

Samantha Moyer

Thank you

(Before I start, I am giving you all a full warning that I will be crying through most of this. If you know me, you know I cry very easily, so I am apologizing in advance for my blubbering through this.)

When preparing for this speech, one of the other speech writers and I talked about how most graduation speeches are about the high school memories we as a class have shared, and how that is not something that we want to focus on. While I think an important part of graduation is looking back on our school years, I wanted to focus on something else that not many of us really take the time to think about: Saying thank you.

In this next part, I was going to do what many speech writers do: define the words that they are focusing on, but then I stopped and thought, “Everyone knows what Thank you means.” And I am almost sure that this is true.

Thank you is something that everyone says every day to many people and for many reasons. We say it when someone holds the door open for us, we

say it when we drop something and someone picks it up for us, we even say it when the waiter brings us our food in a restaurant. The words Thank you are so a part of our daily vocabulary that we don't even think about them. I am giving this speech today to remind us of the importance of showing thanks.

The first thank you I have is for the parents and guardians of all of us graduating seniors. (Here's where the crying starts.) Thank you for all the car rides and pickups. Thank you for coming to as many of our social and sporting events as you could. Thank you for all the peer editing of papers and the attempts at math problems. And especially thank you for waking us up on days that we kept saying, "Just five more minutes." Without you parents and guardians, it is a fact that we would not be sitting here today. And without my mom especially, I would definitely not be standing here giving this speech. You guys have supported us through everything, and I think that you deserve the biggest thanks of them all.

The next thank you is for the other family members of us seniors. Thank you to all the grandparents, aunts and uncles, and whoever else that has helped to raise us and shape us into who you see on this field today. Some

of you have been there for us when our parents could not be, and for that, especially thank you. Thank you to all the older and younger siblings for not always being the worst. Thank you to the households who, in this last year of many, many TEAMS calls, tried to be as quiet as possible while we were taking tests. Thank you to all those people we consider family just because of what they mean to us and what they do for us.

I would also like to thank the teachers. The teachers at Portage are some of the best, hardest working teachers around, and I want to show them my gratitude. Thank you for helping kids to find their passions and dreams. Thank you for making school days even a little bit more exciting by telling us about your weekend or showing us your new dog. Thank you for teaching us even when half of us are asleep or trying our very best to stay awake. Thank you for not panicking too much when one, or multiple, of your students, myself included, pass out in the middle of your class. You teachers are not thanked enough for all that you put up with throughout the school year, so thank you.

For my last thank you, I'd like to give a shout out to the class of 2021. We have definitely been through thick and thin together, huh? But! We

survived! We survived through every English teacher the school threw at us, through the tenth grade “purge”, and we even survived through a global pandemic. Thank you guys for making high school not suck. Thank you for all the laughs and for all the help in “comparing answers” on homework. Thank you for everything, really.

Now, if you have ever spoken to me in the past four years, you know that I have wanted to graduate and go to college probably more than anyone else here. While that is still true, I am seriously going to miss high school, my classmates, and every moment in between (if you can’t tell by my bawling right now). I’ll miss last-minute studying for bio tests, listening to Lane attempt to get every teacher off topic, sitting in the library for lunch, acting out Shakespeare and *The Crucible* in English, and yes, even the cat dissections. I will miss everything about this little school in Western Pennsylvania, and for that I want to say two words: Thank you.