6TH GRADE CONTINUATION SPEECH

FOR

ADAM SCATURRO

Hello everyone!! I want to say that it’s really an honor to have the chance to be with all of you - students, parents, friends and faculty, at today’s continuation ceremony. (**If there are any people in particular you want to thank for inviting you to speak, do so here**) I especially want to thank \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ for asking me to speak today. I know that you want to hear my story, but I have to say, I am really impressed to be around **YOU**-you’re all such a great group of accomplished, caring and fun students! As you probably know, my niece, \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ is your classmate and I have watched her as she has really grown up and learned and shared her adventures with you over the past several years. I think there is a lot that you do as a class that inspires me, so let’s inspire each other!

First I’ll tell you a bit about me. I grew up in the area, near here, and was a normal, average kid when I was growing up, just like you. I always had a real love of sports and I participated in a variety of games as I was growing up. I loved ALL sports-baseball, football, wrestling-you name it. I loved the feeling of being on a team. I loved the competition. I loved the action and I loved learning the skills and strategy needed for each sport. I loved getting better and better at each activity. And then one day, I was involved in an accident while wrestling. It was life changing in some ways, and it took me a long time to heal and adapt to a new way of life, but I refused to let it stop me from living the life I knew and loved. I refused to let my new physical circumstances take away the adrenalin rush I got from participating in sports and I refused to lose the sense of belonging to a team with a greater purpose. You all know how great it feels after a day on the field. You know the importance of sportsmanship and having a sense of belonging. You know how great it feels to be exhausted, after you’ve given your all for the good of **YOUR** team.

As I healed and adapted to my new life, I learned that I really **WAS** strong, and my mental strength helped to encourage my physical strength. There was a famous baseball coach named Tommy Lasorda and he once said, “The difference between the impossible and the possible lies in a man’s determination.” Boy, did I learn **THAT** one!!! I was determined to play sports and I was even more determined to **WIN**.

That accident was many years ago, when I was still in high school. Since then, I have pushed myself and I have managed to accomplish goals that seem to be impossible-but those are the best ones!! I found other people that were in similar situations to mine, and I discovered I was not alone. I found **my team**. There were others out there who were also in wheelchairs, who also loved sports and who also looked for a way to express that love in playing sports. I discovered wheelchair rugby and there was no looking back!! Let me tell you, there are some tough dudes playing wheelchair rugby, and hopefully, I’m one of the toughest!! (**Wait for the laugh**). Thanks to training for and playing with my team, I discovered a whole new world of independence, team spirit, and purpose through my participation with the Denver Harlequins (**Are you still with them?)** I also trained and practiced with my Paralympics team, and we qualified for the 2012 Paralympics in London. Oh, and have you heard??? We won the **BRONZE MEDAL**!!! (**Say this with enthusiasm, show them the medal, and let them cheer**). My team competed with athletes from all over the world, and we won an Olympic medal!! Let me tell you something. There is an expression that teaches us, “When life hands you lemons, Make lemonade.” What that means is, sometimes in life things happen that can throw us off course. Those challenges in life can take try to take away your spirit, but only if you allow it. I have learned that I am stronger than the bad things that may happen to me. I learned that for all of the years I trained as an athlete, I was building a determination and a sense of who I was, and no one and no thing was going to take my spirit from me. I just had to learn new strategies-new ways of doing things. Through the incredible support I received from my family, friends, doctors and my community, I have been able to realize my dreams in spite of that accident. Throughout my life, since healing and really discovering my **true** strength, I have lived an amazing life and I am truly blessed and grateful for all that I have and all that I have achieved. I have been to places that people only dream of. (**Name some of the more exotic places you’ve been-I read that you’ve been to Mt Everest. I would include that**) I’ve been to \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ and I’ve seen \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_, and of course having the honor of competing in the London Paralympics was a real highlight of my life. To know that you’ve worked so hard for something, and to bring such recognition and glory not only to your team but also to your country, is something I will remember for my entire life. (**If you want to mention one particular highlight, add it here**) My most vivid memory of my time at the Paralympics was when \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

The motto of the 2012 London Olympics was, “Inspire a Generation,” and I am doing what I can to live by that motto in my life. I have a young son who inspires me every day. He is a real ball of energy, and all that I do is so that he can have an example of what it means to be a good, honorable, determined and caring human being with strong character and compassion for others. I love coaching and encouraging young people, and I love being here with all of you.

As you know, I’ve heard great things about this class. I know your class motto is, “Wish it, Dream it. Do it.” Just **THAT** is an inspiration!! I am so happy for each one of you that you are learning at such an early age to focus on the positive, and that if you work hard enough, your dreams **will** come true. Don’t let circumstances stop you!! Remember to make that lemonade!! I also admire all of you for being so respectful of each other. Believe me, I’ve been asking questions about you …and the reports I’ve been getting inspire me. I am inspired by the way you support each other, and I am really impressed by your class gift to the school. I’ve heard how you collected money for this beautiful glass mural, and I am sure you learned that a penny alone is just one cent, but when combined with everyone else’s pennies, it becomes a force to be reckoned with! I know how each of you chipped in whatever you could, of your time and money and energy, to build this wall as a team. The wall symbolizes much more than you can probably understand right now. It shows us how you cooperated and were all united in a goal and you **reached** it. It shows how you worked together to present this to your school so that even as you all move on to the next step in your lives, you’ve left something to inspire others. Clearly, the members of this class are “**smarter than fifth graders**!!” (**Wait for the laugh**) The glass represents clarity and vision, and may each one of you remember to always keep your eye on the future while living in the present as you Dream it, Wish it, Do it.

You’re now going to move on to a new, bigger school, and it will seem weird for a while. You will be adjusting to a new part of life and you’ll be called on to handle more advanced projects and problems, but don’t ever forget what you’ve learned with the Dennison Eagles. You’ve learned some incredible lessons here and I don’t just mean English or math or social studies. Each one of you has learned what it means to be a fine, caring and supportive human being, with concern for your neighbors and compassion for all, and that is priceless. Our character and integrity are what we have deep inside that makes us who we are, and I am inspired by your character. Congratulations and best of luck as you all go on to continue your educations next year as seventh graders!!! Thank you all!