

The Impact

I would like to start off by welcoming everyone who came today to witness the graduation of the class of 2021. I would also like to say a huge thank you to the administration who made their best effort to make our senior year memorable under the circumstances, and providing us with the amazing ceremony here today. It has been a long and difficult year for all of us, so to see so many familiar faces and lots of people in the crowd for this special day means a lot to everyone here. As I stand here today in front of the people I have been with since we learned how to wave at kindergarten graduation, it makes me think about how crazy and unforgettable our years in this school have been.

Everyone has probably been told throughout high school not to worry about drama and fights with friends. Personally, I know everyone would tell me “These people aren’t going to matter in a few years when you go off to college”, and they would be right. You aren’t going to remember the little fights or the person who didn’t like you. After you graduate from high school, everyone goes their separate ways to pursue the path for their future. This could be through going to college, trade school, the military, or entering straight into the work force. Any way you decide to go, you aren’t going to be basing your future off of your high school friends. You are going to leave and go into a new, limitless world. You will make promises as you leave to stay in touch and visit your friends, but these promises are often never fulfilled. With the huge change in your lives and the long distance, it is hard to stay connected with

your loved ones. You start to leave your high school life behind, and transition into the next stage of your life. Entering into the world after high school gives you a much better opportunity to meet people just like you, who you can create that lifelong bond with.

However, the people you are sitting next to today have actually had the biggest impact on who you are as a person. Whether you are next to your best friend, someone you fell off with, or someone you have never been close to, your personality has been influenced by them in some way. As I mentioned previously, you won't base your future off of your friends, but that does not mean they didn't help lead you to it. The people you are around the most determine your interests, behaviors, and potential for success. So, if you find yourself being successful in the future, your group of high school friends may be the last people you would think to thank, but they are probably the most important. Even then, your other classmates contribute too. In our small school, our grades don't get split up during elementary, middle, or high school. We have been around the same people since we were 4 years old. That is 14 years that we have had to get to know our classmates. Through these years, there is no doubt that we have all watched every single person in our grade either go through something or we have been through something with them. Every experience, every conversation, and every person helps you learn and grow, and at the end of high school, your personality has a little piece of everyone in it. Your foundation is built during your childhood years when your brain is still developing. You will not change when you meet new people and have new experiences, you just build onto that foundation.

The Class of 2021 is a perfect example of how everything during this time has a huge impact on you. We came to the high school in 7th grade and every teacher would dread having to handle us, with good reason. We had more demerits than the whole school combined, had meetings with Mr Cecere almost daily, and had to be under close supervision all the way up to about our sophomore year. This is when we lost a fraction of our grade. Then, we went through every single English teacher the school had to offer. Then the pandemic hit and ended our junior year and ruined our “best year of high school”. Our grade has been through so much adversity that just made us stronger and more adaptable. These unfortunate events also led us to being a lot closer as a grade and allowed us to make the best out of a bad senior year.

So in the future, remember to say a thank you to the people who got you where you are. Because while it is true that our high school friends are not our “lifelong” friends, and we may never see our classmates again after graduation, without every person sitting on this field, we would not be the same people we are today.

Thank you!