

were thinking and *how* we were making choices. It is the acquisition of this *control* that defines the true, *singular* value of our high school education. I urge you to continue using the great, the powerful, the *almighty* skill that is control in all of your future endeavors, for it will allow you to live meaningfully and with purpose.

I wish you luck and much, much more. Thank you.