

Richie Lewandowski's Salutatorian Speech

"Believe in me, I will believe in you" - this simple yet very meaningful phrase was uttered by the Blessed Virgin Mary to a young girl in Belgium over 80 years ago. In many ways, it demonstrates the relationship we have experienced with Cabrini in the past 4 and some of us up to 13 years, a relationship of mutual and enduring trust. Throughout our time at Cabrini, we developed a great sense of trust in our school and especially the people in it because they trusted and believed in us. This trust was demonstrated in a variety of ways. It was demonstrated by our dedicated teachers and faculty members who always believed in us and pushed us to always try our best because they trusted in our capabilities, believing that we could ultimately succeed even during times of trial if we tried our hardest. It was demonstrated by our parents who believed in us and trusted that we would not waste the opportunities they worked so hard for by allowing us to attend this school, believing we would take advantage of this education. Finally it was demonstrated through our fellow classmates who always believed in each other and trusted one another to always help one another when we were struggling or needed encouragement. In many ways, Cabrini has profoundly believed in us. For this, I would like to thank all the teachers and faculty, my fellow classmates, Fr. Tim, Fr. Joe, Fr. Dom, and Zaid and especially my parents and sister Ellie for everything you have done for us at Cabrini and most of all for believing in us. Yet, now as we leave, it is time for us to in turn believe in Cabrini and trust that all we have accomplished in the past four years was not simply in vain but will help us in the future not only in our careers but even more importantly in our lives. We must believe in our teachers and trust that they have prepared us well for whatever our futures bring us. We must believe in our parents and trust that they knew what was best for our futures by sending us to Cabrini. We must believe in our classmates and trust that they will always be there for us even when we don't see each other every day. And, we must believe in ourselves and not be afraid to challenge ourselves and go beyond what is comfortable as we head into the future, not only accepting trials but even embracing them. Finally, we must trust in God, knowing that He believes in us more than anyone else and wants what is best for us always, trusting in him to always be there for us. We must also thank Him for not only all that He has done for us in the past 13 years but also for everything He will do for us in our futures no matter what they may bring, truly believing that we can do all things in Christ who strengthens us. Thank you.

Lauren Harven's Valedictorian Speech

It is my pleasure to welcome classmates, friends, family, and esteemed faculty to the graduation celebration of the Cabrini High School Class of 2017. I would like to thank you for all that you have done to help me achieve my goals the past four years. Being named the class Valedictorian took long nights of studying and staying home on some weekends instead of having fun with my friends, and the great reward for all this hard work is...another assignment, this speech, that I have to give in front of everyone. But in all seriousness, being the Valedictorian of our class was a goal I set for myself when I was a young little Lauren walking the halls of Cabrini Elementary school, and Mr. R can attest to that because we discussed it a lot Sophomore year. Achieving this goal is truly a great honor and gives me the unique opportunity to be up here in front of all you today. I have put a lot of thought into this speech, about what I wanted to say to you to commemorate all our years together, and I have spent as much time on these words as Mr. Coleman's Honors Chemistry Final, which took about twenty hours. If you enjoy my speech, thank you Mr. V for giving me the tools to wow the audience with my words and if you do not I am sorry Mr. V it has been over three years since I have taken your speech class and I'm sleep deprived. The first time I stood at this podium to read at Mass was in second grade and I was nervous, staring into a sea of unfamiliar faces, and needed a step stool to reach the microphone. I will happily tell you that two of those things have changed because there is no stool behind this podium and I am looking out and seeing familiar faces that are my friends who I have known for four or possibly twelve years. If you are keeping track that means that I am still very nervous, just as nervous as I was for my four day AP Calculus Exam. I have grown up in the halls of these schools and it is bitter sweet saying goodbye to such an important place in my life but it is time. As this chapter of my life closes I am once again as apprehensive as that little first grader entering a strange new world twelve years ago, but I know that you all have prepared us, the graduating class of 2017, to take the next steps and we are ready for the next chapter of our lives. The time we have spent here at Cabrini has transformed us from little cubs curious of all the world's wonders into the proud, hardworking, intelligent, and confident young adults standing before you today. Now as we watch our time together slip away, I want to share with you some Disney inspired life lessons.

Something some of you may not know about me is that being a Disney princess has also been another goal of mine. I'm not quite sure how to make this goal a reality but I'm working on it nonetheless. I often find inspiration in the messages that follow the words "Once upon a Time". Here in the Cabrini Kingdom, the subjects work in the tall towers for four years to earn enough knowledge to survive in the great unknown. The diploma you receive today is like the ladder out of the tall towers and you are allowed passage into this great big, wonderful world. The girls can kick off those saddle shoes and boys, if you want to have your hair go past your collar, let it grow! That diploma is the ticket to start

your life journey. Life is not a spectator sport and, “If watchin’ is all you’re gonna do, then you’re gonna watch your life go by without you.” “Adventure is out there,” I promise, so be like Rapunzel and,” venture outside your comfort zone. The rewards are always worth it.” Life is going to flash by fast, I mean look at how fast high school flew by, and time does not slow down. “You don’t have time to be timid. You must be bold and daring,” like Lumière or all those opportunities will have passed you by. Now, reach for infinity and beyond because you control your destiny, make it everything you dream it to be. But remember ultimately, “it’s up to you how far you’ll go. If you don’t try you’ll never know.” Dream big and have the courage to pursue them because all your dreams and “Fairytale can come true. You gotta make them happen, it all depends on you.”

As we walk through those doors with diploma in hand, we will be entering a new world, the adult world, but do not worry we are ready to be part of this world. I am not going to lie to you, it’s not going to be easy, so “Muscle up buttercup,” because you are in for a wild ride. At first, it will be hard and frightening because the unknown always is, but if you get scared think of Thumper’s motto and “be scarier than whatever is scaring you!” In the hard times that will happen as you begin your journey, think of how Timothy Mouse told Dumbo that “the very things that hold you down are going to lift you up, up, and up”, and once you get up there, “don’t just fly, soar,” like I know you can. Sometimes life is going to get you down and you won’t know what to do and in those times, I want you to think, WWDD (What Would Dory Do), “Just keep swimming, just keep swimming.” There will come a time when you feel that you are not able to achieve your goals and are less than you want to be, but I want you to remember Christopher Robin’s words, “you are braver than you believe, stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think.” The things you hope and work for will not just magically appear because “even miracles take a little time,” so be patient. When the world seems to be plagued with hard times of constant controversy remember, “you’re the one who can fill the world with sunshine.” A simple smile, “hello”, or small act of kindness can make someone’s day so pass them out where ever you go. I know your friendly faces and smiles exchanged in the hall will be some of the fondest moments we have shared together along with the dances, pep rallies, and sporting events, that I will take with me on my journey.

Many of us do not know what we want to do with the rest of our lives, which is okay, but I urge you to discover yourself before deciding who you are going to be because, “when you find out who you are, you find out what you need.” Like the Cheshire Cat always said, “If you don’t know where you want to go then it doesn’t matter which path you take.” Now is the time to explore all the options this great new world has to offer, so introduce yourself to new activities, people, and points of view. Whatever career you choose make sure you love what you do because as Mary Poppins always said, “in every job that must be done there is an element in fun.” I caution you to not get caught up in finding your destiny

because, “life is a journey to be experienced, not a problem to be solved.” “Enjoy the little things in life for one day you’ll look back and realize they were the big things.” Again, I stress, the importance of everyday occurrences, like time with those important to you and the little wonders that surround your life. People are going to discourage you from following your dreams, but “do not forget that you must not let anyone define your limits because of where you come from. Your only limit is your soul.” Everything we experience affects and changes us and, “the past can hurt. But the way I see it, you can either run from it or learn from it.” Mistakes will be made on this great journey of yours because we are human, but learn the lesson within those stumbles you take. Sometimes moments in the past are special, exciting, and riveting making it tempting to live in them forever, but, “if you focus on what you left behind, you will never be able to see what lies ahead.”

As you meet new people and face new situations remember these few simple tips. Follow Thumper’s rule that, “if you can’t say nuffin’ nice, don’t say nuffin’ at all!” “Always let your conscience be your guide,” even though sometimes, “the right path is not the easiest one.” Be humble, kind and show compassion to all those you meet because, “a true hero isn’t measured by the size of his strength but by the strength of his heart.” “A little consideration, a little thought for others, makes all the difference,” so treat people the way you want to be treated. Think of the genie’s lamp when common objects are placed before you because, “like so many things it is not what is on the outside but what is on the inside that counts.” Stay true to yourself because if everybody were like everybody else, how boring it would be. The things that make me different are the things that make me, me!” “All you need is faith, trust, and a little pixie dust,” to reach your goals. Don’t stress about the future just yet, “for it’ll turn out all right in the end. You’ll see.”

It is almost that time and I know what you all are thinking, “Goodbye? Oh no! Please can’t we just go back to page one and start all over again?” No, we can’t, because I know “It’s no use going back to yesterday, because I was a different person then.” We are ready to take this world by storm with the knowledge and lessons we have garnered from our parents, friends, and teachers and I know you will all do great things. Do not be sad that our time together is ending, but be thankful for all the cherished memories of high school you have. I know I will never forget my time spent in these saddle shoes. As I leave here today and walk through the doors of Cabrini for possibly the last time I will be thinking, “how lucky am I to have something that makes saying goodbye so hard.” And finally, I would like to share one last lesson I’ve learned here, Time is not measured by clocks, but by moments. Our time at Cabrini has come to an end but there are many more moments we are destined to have, so go out into the world, our moments are waiting. Thank you for the fond moments that we will cherish for years to come. Congratulations Class of 2017! We did it!